

unemployed in proportion to her population than any of the allied countries.

In looking over the trade returns I find that during the past year we imported steel and iron to the value of \$154,021,858. This one item accounts for over fifty per cent of the adverse balance of trade between Canada and the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I have often thought what might have happened if our neighbours to the south were unfriendly neutrals during the years they remained out of the war. What if they had refused to sell us steel? What if they had refused to sell steel and steel products to the Mother Country? Serious as the situation was, it might have been more serious.

In view of the many lessons which we have learned as a result of the war, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of this country will do well to further encourage the development of the iron and steel industry, which has meant so much to the industrial prosperity of Canada in the past, but more especially during the period of the great war.

Perhaps some of us forget the great financial obligations which have been thrust upon us as a result of the war. When we entered the war our national debt was \$335,000,000; to-day it is nearly \$2,000,000,000. The interest on our national debt at the outbreak of the war was about \$15,000,000; to-day it is over \$115,000,000. In addition to this we have a yearly Pension Bill of \$25,000,000, or possibly \$30,000,000.

As our financial obligations have increased, in like proportion our industry and efforts must increase, if we are to meet our obligations and overtake the world-wide shortage of all the necessities of life. For five years 50,000,000 men have been fighting, and 100,000,000 men turned their attention from their ordinary pursuits in life to the furnishing of munitions and the necessary supplies that enabled our forces to carry on at the front.

In the years that lie before us, capital must be content with fair profits; labour must be paid a fair living wage. If our industrial life is interrupted by strikes the situation will become more difficult. To accomplish the task, labour and capital must co-operate.

During the last session of Parliament an industrial conference was held at Ottawa, representatives of labour gathering together in conference with representatives of capital from, I think, nearly every province of Canada. Mr. Speaker, I believe this was a move in the right direction;

[Mr. McGregor.]

it will, no doubt, result in the bringing about of better conditions and a better understanding of the difficulties of both labour and capital. Not only should labour and capital work in harmony, but every province of this great Dominion should carefully consider the problems of the other provinces. The interests of the East should not be overlooked by the West, and in like manner the interests of the West should, and I believe will be considered by the people of the East.

In the past all classes in this great country worked side by side in harmony. There was little, if any, friction. I think it was well understood that when the farmer was prosperous the manufacturer was prosperous, and when the manufacturer was prosperous, labour was content. We can only prosper as a well balanced organization, for we are each dependent on the success of the other.

Our policy must be national, not selfish or sectional. I think it will be admitted by all fair-minded men that those who have legislated for us in the past, regardless of party, were not class legislators.

I believe the men who were entrusted with our political destinies in the past were honest men who did their best having regard to the interests of every portion of this great Dominion.

As a result of the war we have a share of the world-wide unrest which in other countries threatens to destroy the very foundations of civilization, but in that respect we have little to complain of in Canada. It is true we have those who advocate class legislation, and those who would set up one class against another. Such can end only in disaster, and those who advocate such a course are not the true friends of the soldier, of the farmer, of labour, or of the manufacturer. The platform or the policy of any class that is not national and equitable to all, regardless of class, race or religion, should not be considered, and, I believe, will not be considered by the intelligent men and women of this country.

While much has been said of our great natural resources, which I do not wish to minimize, at the same time, I believe the greatest endowment of any country is that of a united, happy, and contented people. The bulwark of a nation is not its army or its navy, but the character of its citizens. We are now clothed with the authority and obligations of a nation; let us as true Canadians demonstrate to the world that we are worthy of that great responsibility. We must not forget that the name of Canada is written large on the map of the world