

trouble has flowed almost ever since. I could refer to suggestions that have been made by Mr. W. F. O'Connor, K.C., with reference to a declaratory statute. I shall not take the time to do so.

I hold the view that the fathers of confederation intended that Canada should have a strong central government. That view has been weakened by judicial interpretation of the British North America Act. It must not be weakened further. That is my own personal view, and I have not asked any of this galaxy of constitutional lawyers who sit behind me what their views are. I am very strong in the view that the central authority must not be weakened. If anyone doubts the soundness of the view that we must have in Canada strong central governmental powers, let him read the "peace, order and good government" clauses in section 91 and note the use to which these powers have been put in the testing times of war. That is the acid test as to whether we should have a strong central government or not. If we are to consider the Rowell-Sirois report I am in agreement that we should not postpone dealing with it until after the war. But I do suggest to the Prime Minister that because of preoccupation with war measures and war activities it may well be that the government and parliament cannot give to the consideration of the problems arising all the thought and reflection necessary. But in my view that is not a valid reason for postponing its consideration. We may not get as good results as we might under less pressing conditions, but we should not postpone its consideration.

It is stated by the commission, and I believe the Prime Minister has more or less adopted this theory that:

The need for some action designed to enable the people of Canada to throw their whole weight into any great national effort, such as the struggle to which they have committed themselves, and at the same time to ensure the smooth working of the social and educational services necessary for the welfare of the mass of the people, is far greater and far more urgent in time of war and of post-war organization than it is in time of peace.

The commission also declared that it is precisely to these two main objectives that its chief recommendations have been directed; that is to say, the throwing of the weight of the country into a great national effort and consequently ensuring the smooth working of the social and educational services on which the welfare of the people depends.

If it is necessary to implement the report in order to enable the people of Canada to throw their whole weight into the great national effort in which we are engaged, why

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

has the government waited so long? The report was in the hands of the government when parliament met in May. It is now six months since it was tabled, and the whole outline of the recommendations and the suggested new relationship between the dominion and the provinces has been well known and well understood. We had a recess of three months from August. Why was this move to confer not made between August and November, if it was so important and so urgent? I do not know whether the talk of coalition had anything to do with the matter. I ask the Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar) who flew out west the other day for some reason or another.

Mr. CRERAR: May I set my hon. friend's mind at rest immediately—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): My mind is not troubled about anything the minister may do.

Mr. CRERAR: May I say my hon. friend has a totally wrong impression.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am just querying the minister.

Mr. CRERAR: I may tell my hon. friend that any coalition in Manitoba had nothing whatever to do with this question.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Then we have the answer. A cat can look at a king; surely I can look at the Minister of Mines and Resources and ask him a question.

It will be exactly eight months from the time the report was tabled until it is to be considered at this conference. One of the leading recommendations of the commission is with respect to the reallocation of taxing power. This is of great and direct interest to industry and to every part of the community upon which the burden of taxation falls. Portions of the recommendations of the commission go some distance in an effort to meet the submissions on taxation made by various semi-public bodies, and it is felt that the implementing of these recommendations will contribute greatly to the financial strength and stability of the country, because it is believed that it will

(a) reduce substantially the cost of tax collection;

(b) remove causes of friction between the ten existing taxing authorities;

(c) and enable business to expand, with relative increase in national income.

To these I should like to add this hope, that

(d) there is a strong possibility that their implementation will reduce in some degree the burden of taxation itself.