

reaped, and year after year thousands of men, largely young men, have gone to the West and helped in the harvest, and the harvest has been saved. In 1919 an effort was made through governmental action to supply more systematically the harvest help required and to distribute it intelligently, and since that time labour has been supplied in that way, with more or less success. But I desire to point out the very serious situation that existed last year at harvest time, or immediately preceding it. I think the matter is worthy of mention, to the end that the Government may avoid, if possible, during 1925, a repetition of so unfortunate a situation, and withhold supply until required.

In the course of my duties in another connection I travel considerably, and I happened to be in the city of Moose Jaw on the third Sunday in August last and there saw a situation that to me was lamentable. There were about 800 harvesters from Eastern Canada in the city of Moose Jaw on that day. They had been there for nearly a week. That evening another train load arrived. There was nothing for any of them to do, and most of them had little and many of them no money. Along the main street of the city of Moose Jaw there is a boulevard ten or twelve feet wide, between the street proper and the sidewalk. It is a grass plot. Lying along that boulevard like sticks of wood were hundreds of men without any other beds and in many cases without the wherewithal to purchase a meal, and waiting—for what? For an opportunity to work. Beautiful fields of wheat all over that district were just beginning to ripen. None of them were ready to cut, and they would not be for about a week yet. A little cutting had commenced on the Portage Plains, but nothing in Saskatchewan. The scene that presented itself to me reminded me of dry summers in the early days, when as a boy I had to pasture the cows on the road, though inside the fence there were beautiful crops of hay, wheat, etc., which they would like to have but could not reach. And so those human animals were there in want, perhaps unknown to many Western farmers who in a few days would need their services. I hold that there ought to be closer co-operation between the people who require labour and the Government, who are attempting to supply it, to the end that the requirements may be served properly and without such distress and such disgraceful conditions as existed at that time. If a proper relation is to be maintained and strengthened between the people of the East who want to go West to see the country

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON.

and to help in gathering the harvest and the people of the West who need this assistance, then that sort of occurrence must not happen again.

A railroad conductor with whom I am personally acquainted, and who made a very interesting speech in the Saskatchewan Legislature the other day, told me personally that he had had fifty-two men on his train travelling on the brake-beams and in the box cars from station to station the week before, looking for a chance to obtain a meal or board until their services were required in the harvest fields, and they were not receiving any response that would keep them fed until they were needed.

I want to refer in that connection to one other incident. It occurred a few weeks afterwards. The unemployment conference called by the Government to which I have referred was held here on the 3rd of September. I am not criticising the results, but they were not very extensive. During the time that conference was in session a telegram came in and was read, stating that 2,000 more men were wanted in the harvest fields—at a time when I knew there was a surplus. Now, honourable gentlemen, that is not playing the game, and I say frankly to the Government and anybody connected with it that attempts to make human beings the pawns in a game of that sort is not fair.

The Government in its wisdom has included in the Speech from the Throne the statement that the problem of the cost of living is the most important one in the minds of His Excellency's advisers at this time and that every effort is being made to improve conditions with respect thereto. I assume that it means that, but I may say frankly that there are many people in the country who are accepting it with reservations, because of the fact that, although similar interest in the same subject was most emphatically voiced six years ago, yet, three years later the present Government came into power and, although it has since been administering the affairs of this country and has had opportunity to give attention to this matter and effect a remedy, the cost of living has not decreased. I do not think that the new panacea that it is proposed this year to experiment with, namely, to seek to control ocean freight rates, which follows in the next paragraph of the Speech from the Throne, as the remedy to bring about the desired results, is going to accomplish what is expected.

There have been freight rate wars on land and sea from time to time for many years. The Government of Canada has not yet very