

That is no doubt the case. But if honourable members will allow me to make a personal digression for a moment, may I tell them that I have been a resident of the province of Quebec for now nearly thirty years and I can truthfully say that at no time during that period have I ever felt that I was a member of a minority existing there merely upon sufferance or the forbearance of the majority. As the honourable gentleman who leads on this side of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) has said, I think, on several occasions when he has so ably represented this country at the sessions of the League of Nations at Geneva, we have solved our minority problems in Canada and in the province of Quebec. We have none of those difficult, dangerous and sometimes tragic problems of racial minorities which afflict and embitter the political life of more than one of the countries of Europe. I think we may be said to have solved our minority questions on the basis of mutual respect. We respect one another in the province of Quebec; and from respect it is a very short step to sympathy and understanding. It is true, honourable members, that I am one of the representatives here of the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec, but one of the very last things that I expect ever to have to do in this Chamber is to protest against any infringement of the rights of that minority.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. HUGESSEN: Now, honourable members, may I be permitted to advert for a few moments to certain features of the gracious Speech from the Throne. It is extremely satisfactory to know that the external trade of the country is improving, and it is particularly gratifying to learn that negotiations with Great Britain for a new trade treaty are on the point of completion. I think it is generally admitted that in an increase in the international trade of this country we shall find an answer to most of the difficult problems which now confront us: the problem of unemployment, the problem of deficits in the Canadian National Railways, the problem of national indebtedness.

Unemployment, unfortunately, is still with us in considerable degree, particularly in some of our larger cities, but that problem is being rapidly brought into focus, and, if I may so term it, broken down into its constituent parts by the extremely efficient and good work that is being done by the National Employment Commission.

If I might make so bold as to offer a suggestion to the Government, it seems to me that from the experience of other countries it is clear that one of the best methods of further reducing unemployment would be to encourage building activities, particularly the building of houses. A good start has been made in that respect by the home improvement plan which has been brought into effect by the National Employment Commission, but something more still can be done, I think, along those lines. It would seem that the building industry is one which, with its collateral branches, employs, and is capable of employing, a very large number of additional men, and it is not one of those industries which are susceptible of being too much subjected to the competition between the machine and the man. You have to employ men in your building industries, and you cannot substitute the machine, as you can in certain other industries.

The gracious Speech refers to foreign affairs in these terms:

The international situation continues to give much ground for anxiety.

That immediately brings up the question of what part this country should play on the international field. We hear two rather extreme opinions expressed on that subject. The first is what one might call the isolationist point of view. The supporters of it express the belief that, apart from any obligations that we may have as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations or as a member of the League of Nations, we should cut ourselves off entirely from any external affairs, live to ourselves alone; and at the other extreme you have the point of view of the ardent Imperialist who tells us that as a member of the British Empire we are bound to be directly affected by anything which happens throughout the world.

I submit there are objections to both those extremes. Take first the Imperialist point of view. I do not think it will be denied that public opinion in this country would never sanction the idea that Canada should intervene with armed forces in any dispute, however trivial or however far removed from this country, merely because another part of the Empire was involved in that dispute. But objection applies also, it seems to me, to the isolationist point of view. Let us suppose that Great Britain were at war with some other major power. I do not think for a moment that public opinion in this country would ever tolerate a state of affairs in which we not merely kept out of the conflict, but