

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