

then in Europe. I think I have only to ask the question to have the answer. No government would have been justified in 1933, when this country was in the depths of the economic depression, in asking parliament to impose new taxation on the people of Canada for national defence. If we had asked the people for any substantial sum of money for this purpose, what an uproar of indignation would have arisen from hon. gentlemen opposite, led by the Prime Minister himself! I have no doubt about that at all. I heard it on many occasions. My mind goes back to the time in 1922—hon. members know that as we get older we tend to become reminiscent; I hope I am not transgressing too much—when Hon. George P. Graham was Minister of Militia; the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power)—my friend from Quebec South, if he will permit me to call him so—was a member of this house and a supporter of the government, and he led a rebellion against the estimates of the militia department of that day. The Conservative party representation in this house at that time endeavoured to help the minister to put his estimates through, and, as I recall it, they were very modest estimates. I remember that the minister had to withdraw his estimates and bring them back greatly reduced in amount. If that was so in 1922 or 1923, when the country was blessed with the beneficent Liberal rule of my right hon. friend, and was returning to prosperity after the war years, what would he have said in 1933 if we had asked for any substantial amount for national defence? The roof would have been the limit.

Mr. STIRLING: It would not have been the limit; there would have been no limit.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): So I am justifying my position with respect to not having asked the people of Canada for any large sum for national defence at that time. I believe, though—I am not sure about this; I have not looked it up—we did make a start in 1934 and 1935 with respect to the establishment of a government munitions plant in the province of Quebec. I remember that that was opposed by the right hon. gentleman, and if my memory serves me aright, immediately on being returned to power he suspended all operations with respect to that well-conceived plan which had been worked out by the Department of National Defence for the purpose of making munitions under the government of this country. I never heard any great criticism of that at the time, but I have heard a substantial amount of criticism since. Of course we are always wiser in the light of after-events.

From 1935 conditions materially changed with respect to the whole question of national defence. Who ever heard of Hitler in 1933? But you heard of him in 1934 or thereabouts, when he was made chancellor of the German reich. From then one thing evolved into another, and the head of the aggressor was raised in Europe. Still I am free to admit that none of us at that time expected that by 1939 we should be plunged into a tragic war. We all stood aghast at what he did to Austria, and when the rape of Czechoslovakia took place I felt sure that a madman was loose in Europe. After Munich—and I am making no criticism of Munich, let that be distinctly understood: if ever a man laboured and struggled to preserve the peace of the world it was the Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain. He deserves the sympathy of every one of us, and history will accord to him a very high place among the statesmen of the British empire. If hon. members are interested in reading about the struggle which he made, may I commend to them a book which I have recently written—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —which I have recently read. I am glad I do not write books. There is a saying—I think it is in the Bible: "Oh, that mine adversary had written a book!" Some people will refer to that very feelingly; perhaps the Prime Minister himself will remember that he wrote a book—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am glad I did.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —which I do not believe many people read to-day. I am bound to tell him that I never read it; I started to, but I could not finish it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is a reflection on my hon. friend himself.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That may be true; I know I am stupid most of the time, but I confess that I never could get interested in the book. However, this is a digression. If any hon. member is interested in following the efforts of Mr. Chamberlain to preserve the peace of Europe and the world I commend to him the book of Sir Neville Henderson, entitled "The Failure of a Mission." It is I think the first record that has been given to the public of the efforts of one of the greatest statesmen we have ever had in England; and because Mr. Chamberlain failed to achieve his purpose is no reason why he should be condemned. May I say further how much I admire him for what he did in the recent past, since this crisis came on, in unselfishly giving up his position at the head of the state when he found he could not command that