

is a surplus of commodities. Another reason is that there is under-consumption in the Dominion. When you have tens, yes, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people who are suffering as a result of unemployment there is bound to be under-consumption. When you have men and women who are receiving wages of from \$8 to \$12 and \$20 per week, there is bound to be under-consumption of the commodities which are produced. Consequently unemployment is not of a nature with which any municipality can deal. It cannot be dealt with even by a provincial body. It must be dealt with by a federal body. The unemployed of Ottawa will go over to Hull, cross from Ontario into Quebec, looking for work, just as the unemployed in Quebec will cross over into Ontario, for the same reason, but of course they cannot find very much work at the present time. I feel that in dealing with the question of unemployment we have got to get down to fundamentals, and not deal with the question in any superficial way.

It has been stated this afternoon that this unemployment problem is just a passing phase, that it will disappear in two or three months, and that then the problem will no longer be with us. I beg to differ. Only just recently at a conference held in Winnipeg, at which five of the provinces were represented, a resolution was passed stating that unemployment had become a permanent feature in our social system. It is not a passing feature; it is permanent in character, and I say that we are wasting our time dealing with more or less superficial questions when we should be dealing with pressing economic problems.

I should like to refer to a little item in the press, particularly for the benefit of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, as it refers to the city of Prince Albert, with which I am sure he is acquainted. Hon. gentlemen will see from this despatch from Prince Albert, dated December 19, 1929, that the unemployment situation is not simply of a local character. It says:

Inquiry at the jail revealed that the institution has had its elasticity tested to the limit in recent weeks. Up until recently there were some 165 male inmates and no cells available, and since then the accommodation has been stretched to provide for an additional 60 or so men. The great bulk of the inmates, Warden P. Forsyth declares, are transients who have been "sent up" as vagrants because they had become destitute and could not find employment.

Mr. Forsyth pointed out the utter futility of sentencing these men to fourteen day terms, only to release them at the expiration and have them back again in a short while.

[Mr. Heaps.]

The magistrate then goes on to point out in an interview that he has no alternative to sending these unemployed men to gaol for a term in order that they may be provided with food and shelter. I want to protest in this house as vigorously as I can against sending these men to gaol for no other reason than that they are out of work. It is a crime against society, and I believe it is turning perfectly good citizens into criminals. I know of many a case where the first idea of criminality came to the man who happened to find himself through no fault of his own in those unfortunate surroundings. No government, I care not what party it represents, can attempt to shelve its responsibilities because our penitentiaries and gaols to a very large extent are maintained out of funds granted by the federal parliament.

The other authority cited on the question of prosperity was the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I venture to assert, Mr. Speaker, that when the next dividend of that company is declared it will be at the same rate, ten per cent, as it has been in years gone by. In other words, the men who are in the company's employ have to be thrown on to the unemployment market in order that the dividend of ten per cent may be maintained for the shareholders of the corporation. Only recently what do we find? We find that the stock of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was split four for one, and it went up in value as a result. That is, the shareholders got a split of four for one, and the men could go broke for nothing. I do not think that betokens a very satisfactory state of affairs in this country. It would be far better in the interests of the Dominion if the shareholders had lower returns and these men had more employment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to deal with the hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Heenan), who unfortunately is absent, I presume, on other business. In the midst of the agitation to get the government to assist those who are out of work the Minister of Labour issued a sort of manifesto defending the action of the government and made certain statements which in his calmer and more reflective moments I think he would not have made. The minister stated that in his opinion—and this has been broadcast—

—there is not the same necessity for calling a national conference with respect to unemployment as there is in the United States. In that country the crash in the stock market destroyed confidence and threatened to result in slackened activities in industry generally.

Now, I do not know whether the Minister of Labour ever read the newspapers published