

and the seconder last night, it occurred to me that it was fitting that the choice fell upon representatives of the provinces of Manitoba and New Brunswick, for the people of these provinces gave splendid support to the present Government in the last election. However, so far as I know, no such thought happened to be in the minds of those who were responsible for the selection of the honourable gentlemen.

I feel, honourable senators, that much of importance to Canada has occurred since Parliament last met in regular session. The expression of public opinion at the polls resulted in a change in the personnel of the administration. I am sure, though, that there is no feeling of exultation on the part of the Government because of their victory, but rather there is a sincere and sober appreciation of the responsibility of carrying on the public service during the period of depression through which our country, in common with most countries of the world, is at present passing.

I was sorry to hear a remark made the other day, in another place, to the effect that the Right Honourable the Prime Minister's principal objective in calling Parliament together in special session last fall was not to have the unemployment situation dealt with, but rather to have certain changes made in the tariff. I think the right honourable gentleman who made that observation would, on more mature reflection, realize that it was not a statement of fact, for there is no evidence to justify his assertion. But it is a fact, as I am sure all honourable members know, that a year ago the unemployment situation was extremely acute and was becoming worse week by week, and although the administration of that time were importuned by many responsible authorities, including provincial and municipal governments, to take some action with a view to relieving the situation, they did not see fit to act. I have always thought that perhaps one explanation of the then Government's failure to take action in this respect was that they did not have a full appreciation of the difficult conditions existing and the urgent necessity for relief. During the election campaign last summer the present Prime Minister pledged his word to the people that if his party were returned to power he would summon Parliament as early as possible, to deal with the unemployment problem. The people did return his party to power, and as soon thereafter as possible Parliament was convened.

Proposals were then made for authorizing the Government to assist provinces and municipalities in their endeavours to give

employment to our citizens who were out of work. The task of drafting a plan for the achievement of the best results was a most difficult one. While it was intended that all who were entitled to relief should get it, it was necessary to provide that there should be no abuse in the administration of any plan that might be decided upon. Basic principles were laid down and submitted to the Governor in Council, who after careful consideration approved them. It was recognized that it is the constitutional obligation of the municipalities throughout Canada to care for their indigent and needy citizens, but if any municipality was unable to carry out its obligations in this respect, because of the unusual conditions, then, as the municipality was created by the province, the Provincial Government should be appealed to for aid. Never has it been considered that the Federal Government are constitutionally obligated to participate in unemployment relief, although they did so participate after the war, in the winter of 1920-21, and the practice was continued, to a lesser extent, so long as the necessity seemed to continue, by the Government that came into power at the end of 1921. But in 1930 the unemployment situation was acute, not only in Canada but in many other countries. It must be apparent to anyone who has considered the question that a serious unemployment situation existed in countries that had a high tariff as well as in those whose duties were low.

Certain regulations for the relief of the situation in Canada having been approved by the Governor in Council, the Government of every province was immediately invited to send representatives to Ottawa for the negotiation of an agreement for the purpose of co-operating in the carrying out of the plan that was decided upon, the principle being that the Federal Government should assist the provinces and municipalities, but in no way supersede them in their respective jurisdictions and obligations.

Between the 1st and the 22nd of October last agreements were negotiated with all the provincial governments, and signed. In principle they were the same throughout, though some contained very minor alterations to meet local necessities, because, as you know, conditions vary somewhat in different parts of Canada, and it was the intention that the regulations and agreements should be elastic enough to permit common sense to prevail in every community rather than that iron clad rules should govern.

It was provided that certain sums of money, out of the \$20,000,000 voted by Parliament, should be equitably distributed, as far