

if we deduct the 150,000, you have still nearly 400,000 out of employment, whereas my right hon. friend says that the measures that they were introducing, if effective, should bring the numbers down below 177,000. It would be insulting the intelligence of the Canadian people if one were to try to argue the question whether or not conditions have been improved. Everyone in this country knows what the conditions are, and the situation is not made easier or pleasanter for anyone by words of the kind I have read being put upon the lips of His Excellency the Governor General in the speech from the throne.

There are just two other matters to which I wish to refer, and then I shall conclude. Reference is made in the speech from the throne to the St. Lawrence waterway. It reads:

Since the last session of parliament my ministers have commenced negotiations with the government of the United States of America for the completion of the St. Lawrence waterway.

That paragraph in the speech from the throne may mean very much or it may mean very little. We shall have to wait until the government makes a pronouncement to ascertain what it does mean. I just wish to draw the attention of the house to what it says:

Since the last session of parliament my ministers have commenced negotiations.

That is as far as it goes. It does not say that anything has been accomplished. It simply says that the ministers have commenced negotiations—and uses the words—“for the completion of the St. Lawrence waterway.” This would indicate that the waterway had been considerably constructed already, and that what the government is about to do is to complete the whole construction. The significant words, however, are that negotiations have been commenced. The other day I asked my right hon. friend if any communications had passed between Ottawa and Washington, and he said no. I asked if any order in council of any kind had been passed, and he said there was none. If that be the position of affairs, we may conclude that negotiations have not gone very far; that so far what has taken place have been conversations between the Canadian minister at Washington and the United States minister here, or between the respective ministers and the governments of the two countries, and that those conversations have undoubtedly brought to the attention of the administrations the many factors that have to be considered. But so far, the information which the government has

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

given to us on the subject amounts to no more than that there have been conversations. The St. Lawrence waterway stands very much where it was when we went out of office, with the exception of the conversations.

There is one thing which I should like to ask my right hon. friend, and it is this: I attach to it great importance. If, as we are led to believe, not so much by the speech as by what has appeared in the press recently, the negotiations are looking to a treaty at an early date between the United States and Canada, will he undertake to see that the house is apprised of the proposed terms of the treaty before any treaty is formally entered into between the United States and Canada on the St. Lawrence waterway. I think I am justified not merely in making the request that he should agree to that, but in saying that such is the policy which ought to govern in a great transaction of that kind. It will serve no useful end, either to the project itself or to good relations between this country and the United States to have before the fullest discussion a treaty brought into the house that has been signed by the administration of the day and the House of Commons told that that treaty must be passed or that we shall be defaulting in our international relations. In a matter as momentous as this, the House of Commons should be given all the information that can possibly be given as to the terms of a proposed treaty before the treaty itself is signed. I think the government should be authorized by resolution of the House of Commons to sign a treaty on lines to be indicated before any signature should be permitted to be placed to it. That was the position which the Liberal party, when we were in office, took with respect to this very matter of the St. Lawrence waterway, namely, that before the house was committed to any treaty, we would see that a resolution of the house would pass authorizing the administration of the day to sign a treaty. I say to my right hon. friend that the people of Canada will expect that much will be the course which he and his government will adopt.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Was that the course the right hon. gentleman adopted in connection with the last treaty he made with the United States?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is the course the Liberal government said it would adopt in regard to a treaty respecting the St. Lawrence waterway, should one be entered into.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Did the right hon. gentleman adopt that course in connection with the last treaty he made with the United States?