

Supply—Immigration

Mr. ROBB: What is the date of that resolution?

Mr. IRVINE: It bears no date.

Mr. ROBB: I was wondering whether it coincided with the date on which a delegation waited upon Premier Greenfield of Alberta requesting work. He found work for them and only seven or eight would take it, and he told them to get out because there was nothing to keep them in Edmonton if they were not willing to work.

Mr. IRVINE: I am not sure whether the date of this resolution synchronizes with the event to which the minister refers. But in any case the suggestion the minister advances that there is no unemployment is too utterly unreasonable to merit a reply. It is so ridiculous that I refuse to take up the time of the committee discussing it. It is true no doubt that here and there you will find men who, for mental or physical reasons, are unable to work. But that fact does not explain the general unemployment situation. Now, I want to make it clear that this circular is the kind of thing that is preventing the minister's immigration policy from being a success; and the thing to do is not to stop these people from sending resolutions of this sort away but to alter the conditions that make such resolutions necessary. That is where the responsibility falls on the minister and on the government.

I believe that the money which it is proposed to spend this year on immigration could be of far greater service to Canada if it were expended in Nova Scotia. The minister cannot prevent the situation in Nova Scotia from becoming known not only throughout the British Empire but throughout the world at large; nor can the minister blame any individual member of this House for the propaganda which is being broadcast in that connection. That sore has been festering for many years and every member of the House knows the gravity of the situation as it exists to-day. Still nothing is being done. I maintain therefore that if the government would spend this amount or half of it in Nova Scotia to get the industry of that part of the country going and to enable the men to co-operate with their employers in the production of coal and steel, it would be a far better advertisement for this country, in the eyes of people who might be inclined to come here, than sending out some missionary, as the minister says, to Glasgow or London or anywhere else to try to inveigle people into coming here.

[Mr. Irvine.]

I am willing to admit that the economic conditions in Canada to-day are no worse than they are in Great Britain or that obtain in many countries; but granting that does not help the unemployment any. It seems to me rather a shame to allow any family of five poor working people to pay \$580 to cross the Atlantic from Glasgow or London when perhaps they have nothing to do when they come here. I should like to know what the initial investment would amount to for a family of five going on the land in Canada. When you take into consideration their fares, the house in which they must live, the price of the land, the price of implements, and provisions for the first year's grub, and what interest is being charged. I do not doubt that these people and their children will be kept busy as long as they live, paying interest to those who lend them the necessary money with which to start. These are the conditions under which immigrants are coming in. I need not weary the committee with a recital of the facts which they already know as well as I do, if not better. In reviewing the situation, looking at our vast natural resources, our plant and equipment, and the capacity for producing wealth, I am reminded of the old superstitious lines of doggerel which declare that "every prospect pleases and only man is vile." I disagree with that as philosophy, but I agree with it as applied to the present administration. I do not mean to suggest of course that the administration is vile in the sense intended in this line; but considering the manner in which it has disregarded its responsibility in this matter the lines are apropos. There are opportunities for the development of our vast natural resources and of building a nation of happy and prosperous citizens, but the government is not taking advantage of these opportunities. I would offer a suggestion to the minister, and I do so only because I believe that he has a spark of genius if only he would allow himself to put it to some use. The very best thing that Canada could do to attract immigrants from any part of the world would be to give full scope to the genius of real statesmanship and to compel a country as rich in resources as this is to yield more than a bare living to nine millions of a population.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Notwithstanding what the minister (Mr. Robb) has said, I believe there are a good many people in this Dominion who still have confidence that there is a bright future in store for Canada. I know that a great many build those hopes on the great natural resources of our country and