

*The Address*

that offense, went on and sought to curry the favour of his electors by pledging himself to remove the Chairman of that Board. I have not observed in the Speech from the Throne, nor have I observed in any of his post-election utterances a reference to that subject. However things are done sometimes that are not in the Speech from the Throne, and now that the member for Regina (Mr. Motherwell) has fulfilled one, only one, of the pledges he made, namely, the pledge to be Minister of Agriculture, the House will look to see what progress he makes in the fulfilment of the others. Yes, we must have a reduction of freight rates. The Railway Board has the subject before it now, and has heard the evidence. If hon. gentlemen feel that the Board is not doing its duty, that it is not discharging the sacred and most vital trust reposed in it by this Parliament, ratified and confirmed by the verdict of this country, then it is the duty of the Administration to act with reference to the Railway Board. The Government say that they have brought the heads of the two railway systems together. Mighty achievement! Have they not been together every week, every month for years gone by, conferring over this subject and that? Railway rates were reduced last fall. In the latter part of the summer the rates on some basic commodities were substantially reduced. Later on a general 10 per cent. reduction took effect. But since the present Government has come in, since the late Government went out, there has been nothing but advertisement on the subject. So far nothing has been done.

What is the composition of this Administration? We are told it is a Liberal Administration, that there is nothing in the way of compromise in it. All sections, all corners, all elements are of a pure and undefiled Liberalistic type. Well, according not only to the press, but according to hon. members of this House, that is the case through no fault of the Prime Minister (Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King). I know it is in his mind at the present time that he preceded the elections by loud denunciations of coalition. I know that he depicted the extravagances, the evils and the compromises that coalition engendered, and declared time and again that the country was sick of coalition and that he would have nothing to do therewith. Speaking at North Bay on the 1st of December last he stated:

The country is sick unto death of coalition with their log rolling and expensive attempts to satisfy this party and the other.

[Mr. Meighen.]

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: "Hear, hear," say hon. gentlemen behind him. We will wait for the "hear, hear," when we see the other side of the picture as presented by the present leader of the Government. When we come to actions, very often the colour is wholly different than when we are in the realm of promises. That, however, was not the only place. Speaking at Newmarket on the 20th of January—this was after the election—he declared himself as against coalitions; but before, at Saskatoon and in many other points in Western Canada, he warned the Progressives that unless they supported him before the election, they need look for no favours at his hands, nor for any share in the government afterwards.

As for what took place, the country is not yet advised by the leader of the Government. I am not one of those who would argue that it is the duty of the leader of a government, elected as the head of a party, to disclose the invitations, to disclose the negotiations, if you will, he may have had with one of his followers, one elected with him, one supporting him in his campaign, as to admission to his Government. I am aware that I was held responsible for disclosure of even such negotiations as that. I will make no such claim with respect to any leader of a government; it is not proper, it is not right. But when a leader of a government sets about to negotiate with a leader of another party not elected on his platform, not supporting him in his campaign, not one of his own party at all, the leader of a wholly separate group, a wholly separate party, then it has always been the practice and it is the duty of the leader of the Government to make known to Parliament and to the country what those negotiations were, what the offer was, and all the details thereof.

That duty the leader of the Government has not yet performed.

It was possible that he approached the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar), the leader of the Progressive party, and invited him to desert the Progressive forces, to abandon his party as a separate organization and entity, and to come over and join the party of which the Prime Minister is the head. That was one course which he might have adopted. Another course that he might have adopted was to have gone to the leader of the Progressive Party and ask to negotiate on a coalition basis for the joining of their forces and arriving at a