

navigation, of arms, ammunition, implements or munitions of war, military, naval or air stores, or any articles deemed capable of being converted therein or made useful in the production thereof, or provisions or any sort of victual which may be used as food by man or beast.

The dominion government exercised its powers under this legislation in the summer of 1937, when the act was made applicable to Spain. Why should not this act be made applicable to Japan? I hope the government will take an early opportunity to inform us of the reason.

This year the United States took a leading part in the summoning of a pan-American conference at Lima. I ventured to write to the Prime Minister urging that Canada should be represented. He was good enough to reply; let me read the last paragraph of his letter, dated December 3, 1938:

As regards the specific suggestion that Canada should take part in the present conference, I should perhaps point out that Canada is not a member of the conference and, under the present wording of its constitution, is not eligible for membership.

Now Canada is situated on the north American continent. Why should we not participate in such a conference with regard to matters that pertain particularly to American affairs? It seems to me that anything which can be done to promote better feeling on this side of the Atlantic should be done. I should like the government to take an early opportunity to inform us why we should not co-operate with other countries here in the western hemisphere. It may be said that the present constitution of the pan-American conference forbids it, but I think it has been generally understood that a chair awaits Canada as soon as she cares to occupy it.

The speech indicates that the government proposes to continue its present inadequate relief policy. The other day the Prime Minister once more trotted out the British North America Act. It seems to me that act can be classified as an ever-present help in time of trouble. I admit the difficulties under the British North America Act; I recognize that we have been giving grants in aid; but means were found a few years ago to bring in old age pensions, though for years the British North America Act had been quoted as a reason why it was impossible to enact such legislation. That legislation is on the statute book to-day. Why not other legislation? It may be that the Prime Minister will tell us that if we had unemployment insurance it would have to be contributory. At the present time contributory unemployment insurance is out of the question so far as the great mass

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

of the unemployed are concerned. Why should not the federal government act in a matter of this kind? As I heard the Prime Minister's speech I could not but turn to a pamphlet issued immediately after the general election of October 14, 1935, entitled *The Voice of the People*. Here is the message the Prime Minister gave the people of Canada:

In the new era which dawns to-day, the struggle for the rights of the people will, in the realm of economic liberty and security, be carried on as never before. Poverty and adversity, want and misery, are the enemies which Liberalism will seek to banish from our land. They have lain in wait at the gate of every Canadian home during the past five years, and their menacing mien has served to destroy the souls, as well as the minds and bodies, of an ever-increasing number of men, women and children in our land. We take up at once, as our supreme task—

Not the arranging of elaborate functions for their majesties.

—the endeavour to end poverty in the midst of plenty, starvation and unnecessary suffering in a land of abundance, discontent and distress in a country more blessed by Providence than any other on the face of the globe, and to gain for individual lives, and for the nation as a whole, that "health and peace and sweet content" which is the rightful heritage of all.

Brave words; but now all we have is a recital of the difficulties inherent in the British North America Act and more talk about the objection to grants in aid. We had a royal commission appointed, and now we are told that after the commission reports we are to have a dominion conference. I am not sure but that the provincial people must come in on that also. I should like to know whether any province has definitely objected to the government assuming a much larger proportion of the cost of unemployment.

What is the situation to-day? I should like to quote again what was quoted yesterday by the leader of the opposition, from the report of the Canadian Welfare Council:

All in all, since 1930, Canada will have spent by March 31st, 1939, about 900 million dollars on "direct" relief, relief works and projects, —and she has more people dependent on such relief than when she started. She has neither legislation nor comprehensive planning to deal with the problem beyond the jurisdiction of each current fiscal year, and she has a population, in large part dispirited, on the whole uncertain, and yet natural resources, whose per capita ratio is perhaps unsurpassed in any state to-day.

And again:

As to the actual totals with which December opened, it would appear that, when all the facts are totted up, we are not going to be any very encouraging distance from the totals for the same date last year, which the Canadian Welfare Council estimated at 925,000 and which official figures later set at 948,000.