

wonderful machine that delivers our mails in sunshine or rain, every day, in rural as well as in urban districts, a machine that manages somehow to take care of the great increase in the amount of mail handled during the Christmas rush. And what is the situation in that department? The Post Office Department is operated, not for profit, but for service, though if it can show a surplus so much the better; for a surplus naturally helps the taxpayer, whereas if there is a deficit it has to be paid by the same taxpayer. We have a surplus in the Post Office Department of \$3,735,976.73, the highest on record.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that in sixty-nine years this particular department has shown forty-two deficits as compared with twenty-seven surpluses? It is gratifying, therefore, to know that there is a surplus in the Post Office Department; it undoubtedly indicates more favourable conditions among the people. In the matter of revenue, it is also worthy of note that the great increase has come from our external trade. Our external trade is largely responsible for the improvement; and there is one feature in this connection which must cause a tingle of pride in every Canadian, and that is that Canada, a nation of eleven million people, now occupies fourth position among the exporting countries of the world.

It should also be of interest to the Canadian people that during the past year new trade agreements have been arranged with fifteen different countries, and that negotiations in the direction of liberalizing trade have become almost continuous. I am sure there is nothing that would do more to prevent war and to put an end to the fear of war than fair trade agreements. I hope that the example set by the Department of Trade and Commerce will be emulated by all the nations of the world.

We have in Canada at present a royal commission of inquiry which apparently has been causing a measure of unrest in the minds of some people lest changes which might be proposed would create disharmony between provinces. Undoubtedly their fears are uncalled for. I had the pleasure of attending a little dinner the other day at which were present members of this house from almost every province in the dominion. The impression I gained at that dinner was that if the matter is left with hon. members on this side of the house, harmony and unity will prevail.

Taking the good with the bad I believe this government can face the coming year with great courage and optimism and hopefulness. I doubt whether in the history of

Canada any government ever more fully enjoyed the confidence of the people. This sentiment is clearly felt as one travels here and there throughout the country; one gathers it not from Liberals alone, but from members of different political parties. The people feel an assured confidence that this government is carrying on and will carry on in the best interests of our great dominion. If any proof of that were required we have sufficient in the fact that since this house met last year six vacancies have been filled, five of which were filled by Liberal members. One went to the opposition, but even that was due to the generosity of the government in allowing an acclamation.

I take great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, in seconding the motion of my hon. friend (Mr. Francoeur) for an address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I greatly regret that an accident in transport prevented me from hearing the undoubtedly admirable speech in which this motion was moved. I heard a portion of the address made by the hon. member who seconded the motion, and if the whole speech relied, as much as did the part I heard, upon his imagination, I am quite certain it was an admirable performance.

The speech from the throne might well have been an address prepared before the war; but in these days it is difficult to understand any such document being submitted to a responsible parliament in the British dominions. It leaves such uncertainty in the minds of those who read it; it contains so many provisos, and at times is couched in language so ambiguous, that one cannot be sure whether it was a product of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) when opposing the Committee for Industrial Organization or of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) when supporting it.

With the first paragraph of the speech I think we can all agree. The most important event of last year in our world was the coronation of the king and queen; and that during the past year they have succeeded in so performing a very difficult task as to command the admiration and respect of their own peoples and the esteem and regard of the world is something with which we are all well pleased. It strikes me as a matter of singular importance that a young man and a young woman should have offered their lives as lives of service to the people in the manner in which the king and queen did at the coronation. It has been well said that the spectacle of the coronation was not only a