

because after all, as I said the other day, this house represents the last stronghold of democracy and it will not do for hon. gentlemen opposite simply to cast that question across the floor of the house. I ask this house: What have we done in regard to unemployment except give relief to people in distress, and generally speaking I think that has been done generously. But, sir, as to the underlying causes of unemployment I ask you: In the last five years has this house spent, I was going to say one consecutive hour, on it, other than some desultory speeches, an attempt to solve that problem? What have we done with regard to the high interest burden? Has that question been solved? Is it a question that Canada ought to face? Is it a domestic question? True the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Coote) and one or two others brought it before parliament and it has been discussed in a desultory sort of way, but the problem of the weight of debt and the high, usurious rates of interest in this country has never once gripped the attention of this house though it is one of the underlying domestic problems that is causing much of the distress in this country.

Well, we come to the wheat question. I cannot discuss that in detail, but I think I am at liberty to refer to it in passing. The wheat question was under consideration at an international conference held more than two years ago. Certainly no results came from that conference, except that there was an attempt to stabilize the movement of wheat in the world, which was quickly abandoned by one country, which threw the whole matter out of gear. The one thing that prevented the wheat question from becoming one of the most tragic problems this country had to face last year was the failure of nature to bring some rain in the United States and the Canadian west, and the fact that there were some grasshoppers there. These factors brought about the postponement of the wheat question, but what have we to-day? You, Mr. Speaker, and others in this house who come from the west, know that there is a likelihood of a four hundred million bushel crop in western Canada and a two hundred million bushel carryover. We are setting up a wheat board, that is all very well. Let me pay this tribute to the right hon. Prime Minister: I am in hearty accord with the review of the last four and a half or five years which he gave in the house in such an able manner the other day. But, sir, what of the future? By turning over your problem to a wheat board have you solved the problem? Why, you have not approached a solution. I want to say that in my belief next winter, in all probability, we are going

[Mr. Stevens.]

to be confronted with the worst problem in connection with wheat that we have ever been confronted with. I should not like that to be interpreted as a suggestion that the policy that has been followed for the last four years is wrong. There may be some things that might have been done or some things which should have been left undone, but in the main I think everything was done in the best interests of the country at the time, and the western farmers have benefited. Let me say to my hon. friends from the west, from where I come myself, that this autumn we are going to be faced with one of the most difficult problems that ever confronted this country or any government in this country. So do not let us think we have solved the wheat problem.

What about housing? A bill was introduced last night in that connection. I have not had time fully to study it but I was grievously disappointed when I found that only \$10,000,000 was provided for housing. Does this house realize the situation? For four years we have been spending probably \$60,000,000, \$70,000,000 or a little more in construction and reconstruction. The normal expenditure over a long period of years is about \$300,000,000. Not long ago I ventured the statement—

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not want to interrupt the hon. member but I do not think he should refer to that question. It is before the house in another measure and is not the subject matter of this bill.

Mr. STEVENS: Very well, Mr. Speaker. I will refer briefly, then, to the sweatshops. I have already indicated the abortive nature of the amendments to the criminal code, which were introduced in this house by a minister who damned the bill in its introduction. I have already dealt with vicious trade practices.

In conclusion, sir, I want to say that this parliament—I am speaking of the parliament and not of the government—came into existence five years ago with high expectations. The people trusted it. It has been nurtured throughout largely on dissertations on constitutional law. There has not been a question of importance brought up concerning the domestic affairs of this country in connection with which we have not been confronted with the British North America Act, to such an extent that when you go throughout the country to-day as I do there is scarcely a place where people will not approach you and ask what is meant by the constant resurrection or bringing to the front of the British North America Act. I admit the force of the argument that we must not invade provincial rights; no man has ever heard me advocate