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Conservative party which I have the honour to lead in this house for the time being. Compared with the votes which were polled in the country we are few in number, but as I look around and see the earnest young men who sit beside me I realize that what we lack in numbers we make up in quality and in devotion to Canada and to the empire. The results of this election should not be the occasion for tears or beating of the breast. Any party that can poll approximately one and a half million votes in Canada is neither dead nor dying. We must continue to pursue our war efforts and give consideration to the economic problems that confront this dominion, but we should also devote ourselves to the upbuilding of a truly Conservative party, a party which will truly reflect the views of that sober and solemn element in the country which in thought and action is always Conservative. This does not mean that we shall be a static party, but rather a party of orderly progress, holding fast to that which is good in our past, lopping off the mouldered branches of yesterday. Above all the Conservative party will continue to give its unyielding loyalty to the British crown. This is one of the cornerstones of our very existence. I want to express a profound conviction that I hold, that there will always be a Conservative party in Canada. This will be so because of the character and mentality of our people. We are proud to think of the achievements of that party in the past. I do not intend to traverse this situation. Rather should we put forward our voices, rather should we prepare ourselves to be an alternative government at any time. The King's government must go on.

I should like to make a brief reference to the retirement of the gentleman who preceded me in this position. He leaves us with the respect and regret of every one of us. In saying that I feel sure I express the attitude of the members of all parties in this house. Doctor Manion is a great Canadian. During the years he served Canada, in the army, in the government, and in this house, he made a great contribution to his king and country. He is still, comparatively speaking, a young man, and I am confident that he has many years of useful service ahead of him. I should like to add that my own relations with him were most happy. They extended over a period of twenty years or more and I shall always look back with pleasure to my association with him.

I should like to give brief consideration to some of the matters contained in the speech from the throne, other than the reference to our war efforts. I should like to congratulate

[Mr. R. B. Hanson (York-Sunbury).]

the Prime Minister upon being brief for once—or perhaps it is the second time. I was not here last January when the speech was—no doubt—the briefest in the history of Canada. The speech from the throne this session takes second place. I shall not revert to what took place last January, but I can tell him candidly that when I heard the announcement over the radio on January 26, when I was down in the southern part of this hemisphere, I could gladly have assassinated him. However, I do not believe in threshing over old straw, although I have views on that subject. It was an affront to parliament to call members here and then dissolve parliament. It was an affront to the Canadian people. But times are too serious to dwell upon this now and the election has washed out any indictment that may have been preferred against him by reason of what happened on that occasion.

Reference is made in the speech from the throne to unemployment insurance on a national scale, the exact statement being:

—resolutions will be introduced for an amendment to the British North America Act which would empower the parliament of Canada to enact at the present session legislation to establish unemployment insurance on a national scale.

Of course that is absolutely the correct constitutional way to proceed. I am reminded by a smile on the face of the Minister of Justice that on a former occasion another government did not proceed in that way. Well, I really thought at the time that, having regard to the treaty-making power contained in the British North America Act, having regard to the previous legislation and resolutions passed by this parliament with respect to the Geneva labour conventions, we had brought ourselves within the jurisdiction of parliament to enact such legislation. That has been ruled ultra vires. Again I accept the verdict—this time of the courts of the country. Willy-nilly I must. I think that this is the proper course to pursue, the orderly course of amending the constitution in accordance with the powers and the precedents in that regard. But I am wondering, in the first place, if it will be possible at this session of parliament to pass such an address and such resolutions as are requisite and necessary and to have them assented to by the imperial parliament in time to put through important legislation of this kind during the present session. I am also wondering what attitude our friends in the provinces are going to take with respect to this matter. Are we to wait and obtain from them their assent to the important amendments of the constitution which will be necessary, or will they attack the provisions as being an invasion of provincial autonomy?

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I do not know. These are queries which are coming up in my mind with respect to the matter.

Down in the province of New Brunswick we had, until last November, a gentleman who took very strong ground with regard to the invasion of provincial rights by the federal authority. Well, that brushwood has now been cleared away by the election. I warn my right hon. friend the Minister of Justice that there are obstacles left in that direction; however, I say to him, persevere, do not take too seriously the opposition which may come to you from that quarter.

I am one of those who have always thought that we ought to have a strong central government in Canada. I do not care who criticizes me for that opinion. I have found that the more power we gave to the provinces the more money they would spend and the deeper in debt they would put the people of this country. If you want to visualize what the founding fathers of this confederation had in mind, apply to our constitution the acid test of a war-time condition: then you will realize that the basic function of government in Canada is or should be found in the federal legislature.

I doubt very much whether it is possible to enact at this session an unemployment insurance act. If this matter is of the importance which I believe it to be, it seems to me that we have lost five precious years. I would go a little further. I suppose that if in the last twenty years my right hon. friend has promised unemployment insurance legislation once, he has promised it half a dozen times.

An hon. MEMBER: Twenty times—every year.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Well, I will not go that far. For five years I was not here, and I did not pay very much attention to what was going on in this parliament. As a matter of fact I really never anticipated coming back. If I may tell you, Mr. Speaker, a personal secret, I decided to contest this election in order that if possible I might defeat the man who defeated me in 1935. That was one motivating factor; it was not the whole reason—I should not like people to think that I am as narrow and vicious as that. But the fact is that that gentleman eluded me by accepting a high office. I should like to add that we have been on friendly terms for forty years. Once upon a time I had the pleasure and the profit of acting as his confidential solicitor, but when I became a Conservative member of parliament he dropped me like a hot potato. Let me repeat that I should not like the house to believe that the reason I

have given was the only reason I contested this election. I had an idea—if I may be permitted the personal reference—that perhaps I could render service to Canada at this time. I hope I may.

Another matter is referred to in the speech from the throne. There is the very brief announcement:

The report of the royal commission on dominion-provincial relations, which has just been received, will be tabled immediately.

The Prime Minister has made good that statement. I am wondering what is the reaction of this house and the country to that report. I do not suppose that anybody here has read the report, let alone the appendices; but I have studied the recommendations which have been made, and I am impressed by some of them and I am not impressed by others. I alluded a little while ago to the spending proclivities of our provincial governments, especially those of the small provinces. They seem to be oblivious of the fact that there is only one set of taxpayers in Canada paying to both jurisdictions. The suggestion is made in this report that this government shall take over the financing and the servicing of the provincial debts, and that, as the corollary of that, the dominion shall take over certain important sources of income which the provinces now enjoy. Well, I think that if my right hon. friend tries to implement the part of the report dealing with the second matter to which I have alluded, he will have a very great deal of difficulty. My experience, at least from 1930 to 1935—and I say this with great respect to those with whom I dealt—was that the provincial legislatures were willing to take all but to give very little. I suppose that is human nature. But if the government of Canada takes over the servicing of the debts of the provinces, there must be some provision whereby they will not be allowed to go on incurring debt after debt. I do not know what the report has to say in relation to that, but I should like to throw out this warning, that if consideration is to be given to the one constructive suggestion, certainly there is a corollary involved in that principle.

I had intended to say something about the defence of Canada regulations, but the Minister of Justice has forestalled me in nearly everything I had it in mind to say. I have received, as I suppose all members of this house have received, a good many communications and some briefs with respect to the severity of these regulations, and recently, since the war situation has become so acute, I have begun to receive recommendations