

Then I might add that had hon. gentlemen opposite been prepared to accept some of the suggestions which were made from this side, that conditions would not have been as bad as they are.

Mr. COTNAM: We have had you for ten years.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If my hon. friend will just endeavour to be polite for the time I am speaking, I will thank him very much. I am going to ask you, Mr. Speaker, from now on kindly to have order kept this afternoon. I have not interrupted an hon. gentleman on the other side speaking in the house this year except to ask a question, and I am entitled in speaking on this great question of the tariff and of the Imperial conference, as I intend to do this afternoon, to have a proper hearing from hon. gentlemen opposite and no interruptions.

I was about to say that we on this side had made in the course of the debates in this house several suggestions which had they been accepted by the administration would, I believe, have been of service to the country. But they have not been accepted, and as a consequence expenditures and borrowings have been on a much larger scale than otherwise would have been the case.

I refer, first of all, to the suggestion that was made at the special session, and again at the session of last year, that there should be called immediately a dominion-provincial conference for the purpose of discussing between the dominion and the provinces financial arrangements as they affect both parties; that before the government entered into the policy of making grants in aid, for all kinds of purposes, and to all sorts of amounts, there should be not merely a one-day conference between the Prime Minister and some of his ministers with the premiers or other ministers of the several provinces, but a gathering that would occupy several days and which would go into the whole question of the relation of the dominion to the provinces in the matter of subsidies, in the matter of grants in aid, in the matter of what particular obligations should be shouldered by the provinces with respect to social services and what particular obligations should be shouldered by the dominion. I say that had a conference of that character been held before the Dominion government began to make these vast loans to the provinces and to enter upon increased grants in aid in one direction or another, and to carry out some of the extravagant schemes on which it has embarked, a large saving would have been effected, and, as a conse-

quence of that saving, there would have been less in the way of borrowing and less in the way of taxation necessary at this particular time. May I again say that I hope that such a conference to consider the financial arrangements between the dominion and the provinces may be held at the earliest possible moment. I do not consider the conference held a few days ago, the one-day interview which took place, as at all the kind of conference that could begin to discuss financial relations as outlined from this side of the house at different times in the course of the debate. I do think that now that we have before us in the very resolution which was introduced this afternoon notice of a bill to give further money to the provinces and to allow the ministry again more or less of a free hand in the expenditure of public moneys for relief purposes and the like, there should be an immediate conference held in which it would be possible to set out definitely the limits on each side with respect to what is to be undertaken by the provinces, on the one hand, and by the dominion on the other, and what is to be expected in the way of grants supplementary to those undertakings.

The other suggestion which was made from this side, and which I think has everything to commend it, was that an unemployment relief commission should be appointed to administer federal relief funds, that there should be some body specially charged with the administration of the vast sums being given to the provinces, and in part paid out directly for relief. Two years have gone by in which a great deal of very valuable material might have been gathered to guide this house in subsequent legislation on unemployment, but we have, as I have said repeatedly nothing to show at the present time for the millions that have been expended on relief except the additions to the public debt, and what appears in the way of statistics in the blue books. We have no report from any body indicating wherein some scheme of unemployment insurance would help to meet the situation more effectively. We have had no opinions of experts dealing with this question, which of all the economic questions of the day necessitates expert opinion.

So I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that while world conditions may be responsible to a very considerable extent for what the country has been suffering, the policies of hon. gentlemen opposite, intensifying as they have the adverse effects of world conditions, have made things infinitely worse than otherwise would have been the case.