

The Address—Mr. Drew

indeed if there were any fear on the part of those using our lake ships that such a tragedy might occur again. Undoubtedly it will be conducive to the continued use of the many ships which carry visitors to Canada, as well as our own people, to know what steps will be taken following the inquiry to strengthen the various legislative measures which provide protection to travellers.

Perhaps a reason for special precaution in connection with ships which are primarily for summer use is the fact that their crews are not associated with them during the whole year. Without any suggestion that every member of the crew did not completely perform his task, it would seem that some special supervision might be required of ships which start their services in the early part of the summer and continue for only a few months, to ensure that every member of the crew has a knowledge of safety standards and the handling of passengers. In making these remarks, I do not feel that I have transgressed the boundaries which are imposed by the fact that an inquiry is now under way by one of the most eminent jurists of the country.

It is only natural that in the speech from the throne there should be little that is new, because, although this is a new parliament, a session at this time is necessary only because the business of the house had not been finished at the time of dissolution. It will be a pleasing and unusual novelty that nearly all—though certainly not all—the statements in the speech from the throne will receive the support of most members of the house. Those that are new are referred to so briefly and in such general terms that they can be much better discussed when legislation is introduced which will set forth in exact terms what the government has in mind. This is particularly true of the reference to procedure for changing the constitution. I am sure that every hon. member of this house will warmly approve the proposal to consult the provincial governments in regard to the procedure by which amendments to our constitution should be made. There is some suggestion, however, that this consultation will relate only to that part of the procedure which would affect limited fields of provincial jurisdiction. I earnestly hope that there will be consultation with the provincial governments before any proposal is put forward to settle the procedure for the amendment of our constitution.

That constitution is necessarily one and indivisible. In a great many instances the borderline between national and provincial jurisdiction is not too clear. This is perfectly natural. The constitution was framed at a time when many of the most important activities of this country had not even taken form. For this reason many of the appeals

to the privy council have been for the purpose of determining whether a particular subject fell within the national or the provincial field of jurisdiction. This being so, I urge the government not to make an attempt to draw a distinction between a national and a provincial authority in any of those doubtful areas, or, in fact, to take any step which would have the effect of changing our constitution, without first consulting the provincial governments and obtaining their views. Under any federal system the procedure by which amendment to the constitution is to take place, and the determination from time to time of the expanding responsibilities of all governments, are of the utmost importance. It is not so much a question of who has the power or who has the authority; it is a question of how this can best be done. Agreement as to the procedure is of particular importance in Canada because of the special circumstances under which the provinces joined to form one nation.

As the details are not before us, it will be more satisfactory to discuss this subject when the legislation is before us; but once again I urge upon the government the importance of consulting the provincial governments before this parliament is called upon to make any decision which would have the effect of changing our basic constitution. There never was a time when the avoidance of any possible misunderstanding in regard to a matter of this kind was of more importance to the future of this country than it is today.

One subject referred to in the speech from the throne is of paramount importance. There is a brief reference to the currency situation. The real problem is, of course, world trade and the necessity for finding satisfactory means by which the currencies of different countries can be used effectively for the purposes of international trade.

The past week has in many ways been the most eventful since the end of the war. A week ago today the conference between the foreign and finance ministers of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States terminated in Washington. From Tuesday to Friday representatives of forty-eight member countries attended meetings of the international bank and monetary fund. While many subjects were under consideration, it was obvious that the primary subject was the closing of the dollar gap. On Saturday the foreign ministers of the twelve countries in the Atlantic pact took steps to organize the Atlantic pact council. Yesterday Great Britain announced the bold and generally unexpected decision to change the value of the pound for the purposes of international trading from \$4.03 to \$2.80. Each of those events was directly related to the other, and each had