

*The Address—Mr. Forke*

ment, and nothing can be done in this direction by herding people into large cities. I might go on for quite a while stating just what was the trouble with the countryside, but I may tell you that one of the first things we have to take into consideration is the lack of remuneration. You cannot get people to stay anywhere or undertake any work if they are not going to receive adequate remuneration for their labours. In by-gone years it has not taken the young people in the country districts very long to learn that more remuneration and better conditions were to be found in the cities than in the country, and consequently they have sought them. We cannot blame those people; they did just what was natural, and what others would likely do again. Perhaps every dweller in the rural districts will agree with me in what I am about to say; at least I know it is true of my own particular district, where I am well acquainted. Look over that district and pick out the best homes and the most intelligent people, and in the great majority of cases you will find that the brightest and best of the children have left the countryside and gone to the cities. I am not going to attempt to solve the problem which that state of affairs presents; I am simply pointing out what is a fact, and I should like the government to take notice of it and endeavour to find some remedy.

The government may be congratulated upon the trade treaties which ministers have been able to make while they were abroad. I, sometimes, however, wonder why such efforts should be made to secure treaties for the improvement of our trade when one of this country's policies has always been to erect barriers against international trade. It seems so contradictory. I believe that if artificial restrictions were removed trade would flow freely and naturally, to the advantage of all sections of the country. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Robb) has been over in Australia, and we have learned that he has not been very successful in his endeavours to enter into trade arrangements with the people of that continent. I am rather sorry at this, because as a true Briton I should really like to see as close connection between the countries of the British Empire as it is possible to have. But looking back a few years I cannot help wondering that such desperate efforts should be made to enter into trade treaties with nations far distant after we have ignored the opportunity we had of making a treaty with the nation that lies at our doors. I am not going to be too critical of our ministers going abroad and trying to make treaties,

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but I certainly desire to see closer attention paid to matters at home. We have many home problems that need looking into. We have trade commissioners in these countries abroad, and I hope they are on the job and are trying to do the business they have been sent out upon. We have only one trade commissioner in the United States, resident in New York, and it seems to me that perhaps a little more expansion might be made in that direction.

We had the Prime Minister's assurance that the railways had been co-ordinated and unified. We were glad to learn this. I am sure we heard a great deal last session about co-ordination; we have made advancement, and we find that that has been carried into effect, and I am willing to congratulate the government on that step. A new board has been created with Sir Henry Thornton as chairman. He has made a very good impression on coming to Canada. I noticed that the right hon. leader of the Opposition criticized him a little at the time it was announced he was coming to this country. I have no doubt that Sir Henry is all the better of the little touch-up that he got from the right hon. leader of the Opposition and no doubt will be very careful to carry on his duties in the way he should. However, I think we are all very anxious to see that the new board and the new manager get a good start and be afforded an opportunity to make good the situation. It is far too serious a matter for party politics, and I hope that patronage and every political aspect of the case will be removed far away, that the board will have a free hand, and that public ownership will receive a fair and just trial in the Dominion of Canada at the present time.

Much dissatisfaction has occurred this fall in regard to lake freights. A royal commission has been appointed. I am not very sure just where to apportion the blame, but I know there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in the West that some move was not made a little earlier. It seems just a little like locking the door after the horse has been stolen, and as far as the trade last fall is concerned, no remedy can now be obtained. However, we will hope for better things in the future. The farmers—and I might say all the people in the West, because it is not confined to the agricultural population—were delighted that the Crownsnest pass agreement was brought into effect this fall in the carrying of our grain. I want to be perfectly fair, and I may say that I think the right hon. leader of the Opposition is very sincere when he says his heart is sore for the people and