

*The Address—Mr. Foster*

was the object of it? If I understand it rightly, the object was to impress upon the country the necessity for at least a Deputy Minister of Fisheries apart from the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, possibly looking at the same time to the establishment of a separate ministry in charge of the Canadian fisheries. I shall not offer any comment at the present time on the desirability or otherwise of such a departure, although perhaps it might be a good thing in view of the fact that the industry has been neglected. But the report having been brought down, have we any minister of fisheries apart from the minister in charge of the combined branches of Marine and Fisheries? If we have we do not know anything about it. Rumour has it that a portfolio has been promised the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg (Mr. Duff), but whether it will be the portfolio of Marine and Fisheries or simply Fisheries, or whether another portfolio is to be carved out for the hon. gentleman, this House has not been advised. There is I admit, a good deal of pleasant reading in the report, and some noteworthy facts are brought out; but nothing has been done. Inactivity marks the result of the investigation made by that commission.

A session or two ago also a committee of this House was appointed to look into the coal situation with a view to formulating some sort of national fuel policy. Where is that policy? Was the country advised of it in the last campaign? Has the government in mind at present any solid fundamentals upon which a national fuel policy could be framed? If so, why is it not presented to the House and to the country? Moreover, only a short time ago a royal commission sat in Nova Scotia to examine into the coal industry, and the eminent men composing that commission brought in a report, which I understand both the miners and the company seem disposed to accept. Now, what is the major point in their finding? It is that the coal industry of Nova Scotia cannot possibly exist unless it is granted greater protection. Well, in what position are hon. gentlemen opposite to carry out that finding? Why, they pledge themselves in the Speech from the Throne not to raise the tariff, and they are sustained in office by hon. gentlemen to my left, whose policy is "No increase in the tariff. If any changes are made in the tariff they must be downward."

Mr. HEAPS: Would the hon. gentleman inform the House in what particular paragraph of their report the royal commission he refers to found that increased protection is required for the coal industry of Nova Scotia?

[Mr. Foster.]

An hon. MEMBER: Everybody says that.

Mr. HEAPS: I should like to have the specific passage.

Mr. FOSTER: As usual, my hon. friend from North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) is right technically, because in the report itself increased protection, being regarded as a political question, is not dealt with; but I would refer him to the addendum to that report, which was what I had in mind. I venture to say that both gentlemen who sat on the commission with Mr. Hume Cronyn concurred in his view that increased protection was the only remedy, because, it seems to me, it is only the common sense viewpoint and therefore natural to concur in it. But apart from technicalities, this House as constituted—assuming that the government can continue to command a majority—will not be able to deal with the problem in the only practical manner possible, because as everybody from the Maritime provinces believes who has given the subject consideration, we must have increased protection on our coal and on our iron and steel products. I doubt even if the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) will proclaim himself in opposition to an increased tariff on coal, so far as Nova Scotia is concerned.

Now, let us look at the situation. We are going to appoint another royal commission. Let us assume that that commission brings in a report to the effect that our coal industry can exist only by the imposition of increased protection, whether by way of an ad valorem or a specific duty. In what position is the government to carry out such a finding? Hon. gentlemen to my left are opposed to increased duties. They say that the solution of the coal problem in the Maritime provinces is to be found in a proper adjustment of freight rates. I am perfectly prepared to agree that in a very large sense transportation does enter into the solution. And, Mr. Speaker, after an absence of ten years from the House I am surprised to find that the genius of our people, as represented on both sides of this House, has not yet found a solution for our fuel difficulties, including rates on coal. It is no use for me to say that there is no ability on the other side of the House, Sir. There is ability there—not so much as there was before October 29—let us not be carried away by partisanship and deny that there is any ability among our friends opposite. I repeat, there is ability, but there seems to be lacking that determination to do something to solve any of the great problems that confront this country, particularly the fuel problem.