

then he had some others, I think. I am not sure but I think the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Robb) was out there. At all events, surely he had the new Solicitor General (Mr. McMurray). Did he not take him in in order to get the views of Manitoba? The Solicitor General fresh from the people had just entered the cabinet and was at his disposal, and as well the Minister of Customs (Mr. Bureau), and if all others failed surely the verdict of the Minister of Customs on western Canada would have been accepted. But all of these ministers of his own who spent the summer travelling, whose private cars were to be seen dotting the stations of the western plains—all these ministers could not bring him a report that was any good.

Mr. BOYS: There was the Secretary of State (Mr. Copp) too.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I had forgotten him. The Secretary of State in order to illustrate the practice of joining the cabinet to see the world went out west as well.

Mr. COPP: When was I there?

Mr. MEIGHEN: He was in the West last year as far as Fort William, and the year before all through the West; so he got a bird's eye view one year, and a full view the other, and his opinion should have been of some value.

But I wonder what compliment the Prime Minister paid to the present leader of the Progressive party (Mr. Forke). Upon what principle of reasoning did the Prime Minister conclude that he could get western opinion or Progressive opinion better through the hon. member for Marquette than he could reliably get it through the leader of the Progressive party? The government, headed by the Prime Minister, sends 1,500 miles across the country and brings a private member out of the ranks of another party in order to find out what the views of the people are in order that he may legislate. This is the story we are told. Though the Prime Minister and the hon. member for Marquette may have very little confidence in the judgment of the Canadian people, I must frankly admit they seem to have infinite confidence in their credulity.

How often is this performance to be repeated? Does the hon. gentleman ever think of the effect of these performances upon the country? Last year, for example, we had a promise of stability. Two or three years before we had a promise of battering at the tariff till it was down, and hon. gentlemen

[Mr. Meighen.]

to my left were thereby lured to the side, though not altogether within the ranks of the government party. But all these fine promises of 1919, 1920 and 1921 went by the board in 1923, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) announced that the assault was over and that stability was now the order of the day. Where is stability in the light of the present Speech from the Throne? Stability goes just where tariff destruction went. How long it will be gone it is not for me to prophesy, but I venture to say that the period of the submersion of stability will be just about as brief as the period of the submersion of the other policies which this government has from time to time announced, and from time to time abandoned.

The government comes now and brings in a Speech from the Throne. It is lengthy; it is the longest that I can recall, but, I think, in so far as the submission of material for the consideration of parliament goes, it is the most attenuated and aenemic in the history of our parliament. I would like hon. gentlemen to be good enough just to carefully analyze this Speech from the Throne. In the first place, shining out of every line, it is an electioneering document. It does not partake of the characteristics traditional in a Speech from the Throne. A Speech from the Throne by custom may contain some general observations on the state of the country, on the state of inter-empire affairs, but primarily it is for the purpose of laying before parliament the government bills for the ensuing session, the government programme, what it is proposed to submit to honourable members of this House and of the Upper House, to the end that we may address our minds to these subjects and determine what stand we shall take upon them.

This is the great purpose of a Speech from the Throne. This Speech contains a few references to microscopic amendments. Something is going to be done to the Government Annuities Act. What it is we are left to conjecture. I do not know what good it does to give us these indefinite words. It does not help us in the least. Something is going to be done to the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. What it is we do not know, but there is going to be an amendment. Then there is going to be an amendment to the Militia Act by which there is no longer going to be this power of requisition of troops in the way it exists now. This is the programme the government proposes, aside from the intimation in the early part of the Speech that a bold adventure is going to be made in the way of reduction of taxation. But in so far as the