

It will be noted that building permits awarded in the month of March this year were only about 43 per cent of what they were a year ago.

I should like again to suggest to the government the advisability of providing some housing scheme in Canada. I know of no better way to put money into circulation. Perhaps before considering this matter in detail I should say that thousands of people in Canada have already lost their homes owing to the unemployment which has existed for the last two years. Others have lost their farms, and still others their savings. Many citizens have lost their jobs, and with them their hope, their health and their self-respect. Many have committed suicide or died prematurely because of the worry of it all. I believe it is high time we really took some effective steps to put our people to work. It is useless to look for permanent alleviation of present conditions without important social and financial changes. There is no doubt that industry in Canada is capable of producing more goods than it did in 1928. Industry, however, has come to a standstill, and as a result men, women and children are suffering. Most of them suffer in hopeless silence, not because they do not want to work or do not know how to produce; not because materials are scarce or machinery lacking, but because of an inadequate, inefficient monetary system which demands from them a great sacrifice. The scarcity is purely artificial.

The situation to-day might very well be likened to that of a horse tethered to a tree standing in the midst of a luxurious pasture. The horse walks in one direction, thereby winding the tie rope around the tree. After a while he finds himself with his nose close to the tree, unable to reach the grass. In other words, he is starving. There is plenty of luxurious grass within a short distance, if he had sense enough to turn around and walk in the other direction. If he has not sense enough to do that he must starve. We in Canada are in the same position. We have not sense enough to make use of the machinery and raw materials in our country so that our people may be put to work to produce the goods they require. In my view our people have a moral right to demand from their representatives and their government an immediate examination of the fundamental weaknesses of the gold standard, to be followed by some permanent correction of that standard or the adoption of a new one. To my mind there is no doubt that we should adopt an entirely new financial policy. It

[Mr. Coote.]

seems to me at the present time we are carrying on a sort of hunger strike. Why should we not give those people employment? The Prime Minister is reported to have said in Montreal a year and a half ago that the first duty of the Canadian government would be to provide work for the Canadian people. With that I heartily agree, but we have neglected our duty. Of course we can do nothing until the government acts, and I hope it will not be long before it is persuaded to take action.

I should like to quote from the new book by Doctor Robert Eisler entitled *This Money Maze*. The preface is written by Sir Josiah Stamp, who recently delivered such a splendid address in this building and the foreword is written by Sir Thomas Barclay, one of the most prominent bankers in England. Doctor Eisler says:

Nothing but the borrowing and spending power of the community can start the wheels of industry whirling again after such a prolonged lethargy and continual fall in prices.

Under present conditions the best way to put the spending power of the community to work is by government action. I know of no other way in which it can be done. I think we are quite justified in asking the government to take action. I should like to remind the committee of the many promises made by the Prime Minister during the election campaign. He said:

I accept the challenge, and I say again I will call parliament together at the earliest possible moment to provide at once a remedy,—employment for all who can and will work.

There is no doubt we have several hundred thousand people in Canada to-day who would and could work if they had it to do. When Canada entered the war in 1914 we did not hesitate to use all the nation's credit. We financed our part of the war on our own credit, and by similar methods we could finance this war against poverty and unemployment if we would make use of our national credit. We have plenty of it.

I suggest first that we institute a housing scheme along the lines I suggested a few weeks ago. I will not go into the details of the plan to-night, but I should like to draw attention to an article which appeared recently in *The Prairie Lumberman* concerning a federal home building loan, and pointing out the work which would be given if such a scheme were adopted. The article is as follows:

Work would immediately be provided for a great body of men now unemployed and additional employment would immediately be spread throughout many industries now cutting down on their staffs.