

I think I have already indicated where part of the policy there outlined has come from. May I indicate where the rest of it has come from? Here, as elsewhere, I wish to cite a part of Liberal policy which is not being put forward to-day for the first time on the eve of an election but which has been our policy from the start. It is the policy which I advocated years ago and at the first session of this parliament and which I have advocated every session since, as hon. members well know. What is the first item which appears in the published statement of Liberal policy?

Unemployment of First Concern

The Liberal party believes unemployment is Canada's most urgent national problem. It would deal with the present emergency conditions through a representative national commission, which would cooperate with the provinces and municipalities in the administration of unemployment relief, and in an endeavour to provide work for the unemployed.

That is a step which, if it had been taken at the time, or if it had been taken in any year up to the present, would have served to coordinate all the efforts that are being put forth by the dominion, the provinces and the municipalities to provide work for the unemployed. It would have saved a waste of millions of dollars and would have helped relieve the situation to a degree to which it has not begun to be relieved. The Prime Minister has no constructive plan of that character even yet, and he has not put anything of that kind in the speech from the throne. Again I say to him that if he wants to deal with this problem as it should be dealt with, he should have a representative national commission to deal with this matter. What else might have been done? What did I point out at the time I was advocating this step? I pointed out that such a commission could, amongst other of its duties, gather the necessary data on which to base an unemployment insurance scheme. Had this step been taken we would have known ere this who were the men and women best qualified to hold positions in connection with any national commission dealing with these questions.

What else is set forth in this statement of Liberal policy?

As permanent measures the Liberal party is pledged to introduce policies which will serve to provide employment by reviving industry and trade; and to introduce a national system of unemployment insurance.

Does the Prime Minister claim that this is his policy, a national system of unemployment insurance? We have been advocating it since 1930. Why have we had to wait until 1935 to have it even mentioned that it is to be part of the policy of the Prime Minister?

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Now let me come to the next matter mentioned in the speech:

My ministers are now engaged upon a survey of the national debt structure to determine what action may be practicable and advisable to effect further improvement in it.

Where did the Prime Minister get that? I read here, from the same statement of the position of the Liberal party on some immediate problems, the following:

The Liberal party believes the aim of every government should be the balancing of its budget.

It would seek to effect that end, by retrenchment of public expenditures, by reduction of principal and interest on the public debt, by a reduction in taxation, and by increasing revenues through the encouragement of trade.

It will seek to effect a reduction of the cost of government in Canada by a careful inquiry into federal, provincial and municipal costs.

In all of these matters, as the house will observe, the Liberal statement of policy is a much more comprehensive and extensive statement than anything embodied in the speech from the throne.

Now let us come to the next point in the speech:

It is the policy of my ministers to pursue vigorously every opportunity by which our world trade may be increased.

Where did the Prime Minister get this idea with regard to world trade? I find in the Liberal statement of policy, as given by me in this house in 1933 and as urged from the outset, the following:

The Liberal party believes that trade is the basis of industrial and commercial development, and that Canada needs trade.

It will promote trade with all nations—

That is what the Prime Minister is just now saying here, that the policy of the government is to encourage world trade:

—and negotiate trade agreements with any countries willing to trade with Canada on a reciprocal basis.

This afternoon we had from the Prime Minister a statement telling us that now, at the end of this parliament, just on the eve of an election, his government and the government of the United States are negotiating with regard to a reciprocal trade agreement. For years we have been advocating that some steps should be taken in that direction. Over and over again we have asked the Prime Minister whether any progress was being made in negotiations with respect to a reciprocal agreement between Canada and the United States. I am not so sure that he has got very far even yet. If I caught his statement correctly this afternoon it was to the effect that it would be