

great pageant, it was more; it was a service so deeply moving in all its aspects as to impress men and women with the magnitude of the task undertaken by the king and queen as well as the duties and responsibilities that rest upon their subjects.

But when we have dealt with that we cannot forget that at the same time there met an imperial conference. If one reads the records of that conference as they were presented to us a few days ago it is difficult to understand what it met for. But if one reads the reports in the newspapers he finds a somewhat deeper significance. If the speech of the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mackenzie King) as reported in the press—and not in the proceedings—is to be taken as being of value, he undertook to interpret the will of the chief executive of a foreign country to those who were assembled with him as representing the British commonwealth of nations. I do not pronounce upon the authenticity of those reports; it is not for me to do so, but they appeared at some length in leading journals, and doubtless there was some foundation for their being thus printed.

But there is one thing upon which we can all agree, and that is the pride and satisfaction we feel in the knowledge that the British commonwealth has withstood so many shocks during the year through which we have passed. Menaced as it has been on more fronts than one, it has still stood four-square to all the winds that blow, and we know that whatever else may be said, the greatest assurance we have for the maintenance of our democracy and our institutions lies in the preservation of that commonwealth of nations amongst the peoples of the world. There may be ample opportunity on a later occasion to discuss matters connected with the imperial conference of 1937. I do not propose to enter upon a discussion at this moment with respect to these matters. But it is of course of singular importance to us as well as to the other dominions that for the first time the new sovereign was crowned as king, and his consort as queen, of the overseas dominions by name, as indicated in the speech from the throne. The imperial conference did and does afford an opportunity to discuss problems of common concern to everyone who lives within the commonwealth. That the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Mackenzie) availed himself of that opportunity is not unexpected. Those who have had the pleasure of reading his utterances, such as those delivered in Victoria not long since, will realize the striking effect they had upon his mind.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. BENNETT: Even the minister himself laughs loudly as he recalls the effect upon his mind as indicated by his speeches delivered on those occasions. About that I shall have something to say before I resume my seat, but there is one thing that did not take place at the imperial conference with respect to defence. That was that responsible people should publish in this country the extent of the provision we have made for the defence of Canada. When I read in the press, as I did, a statement that had about it every sign of having been authorized by someone, as to the character and type of the defences we are erecting on Vancouver Island and on the mainland, I wondered if at the imperial conference the minister was told that this might be desirable. Those who are responsible for these publications, to which I shall refer presently, have done a grievous wrong to this country, for they have published to the world the size, calibre and weight of the guns we are to use, and what their prospective range may be. No such thing has ever happened in any country that I know of in the world before, and I do suggest that the Minister of National Defence at least did not learn that rule of strategy at the meetings of the imperial conference.

I should like to say how much I rejoice, as do those who are associated with me, in the gratifying progress of this country during the last twelve months. The upward trend began in 1933. The president of one of our banks pointed out that last year the progress was greater than in any other year excepting the progress in 1934 over 1933. It is desirable to point out, it seems to me, that there has been little departure, by the new administration, from the policies of the government that formerly held office, and that at the end of two years, entering upon the third session, they, in common with other governments of the world, rejoice because of a prosperity which, during the last twelve months, was very great indeed. But it has been interrupted. It will be found that the report of our exports in the months of November and December last shows that they have decreased as compared with November and December of 1936, and it is also well to recall the fact that the favourable trade balance which we had with the United States, amounting to over \$50,000,000, has been altered to an adverse balance on visible commodities amounting to several millions of dollars.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) to some of his utterances in 1929 and 1930. He will recall how, in those days of buoyant trade and expanding revenues he, as