

discussed and debated by parliament; and any antecedent discussion of such measures, before they are brought down to the house, is but beating the air and wasting the taxpayers' money. There are times, of course, when large questions may have to be considered in relation to the speech from the throne; this was done, for instance, in the days of the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier and in the days of Sir Robert Borden. But unless the opposition proposes, for some great purpose, to move a vote of want of confidence in the administration—which is not our intention at this moment, inasmuch as amendments are limited, by our practice, to suggestions of what the speech should contain but does not—then indeed no good purpose may be served by such abstract discussions. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, we have no intention at the moment of moving an amendment to this speech from the throne; to do so would necessitate the entire recasting of that document, for if we indicated to the country the matters which should be dealt with but which are not, what would be left of the speech from the throne would be very meagre. There is so little in it. We will rather adopt, as far as we may, the practice which is approved by one writer in Great Britain, who has said that it is usual "to allow the address to pass without a division so that it may be, in point of fact, unanimous in respectful expression of deference when the house has received the first communication of the session from the sovereign to his representatives." That will be our attitude.

But, sir, one must make some few observations with respect to a document of this character. It is to be observed that the keynote of it is rejoicing at prosperity and the improved trade of the country. There is no member of this house who does not rejoice that Providence has given us great crops and that we have had a large measure of prosperity. But this I will say: I challenge my right hon. friend (Mr. Mackenzie King) to point to a single item in all the long record of our trade in which there has been any interference by this government, since it came into power in 1921, which has not brought a measure of disaster to the industry with which it has meddled. And when I say a measure of disaster I mean a lessening, a curtailment of the export business of that industry and an increase in imports of the products it manufactures. Whether you take butter or machinery, sugar or cotton, whether you take the legislation of last session or that of any other session: wherever the government has interfered you will find that there

[Mr. Bennett.]

has been a diminution in the prosperity of that particular industry so far as Canada is concerned. It may be said, with respect to the implement business, that this is not so, because of certain conditions in connection with the expansion of the Canadian industry to the neighbouring republic. But if you will analyse it you will find, in connection with that industry alone, that there was an increase in imports in the last year of \$15,000,000 from the neighbouring republic—imports of agricultural implements alone. In regard to butter, you will find that, before this government began to interfere with our dairy industry, this country was able to export some fifteen million pounds of butter per annum. But our importations during the last twelve months have gone up to sixteen million pounds, so that we are no longer an exporting community so far as this commodity is concerned. And the provincial Minister of Agriculture the other day in Alberta, pointed out that there had been a decrease in dairy herds in that province in the last few years of 60,000 cows. It matters not whether you take agriculture or industry, wherever this government has legislatively interfered it has been to the detriment of either agriculture or industry.

I would remind this government and the country that when we discuss the question of prosperity it is highly important and desirable that we ascertain just what is the basis of this country's prosperity. What is it? Is it its industry? It is not. The basis of Canada's prosperity at this moment is agriculture; whether you like it or not, sir, you will find, if you look at the returns, that the purchasing power of this country is derived from what we are able to sell. The increased purchasing power of Canada is represented in turn by what it is buying; we may buy at home or abroad, but so far as this increased purchasing power is concerned, it arises from what we have been able to sell. Consider for a moment what we have sold, what we are selling, where our purchasing power comes from, and you will observe that it does not come from any action on the part of this administration, nor yet from the acts of man himself; it comes rather from a beneficent Providence that has enabled us to reap very bountiful harvests in the last few years. The sales, for instance, of grain and grain products for the twelve months ending December 31 last amount to \$558,000,000. When you recall that the sales of living animals—diminished though they have been—amounted to 17½ millions; cheese, 25 millions; fish, 35 millions; raw furs, 23 millions; hides and skins, 11½