

enable us to pay for our own folly instead of shouldering the burden on our children's children.

This is not a mere personal matter with me, although I feel strongly on it. Only a few days ago there was sent to me through the mails by the Secretary of the Farmers' Union of Canada a resolution which, after enumerating some of the evils of the last war, declares:

Be it resolved that we urge on our representatives in parliament to take action to ensure that Canada lead the world now by being the first country in the world to adopt complete disarmament; and with that end in view;

1. That our standing army, our navy and militia be abolished.

(2) That all cadet training in schools be discontinued and that appropriations thus saved be expended in helping to provide;

(1) Adequate pensions to disabled war veterans.

(2) A system of state insurance against financial difficulties incident to sickness, old age, and death, including a pension to all indigent widows and orphans and pensions to all aged people in want, so that, on reaching the age of sixty-five years, every man and woman in Canada would be in receipt of a dollar a day for life.

Personally I have hardly the courage to suggest that every one should receive that much, and yet it would take an infinitesimal part of our annual revenue. Instead, not only do we go on year after year paying 50 per cent of our revenue towards the cost of the last war, but apparently we are actually entering into certain obligations that may precipitate another conflict.

Before closing let me make this observation. During the war social legislation was very largely suspended or postponed. Between 1921 and 1925 the government did comparatively little in this direction. In 1925 I remember distinctly charging the government with having done practically nothing for labour—at any rate, nothing of a constructive character during the preceding four years. Last year they made a good beginning in introducing old age pensions and other measures that would have helped a large proportion of the ordinary people of the country. But it is only a beginning. Social legislation is sadly in arrears. I submit that at present the government has a wonderful opportunity; it has not only a majority of its own followers, but it has in this quarter of the House members belonging to other groups who are prepared to support it if it goes forward with a progressive policy. I might, however, utter a word of warning. I want to state very frankly that if the government fails to carry out a constructive program then the government will soon find that the people of

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

Canada did not put them into power in order merely to hold office, but rather to get things done. The west at least, and I think, the country at large, expects action. So far as we in this corner of the House are concerned, we shall do our utmost to co-operate in pressing forward such action.

Mr. WILLIAM GORDON ERNST (Queens-Lunenburg): Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself with the hon. members who have preceded me in conveying my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your re-election to the office of Speaker; also to the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, and to His Excellency the Governor General and Viscountess Willingdon upon the appointment of Lord Willingdon as Governor General of this Dominion. From a purely personal standpoint I also wish to convey to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) my congratulations on his appointment as a minister of the crown. I happened to be associated with him and to serve under him, in an enterprise perhaps more hazardous than the present one; I have been associated with him in civilian life as well, and I only hope that he will continue to fill his office with distinction until the next general election.

As the first Nova Scotian to speak, Mr. Speaker, I feel it my duty to convey to this House the keen sense of personal loss which we all feel on the death of the late member for Antigonish-Guysborough, Mr. J. C. Douglas. We appreciated the kind and sympathetic words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Guthrie), but perhaps we knew him best, and we feel his loss most keenly. I need only say that his passing leaves a genuine sorrow in thousands of Nova Scotian hearts.

My main purpose in arising this evening is to draw to the attention of the House what I believe to be one of the most momentous documents tabled here since confederation; I refer to the report of the Duncan commission upon maritime rights. Before I pass to that, however, I want to say just one or two words with reference to another matter mentioned in the speech from the throne; I refer now to the Imperial conference. I do not profess to be a great constitutional lawyer, but if I am not mistaken, when that conference convened there were gathered around the council table representatives of one sovereign country and of six dominions. In international law at least the attributes of sovereignty and those appertaining to a dominion are decidedly different; for instance, the sovereign country alone can make peace