

The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King

declared. He further found the west favourably disposed to the east and to the new government. People are willing to give the Bennett administration a chance, he said. Far from running into free trade sentiment, he had met numerous requests for higher tariffs on different commodities.

"We had no complaints anywhere, either on the prairies or on the coast," the minister emphasized.

Shortly after that the Prime Minister sent New Year's day greetings to the country, the report of which appeared in all the newspapers. I quote from the *Ottawa Citizen* of January 2, 1931:

Mr. Bennett spoke with optimism of the future and expressed his conviction that the clouds of depression were about to disperse.

That was almost two years ago.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens), shortly after sent a message to the *Canadian Gazette* of London, England, under date of January 15, 1931, as follows:

Already the depression has been going on for some fifteen months and would appear to have fairly well spent its force.

Then on March 18, 1931, the former Minister of Labour, Senator G. D. Robertson, in the Senate chamber spoke as follows:

Conditions have gradually improved. The improvement, it is true, has been slow; . . . The substantial improvement in the situation is due not only to the opportunities created by the cooperative action of governments, federal, provincial and municipal, but also to the tariff adjustments made during the special session last fall.

In an interview at Vancouver, as reported in the *Manitoba Free Press* of August 17, 1931, the Minister of Trade and Commerce is again reported as follows:

He expressed the opinion that while high wheat prices were not likely within the next few years, it was probable that in eight or ten months there would be a material recovery in prices.

We know what wheat prices have been ever since.

Turning to unemployment, Mr. Stevens remarked that "while undoubtedly the matter is one of considerable seriousness, I am inclined to the view that undue contemplation of the problem has given it a magnitude beyond what it is in reality."

Again, addressing the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in Montreal on October 22, 1931, the Minister of Trade and Commerce is reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* of October 23, 1931, as follows:

A message of confidence and optimism was brought to a Canadian Manufacturers' Association banquet here to-night by Hon. H. H. Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Prosperity, based on more permanent structures than those which had collapsed in the hectic days of 1928 and 1929, awaited the country in the new epoch which opens next year, he declared.

This is the year at which the new epoch was to open.

The minister was given an eager hearing as he pointed to certain facts and figures to support his conviction that optimism was justified.

Speaking to the electors of Maisonneuve on June 20, 1932, the Minister of Marine (Mr. Duranleau) is reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 21, 1932, as having said:

I predict with great confidence the return of normal times and conditions in Canada, without long delay.

I notice that the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Manion) is waiting for his quotations, but I am going to keep them for a little later on. I shall conclude with the present Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon), in his Labour day message delivered on September 3 of this year. He said:

It is hoped that we have reached the depth of this depression. There are many indications to-day that we are beginning to emerge from it. Not the least among these indications is the spirit of optimism which the recent Imperial economic conference has stimulated in our country. If we will now all put our shoulders to the wheel, there is abundant reason to justify the conviction that prosperity is not far away.

So month by month, for over the year past, we have these predictions by ministers of the crown, of prosperity not being very far away; being in fact, just around the corner; the people told month in and month out, year in and year out that conditions were improving, that they had improved and that prosperity was already here. But, Mr. Speaker, what are the facts and what are the figures with respect to the improvement of conditions? What have they been right along? The situation might be laughable, if it were not so tragic. Take the trade situation as borne out by the figures of the government's own statistical record. Trade in Canada is the best indication of the extent to which conditions have been improving since the present administration came into office. I shall take first the figures for one month, the month of July of the years 1930, 1931 and 1932, respectively. The imports of Canada in those years have been respectively: \$84,000,000; \$48,000,000; \$35,000,000. Take exports, domestic: \$76,000,000; \$49,000,000; \$42,000,000; foreign: \$1,000,000; \$995,000; \$710,000; or a total for the month of July in those different years of \$162,000,000, then a drop to \$99,000,000, and a further drop to