

going to vote; and I believe, furthermore, that that was the thought of the people who sent me here. I have hesitated to mention such a mundane affair as eating hitherto, because our discussions have been of a somewhat exalted nature, concerned with such things as rights and wrongs; but I don't think the question can be long avoided. I hold it true that political independence is based on economic independence. We had a form of political independence in this country for many years. When we lost our economic independence our political independence went too. Should we not learn something from our own history, and make sure that we are not to be faced with a similar situation? The economic independence of our country is in turn dependent on the economic independence of the people who compose it. If a man is not economically independent, what freedom has he? He may vote in a free election for the candidate of his choice every two weeks or every two years; but if he isn't free to eat three times a day, I repeat, what freedom has he? What do I mean by economic independence, you ask? Just this. In a parody of the famous words of Mr. Micawber, annual income \$1,000, annual expenditure \$900 — result freedom. Annual income \$1,000, annual expenditure \$1,100 — result economic servitude. The man in this country who can look his neighbour in the face and tell him what's what is economically free, and if he hasn't got political freedom he'll soon start getting it. People who have money to spend are not afraid to assume their own responsibilities. Let us set our economic house in shape, let us have independent-minded men, and you and I can go home tomorrow. Let us fall short of that attainment and we may wrangle on here till doomsday.

There are those who claim this country is self-supporting, and maybe it is. But I wonder whether they also assert that our economic system is fundamentally sound. When things are going well most of us fail to see the inherent weakness of the very system that is providing the monetary prosperity. Perhaps it is because we are too conservative in our thinking. We are extremely careful how we handle a new idea. Get too many new ideas and someone might call you a radical, or even a socialist, or perhaps something even more wicked and staggering. Better to leave

things as they are than risk that. I suppose that is why we are still cranking the old Model T economic system that Cabot left us when he went back to claim his ten pounds. It's archaic. It's an anachronism. It's almost medieval. Certainly our economic setup has all the earmarks of the old feudal system, with its lords and vassals. Perhaps in our case the villains are the lords.

The war, which uprooted so many things, has failed to dislodge it. True, it increased the booty as far as we are concerned, but it did nothing to change the rules. Our economic system has not changed its fundamental character, except in spots, over the past 14 years. It hasn't changed in 400 years. And bearing in mind always the extent to which we are dependent on changing conditions in the outside world, the fact remains that our economic setup is not conducive to individual freedom. And I hope, Mr. Chairman, that in putting it so mildly I have not obscured the fact. If you want something specific to argue about take our credit system, our barter trade, our individual control of credit, with all their attendant evils and inconvenience both to business and the individuals. Sentiment is a grand thing, particularly on holidays and Sundays. But in our workaday world we must be guided by hard practical considerations and for us at the moment that means economic considerations.

I come from a district that is a bit remote from the centre of things, far removed from the political arena. But we are concerned about the future of this country, and desperately anxious to do the right thing. I have received letters from constituents expressing the hope that this Convention would produce the information necessary, and not presently available to them, to enable them to make a wise decision. We want all the facts, economic and otherwise. And we want the widest possible freedom of choice. We would resent any attempt to limit the choice of this freely elected assembly.

To return to the importance of economic considerations, and taking one case in point. Yesterday I gave notice of a question about public health. I am particularly interested in the subject because I work with an outfit<sup>1</sup> that is up to its neck in a fight against such things as TB and beri-beri. Beri-beri, is a by-product of malnutrition, a prevalent disease in certain parts of this country

<sup>1</sup>The International Grenfell Association.