

The Address

termittent periods of unemployment, he has been magnanimous in his conduct. He never had the intention, as was so justly remarked the other day by one of their leaders on a delegation to Ottawa, to belittle any government, but on the contrary to co-operate to the best of his ability in the country's interest. However, in return he expects a legitimate and effective protection from the Government, a legislation which will give him hope of more favourable conditions of employment and compensation. It is with pleasure that I see that this question is under consideration and will be solved by the department to the advantage of all interested.

Justly does the Canadian workman hope, for the present Liberal Administration was born from the popular vote, and knowing its responsibilities, of an incomparable importance in our political history, it will strive for unity, right and justice.

Representing in this House an electoral division for the greater part made up of workmen, and knowing these good people, having witnessed the throbbing of their generous heart under their working blouse, I can vouch that the workman of my county, like others, understands that he has to work with the ultimate end of the greatest possible production in order to establish abundance and competition of products in the world's market. In so doing, he will have been a help to his Government, he will become the recognized artisan of the falling cost of living already but too high, the comforter of human misery.

And we on this side of the House, witnessing such a noble act on the part of the working class, shall continue to believe in the just administrative principles bequeathed by Laurier and which our party has always extolled in its programme and which the people accepted at the last general election, that is: that the individual of whatever art or trade, commerce or profession he may be, is indispensable on this earth; that classes must exist, help one another, love and respect each other in order to re-establish peace in this world and thereby assure the success and the welfare of humanity. This is, Mr. Speaker, the true doctrine; no other exists, to follow or to invent in order to make a people happy.

I admire the reference in the Speech from the Throne, which draws our attention to the fact that in the hard times we are experiencing a wise economy must be sought by all the federal departments if

[Mr. Mercier.]

we wish that Canada, burdened with heavy debts by the different administrations that have followed one another since the year 1911, meet her obligations. Official figures speak more plainly than words and sarcasm. On January the 31st, 1922, our debt amounted to more than two billions of dollars. Our current revenue on January the 31st, 1922, amounted to \$318,489,889.74. The expenses incurred by the late government for the fiscal year ending on March 31st, 1921, required the enormous sum of \$361,118,145.21. We must conclude, taking into account these figures, that the financial position of Canada must be judiciously looked into if we wish to maintain our national credit. It is absolutely necessary to make the best possible use of our revenue; to see that such an important problem as the railways be solved not in the interest of individuals, but in the interest of the whole country; to reduce the expenditure of the various departments to the minimum of their needs; to reclassify the Civil Service, if need be, in order to secure in every case the greatest efficiency and also that every civil servant may prove his actual usefulness by his daily labour. This economy which we are now preaching with a view to restoring our national credit, will show to the citizens of Canada that the hon. Prime Minister and his colleagues are conscious of their responsibility. No doubt, during this much confused period, they may rely on every member of this House who sincerely wishes for the prosperity of this Dominion.

Before I resume my seat, as I cast my eyes upon this House, I realize better now than I did at the beginning of my remarks, that it is composed of three parties. The division of the old Canadian political system into two great parties, Liberals and Conservatives, seems to have disappeared, at least for the present. The Conservative party died away, even in time of victory, and like an autumn leaf, was carried away by the passing breeze of Unionism. Since 1911, the Liberal party alone remained in existence. It remained the party of the people, of the humble and of the mighty, of the poor as well as that of the rich; untouched by the conflict of opinions which has destroyed everything else, it will live to promote the actual interests of the country.

There is a third party, named the Progressive party. At its head and in its ranks there are experienced men who are filled with the best public spirit.