

*The Address—Mr. Duff*

I was a little amused the other afternoon when the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) suggested that the redistribution which is to take place this session should follow the lines of the redistribution policy of 1912. I think when he made that request he strayed a considerable distance from the paths of intelligence. In 1912 it was unquestionably the policy to make as many safe Conservative seats as possible, and this time I do not doubt, it will be the policy to make as many safe Liberal seats as possible. Whether or not this government is responsive to the needs of the country I do not know, but I do know that the opinion is held that a small group control and largely dominate the business of the country. That is a dangerous tendency. The people are losing heart; they are becoming dissatisfied, and unless confidence can be restored and the spirits of the people brought up to a higher level, the position will become even more dangerous. That was virtually admitted yesterday when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) said that our debt would probably not be paid during the lifetime of the present parliament. That is practically the condition that the individual finds himself in today, except that he is a little worse off, because he has not the taxing power of the country in his own hands. If his business requires new money, he invariably finds that he cannot get it, whereas the government can levy additional taxes to meet the country's requirements. It is the duty of the government, Sir, to see that there is fair play as between the different classes that comprise the people of Canada, a duty which I am afraid in the past has not been faithfully carried out.

Mr. WILLIAM DUFF (Lunenburg): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, and after listening to the number of excellent addresses which have been made on the motion of the hon. member for Colchester (Mr. Putnam), I feel that it is not necessary for me to take up the time of the House at any considerable length. However, I feel it my duty to refer for a few moments to certain matters contained in His Excellency's Speech, as well as to try and answer some of the criticisms made by certain members who have preceded me.

I presume I am in order with the other members of this House in offering, as is usual, my congratulations to the mover of the Address (Mr. Putnam) and the seconder (Mr. Rhéaume). We in Nova Scotia, as was so ably said by the hon. member for Hants (Mr.

[Mr. Kellner.]

Martell) are very proud of the honour the government has done us in selecting one of our number to move the Address. We are proud, Sir, of the hon. member for Colchester, and proud also that he comes from one of the old historic counties of the province of Nova Scotia.

Since the opening of this parliament reference has been made to the deaths of certain members which have taken place since last session. Whilst we all lament the four members who have passed away, I wish particularly to refer for a moment to one who for the last four or five years was a very dear personal friend of mine. It is said that if you sleep with a man you come to know him, and I had the honour and the pleasure during an eight weeks' trip to the West in the year 1920 of coming in close contact with one of the hon. members of this House who passed away during the recess. I feel it my duty at this moment to express my deep sorrow that a personal friend of mine in the person of the Hon. Mr. Kennedy, the late Minister of Railways, is with us no more.

His Excellency in his Speech has given us some very valuable information. The second paragraph says:

It is gratifying to note that in a period of world-wide trade depression following the Great War, Canada has made substantial progress towards recovery.

It is quite true, of course, that conditions in Canada are not as bad as they were a year ago; but still every business man in this country realizes that we are not yet out of the woods by a long way, and it is desirable that there be not only public economy, but private economy by every man, woman and child in Canada if we are ever going to get back on a proper business basis. While conditions are not just exactly what they should be, yet there is hope for this great country. We have great natural resources, and if our people apply themselves and work, not merely six or eight hours a day, but from daylight till dark or as long as there is work to be done, I believe that we shall pull Canada out of the condition in which she finds herself today.

The government seems to be coming in for a great deal of blame for the present conditions. I cannot agree with this statement. It is to be remembered that this government only took office a year ago, and it was faced with certain conditions at that time. I do not blame the conditions altogether upon the late government, but this government was faced with certain conditions, and it is certainly going to take a year or two—in fact, it will take, not decades, but centuries to overcome