

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

form suggested—is the royal commission which, it is stated, is to be set up. That royal commission is described in the speech from the throne as follows:

It is the view of my ministers, that there should be an examination of the activities of agencies of the federal government relating to radio, films, television, the encouragement of arts and sciences, research, the preservation of our national records, a national library, museums, exhibitions, relations in these fields with international organizations, and activities generally which are designed to enrich our national life, and to increase our own consciousness of our national heritage and knowledge of Canada abroad. For this purpose, the government intends at an early date to establish a royal commission.

**Mr. Rowe:** The Twentieth Century club.

**Mr. Drew:** I would express the hope now, in these first remarks in the debate, that if any such commission is set up—which will certainly be a commission to arouse criticism of all royal commissions, because of the vagueness, uncertainty and lack of any limitation of its scope—there is no thought that the setting up of that commission will be given as a reason for not dealing with any of the subjects mentioned in the terms suggested by this paragraph in the speech from the throne.

Just take as an example the fact that this commission is to deal with television. This afternoon it was suggested that we had progressed in Canada from the early primitive stages to the days of television. I do hope hon. members in the house will realize that in Canada we have not advanced to the stage of television, and that at the present time we are being prevented from reaching that advanced stage by an arbitrary denial of the rights of those people who are prepared to provide television in this country, without the treasury of Canada being committed to the expenditure of one cent for this new service. I should like also to suggest that the full possibilities of this commission be fully recognized before the terms are drafted.

Then it contains the words "the encouragement of arts and sciences". That in itself, without some limitation, would cover a very wide field.

"Research"—that, too, covers the broadest possible field, because it would include research into every conceivable type of activity we now have.

"The preservation of our national records, a national library"—these may well be subjects for consideration by somebody.

"Museums"—well, they are set up by national, provincial and municipal organizations, as well as by private organizations. The limitation on that would be very difficult indeed.

"Exhibitions"—I wonder what the purpose of that could be. Are we going to have inquiries into the conduct of county fairs and

of agricultural exhibitions across the country? Are we to have inquiries into various activities of that kind?

Then, above all, let us imagine the wide possibilities of examining into "activities generally which are designed to enrich our national life." If there is one activity designed to enrich our national life, it is education; and although I recognize that this government constantly forgets it, the fact is that under the constitution the provinces of Canada were given certain designated powers. One of those exclusive powers covered education, which, in my opinion, is the most important way of enriching our national life.

I am not going to go into all the other possibilities. There are much younger members in the House of Commons than I am, but I doubt if any one of them would still be alive, when this commission finally completed its inquiries, if it were to really carry out all the possibilities contained in this paragraph.

**Mr. Rowe:** It would tide them over until after the election.

**Mr. Drew:** That, of course, is the inescapable suggestion when, coincident with the announcement by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) at a friendly gathering on Tuesday night that an election might not be very far away, we have this omnibus reference to a royal commission. I am expressing the hope now that before attempting to do this it will be recognized how absurd the results would be. Also I do hope there will be no suggestion at any time in the present session that the setting up of such a royal commission will limit the discussion here of any subject coming before it, because there are very few subjects which would be discussed here which could not in some way be brought under the wide umbrella of these terms of reference.

I find no positive statement as to the advancement of the national health program. Certainly I had hoped that there would be some positive statement in regard to that subject in view of the fact that at a very late date the dominion government did advance with the early steps of inquiry into the broad basis of the health requirements of this country so that other health programs could be proceeded with. Actually, from beginning to end, this statement by the government of its intentions during the present session is marked by the absence of any positive evidence as to the things that it intends to do, in the field either of health or of social security, in the reduction of taxation or in meeting the very urgent problem of housing that exists in this country at the present time.

There is a very clear and very important omission. There is no reference in the speech from the throne to the possibility of any