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"A few days ago Mr. Bennett put forward the bright idea of summoning a special session of Parliament to deal with the problem. He is strong on special sessions. Last spring he and his party were prepared to keep the Canadian Parliament in continuous session to await the adoption of the new United States tariff in order to give a red-blooded reply. Had they had their way the world would have been treated to the spectacle of the

Parliament of Canada sitting all through the spring, all through the summer, all through the fall, all through the winter, all through another spring, and in fact sitting yet, watching and waiting for the egg to hatch.

What Has He to Offer?

"As to the present proposal, it is easy to test its worth and its sincerity. What constructive and practicable policy has Mr. Bennett proposed for such a session of Parliament to consider? None. What policy did he propose during the session of Parliament just ended, and which was just as good a session as any other? None. Would it be the policy of his first lieutenant and party manager, General McRae, who only a year ago, with his Leader's approval, urged Parliament to adopt a fantastic policy of bringing 300,000 additional immigrants to Western Canada? What would be the position in the West today if that policy had been adopted?

"Only two months ago there was a prolonged debate, a six-day debate, in the House of Commons on unemployment, arising out of a motion by a Labor member. What constructive policy did Mr. Bennett have to advance on that occasion? Surely, had he been genuinely convinced of the existence of an overwhelming emergency and convinced that he held the key to its solution, he would have taken advantage of that debate to expound it to the House. Would you believe it, that the Leader who now wants to call a special session today with unemployment did not, two short months ago, think it necessary to contribute a single word to that debate?

"But what of his colleagues? What practical ideas had they to advance? They rang the changes on two proposals: first, that the Dominion should make unemployment grants to the Provinces, which had not, and have not yet, asked for such aid; and, second, that we should adopt a policy of protection, protection as they have it in those protectionist paradises, the United States and Australia; where it has not averted an unemployment problem immensely more serious than our own."

Five-Cent-Speech Issue.

On the much-discussed five-cent-speech issue, the Premier said:

"Mr. Ferguson says: 'I am prepared to take the platform and use all the power of my Government against this man, all on account of a five-cent piece,' declared the Prime Minister in referring to this new phase of his speech. He asked his audience to listen to the figures which he was about to quote, and then 'ask yourself if a five-cent piece is a ground for a quarrel between Governments.'"

Since the present Government had come into power, continued the Prime Minister, it had paid to the Province of Ontario in subsidies the sum of \$21,140,893; for highways, \$4,550,945; for agricultural instruction, \$590,304; for technical education, \$2,400,024; for employment offices, \$519,411; for unemployment relief (labor), \$565,466; for eradication of disease, \$336,939, and for old-age pensions, \$1,127,844. This was a total of \$31,231,805. Added to this might be sums which were given in the form of war pensions, unemployment relief from the Department of Pensions and National Health, and war pensions, all to individuals in Ontario, a further sum of \$98,865,940. When added together these two totals made the large sum of \$130,084,518.

Mr. Ferguson knew, declared Mr. King, that these sums had been paid to the Province of Ontario by the Federal Government, and yet, because of a five-cent piece, he was prepared to throw the full weight of his Government into the campaign against the Government which had paid these sums to Ontario.

Unemployment Discussion.

Then Mr. King described to his audience the circumstances under which, he said, he had made the five-cent reference in the House of Commons. There had been a lengthy discussion on unemployment, with respect to which "I knew very well what political ends were to be served," and in the course of that discussion he had endeavored to make it clear to the House that, if the Provinces came and asked for aid from the Dominion Government to meet unemployment conditions, careful consideration would be given to their requests. He had quoted from Premier Ferguson himself to the effect that Ontario did not require such assistance. His five-cent reference, made, he said, in answer to interruptions, was intended to apply only to conditions as they existed at that time, and had no bearing whatever on the general policy of the Government with respect to unemployment.

He felt that it ill became Premier Ferguson, in view of all the circumstances, to assume the position which had been taken by the Ontario Leader from the public platforms.

Enthusiastic Welcome.

The same spontaneously enthusiastic welcome which was accorded the Prime Minister at Brantford last night on the occasion of his inaugural campaign

speech was tendered him here this evening by the electors of West Peterboro'. A street parade, playing bands, and a gaily decorated assembly hall added to the spirit of the large and triumphant party rally.

Premier King was supported on the platform by Mrs. Turner Skalth, daughter of Senator James Murdock, and President of the Twentieth Century Liberal Club of Toronto; by ex-Mayor J. J. Duffus, the Liberal candidate in the approaching election; by Hon. George N. Gordon, and by Dr. John J. Craig, President of the West Peterboro' Liberal Association, and Chairman of the evening.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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