

Mr. ROBB: I am inclined to agree with both the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) and the hon. member for Centre Winnipeg (Mr. Woodsworth) on the point of order, but I have no desire to stop the debate. It is quite interesting. And I am not going to prolong it more than to say this to my hon. friend who has just told us of conditions of unemployment which prevail in Winnipeg. I have also some record of the unemployment situation in Winnipeg and it is about up to date. In the Toronto Globe of July 3, this item appears:

The Winnipeg strike ends. The strike of the Winnipeg bricklayers and stonemasons which was called on Monday ended abruptly to-day when an agreement was reached with the employers which will bring the union scale of wages to \$1.25 an hour.

These men were being paid \$1.15 an hour, and when they got the employers started and the buildings partly up, they demanded an extra ten cents an hour. They are now being paid \$1.25 an hour. How are you ever going to get down the cost of rents to the people of this country when you are paying men that scale of wages?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I would submit that that is another matter altogether and has nothing to do with the unemployment situation. I was discussing unskilled labour which is to be found in such large numbers with no work. If the minister wishes to enter upon the question, I could point out that stonemasons and bricklayers are highly skilled craftsmen and in the West they are employed often for only four, five or six months of the entire year. Throughout the years in the past there has gradually developed for bricklayers and stonemasons a much higher scale of wages than that which prevails in any other section of the building trade and much higher than in any other section of the ordinary mechanical trades. Further than that, I would point out that although \$1.25 an hour seems a high wage, it is not nearly so high a wage as has been paid in the building trades just south of the line. This has had the effect of depleting the ranks of our mechanics in Winnipeg, almost every one who can get out going south to Chicago and Detroit. So far as building homes is concerned, let me point out that the question of wages constitutes only one of the vital facts; the enormous ground rent that has been charged, by which a great many people through inflation of land values have made fortunes in Winnipeg and in most of the other cities in the West, is a larger factor in the situation than the wages paid mechanics.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I do not want it to be inferred from anything I have said that I consider the present a particularly good time to bring labourers or artisans into Canada. I realize as everyone else does that there is to-day especially in the cities a great deal of unemployment. We all regret this but we recognize the fact, and I do not suggest that the present is the most opportune moment for pursuing a vigorous policy of immigration; nor would I think the autumn of the year favourable under any circumstances, spring being much preferable. As regards the situation in Winnipeg, I have no doubt that a large part of the congestion there, in regard to labour, arises from the fact that so many of the immigrants who do come to Canada to-day are brought across the continent and practically dumped in Winnipeg. There they are supposed to await farm labour, or they are supposed to become farmers there themselves. My information is that a very large proportion of these people simply remain in Winnipeg, and if that system is persisted in the conditions will become worse instead of improving there. My own view is that immigration as it lands should be more spread out than has been the case in the past. I had the benefit of an interview with some of the immigration officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway one day last week and I also saw a representative of one of the American shipping companies. These officials told me that to-day you can obtain from northern Europe, not only in the countries enumerated by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen) but in such places as Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Esthonia, Ukraina and parts of Austria, a splendid class of immigration. The people want to leave those parts of Europe and as they cannot go to the United States there are only two alternatives now open to them, namely, South America and the Dominion of Canada, because they do not very readily take to the idea of going to Mexico. This I submit is Canada's opportunity, and so great is the desire of people to come to Canada that we can pick and choose, taking the best and rejecting the undesirables. I do not however suggest that the present is the opportune moment to bring these people; I do not suggest that as unemployment becomes acute we should bring in more immigrants to add to the army of unemployed which we already have with us. But surely there will be a time when this country will welcome a tremendous immigration. I have heard it stated by United States officials that a country can absorb annually without inconvenience 5 per cent of