

opening of the session, and the proposed amendment thereto of Mr. Hoey, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Shaw, resumed from Wednesday, February 7.

Mr. JAMES J. HUGHES (King's, P.E.I.): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne which was read by His Excellency contains an outline of the legislation which the government intend to introduce and pass during the present session, and the debate on the Address in reply gives hon. members an opportunity of presenting their views on this proposed legislation and on any other matters which they think should be brought to the attention of the government. The debate should therefore serve a useful purpose. The members, being fresh from their constituencies, should have first-hand knowledge of the needs and requirements of the nation as a whole, but should have as well the latest views of their constituents upon the public questions of the day.

One paragraph in the Speech from the Throne reads as follows:

During the course of the session your attention will be invited to other agreements of an international character and significance, and to other matters requiring legislation.

This is pretty broad, and may contain many things. But it is more in connection with the specific legislation promised that I intend to speak. Several important subjects are engaging the attention of the people of Canada at the present time, but I shall refer to only three. The first of these, as I group them, is the financial question, or the question of ways and means, which since the war has been brought home to every taxpayer and to every householder in Canada in the most direct and impressive manner possible. But, as another and perhaps a better opportunity for discussing this important subject will occur later, when the budget will be delivered, I will reserve any further remarks until then.

The next question to which I will allude is our social and industrial unrest, and in which, of course, is included the labour problem; and the third, is the question of transportation in which is involved the great railway problem with all its far reaching consequences and influence on every phase of our national life. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to present my views on the second subject to which I have alluded. While there is comparative industrial rest in Canada at the present time we have had our labour troubles and we may have them in the future; and it may well be that even during this session some legislation on this subject will be intro-

duced, so that the remarks which I now make may perhaps be in order.

In the early days of society all or nearly all things were held in common. Then, as the race increased and multiplied and spread out over the earth new conditions arose. The old patriarchal order of society gave way to a new form of autocratic government. It was no longer the father but the king who ruled. Still further and further went the divisions and sub-divisions of society, until the last vestiges of the feudal system, with all its vices and virtues, disappeared until now in all communities called enlightened democracy in some form holds the balance of power. With the passing of the feudal system came greater freedom of opportunity, and fuller reward for labour to the mass of workers; but no one was now responsible for the welfare of the employed or the unskilful. Even the skilled labourer found himself unable to cope with the power of the successful commercial or industrial leader, who was often assisted by some direct or indirect privilege denied to the mass of his fellows, so that the last state of labour became worse than the first. From out of this oppressed and almost hopeless condition grew the organizations which have since spread over all the world, known as labour unions. Animated at first by a desire to secure justice, and reasonable opportunities and rewards for manual workers, the movement spread, and by force of circumstances, became militant in nature. The status of labour was tremendously improved in consequence, and its organization was perfected. But over-organization often defeats its own well-meant purposes by destroying individual freedom of thought and action. As soon as unionism approached this stage of its existence, it became less concerned with the welfare of the unemployed and more concerned with the maintenance of its own place and power. The age of the professional labour agitator and the professional labour boss had arrived, and a new tyranny was born, more relentless and more destructive than anything that preceded it, as witness the horrible butchery at Herrin, Ill., some months ago, and the terrible upheaval in Russia.

Few, indeed, could be more sympathetic than I with every honourable and lawful effort that labour could make to improve its own condition, and conditions generally, but at the same time few would be more resolute than I in opposing its unlawful aims and aspirations, or in preventing it from imposing the decrees of its sometimes badly-informed