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ADDRESS

—DELIVERED BY—

LIEUT.-COLONEL H. A. C. MACHIN, M.P., KENORA

—IN THE—

Ontario Legislature, Tuesday, March 4, 1919, during the debate
on the Address in Reply to the Speech
from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker:

The last time I had the opportunity of speaking in this House was at the session of 1915. I had the privilege of attending the session of 1917 for an hour or so, and in order to make my position absolutely clear and to give a proper interpretation of what I am about to say it will be necessary for me, for a few moments, to refer to that occasion in order that I may not be misunderstood. I am sure the House will bear with me in my endeavour to avoid being misunderstood.

In the session of 1916, during the few hours I was here—I had left my battalion (the 94th), which I was recruiting, drilling and organizing at Port Arthur, to come down to the session because I had learned that the Government at that time had the intention of bringing in some very drastic legislation with reference to the liquor traffic. A good deal of the speech I am about to make to-night I would have made in 1916, but, Sir, I only had a few hours, and a new arrangement, as I understand it, a new system of speaking, had come into vogue, by which the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition start to speak at the beginning of the debate instead of, as formerly, at the closing. So it happened that when, on the afternoon I was here, I endeavoured to give voice to what I had already said in caucus, and which I had informed the Prime Minister I proposed to repeat in this House, I unfortunately was not able to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, and gave way to the Prime Minister, who took the Floor. I had to leave that night for Port Arthur to rejoin my unit, but before doing so, during the evening, I asked the Prime Minister to meet me, and he very kindly did. I told him the legislation then proposed, which has since become law, was to my mind a breach of faith with the people who elected me, and while I was perfectly prepared, as a wartime measure, to see some method of suspension, I was not prepared, in British fairness, to go back on the promises made with a legitimate trade, and wipe them out with a stroke of the pen unless, and, Mr. Speaker, I repeat it here to-night, unless the people of this province desire to see confiscation without compensation. I am not here to-night to defend, nor have I the slightest interest in the liquor traffic, as it was nor as it is, but I have still left in me some sense of common, ordinary justice and fair play, and I say to the Government, to the members of the Legislature, and to the people of the Province that the Conservative party having been elected in 1914 on a definite platform, should at least have compensated the people that they have put out of business. This House will remember that up till the passing of the Ontario Temperance Act, the liquor traffic in this Province was a legitimate trade. They had been encouraged by the