

1911, who put his finger upon the weak spot of our banking system as regards rural communities and suggested certain broad lines of remedy. I take up the question of rural credits very briefly with some hesitation, because I have under my hand an attempt made by the government of hon. gentlemen opposite in the last session of this House to translate this matter into legislation by Bill No. 237, an act to authorize advances to assist agriculture by providing long term farm loans. I do not intend to discuss that measure other than to point out that if I recollect aright, it was the government leader of the Senate, the Hon. Mr. Dandurand, who refused to allow its consideration in the Senate last session—if anyone may be said to have refused it consideration—and not the Conservative party, as the country was given to understand in the speech of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) a few days ago. If a full cabinet of hon. gentlemen opposite were able to produce such a sample of rural credits as this Bill No. 237, I ask hon. gentlemen to my left: What can they expect from half a government now? Is half greater than the whole? But in this regard I understand the government has abrogated its functions and has passed over to hon. gentlemen to my left the responsibility of framing this very important piece of legislation. If that be so—and I hope it is, for the benefit of the country at least—from my association with hon. gentlemen to my left, I believe I can say this much for them, that they will bring to the consideration of that problem studious care and some ability, because I recognize the fact that there is great ability in that group to the left of hon. members on this side of the House. I shall await with a great deal more pleasure any rural credits bill which may emanate from hon. gentlemen to my left. From this standpoint at least I could not find it possible to have any confidence at all in a rural credits measure that would be the product of half a government in the face of Bill No. 237 the product of a full government sitting in council. I am in favour of rural credits, but I want rural credits for not only the farmer but the fisherman, the fruit grower and the lumberman as well. To get a rural credits bill that will include all those without doing serious damage to the financial structure of this country and without undermining our great industrial institutions, not only close study but great ability will be required of hon. members of this House.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

After Recess

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. FOSTER: When the House rose at six o'clock I was about to direct attention to the following paragraph in the Speech from the Throne:

With a view to affording such remedies as may appear to be practical and appropriate, the government also propose to appoint a royal commission to inquire fully into the claims that the rights of the Maritime provinces in regard to the operation of the Inter-colonial Railway have not been observed, and that in regard to transportation, immigration and other economic factors these provinces have suffered prejudicially, in their position under confederation.

I shall not attempt to deal with all the phases contained in the four corners of that paragraph, but shall content myself on the present occasion with just a few observations generally on what it implies. Reading it, it appeared to me that whoever in the present government, or what is left of the government, was responsible for this particular paragraph in the Speech from the Throne, it certainly could not have been the Minister of National Defence, the member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Macdonald). Had he been in the cabinet, or that portion of the cabinet which was responsible for the Speech, there would have been indeed a lively time, for no one knows better than that hon. gentleman the temper of the people of the Maritime provinces and especially of the province of Nova Scotia. In a very peculiar way, known to this House and to the Maritime provinces, the hon. gentleman had occasion to test the temper of those people on the subject of their grievances under confederation and I am sure he realizes that they will no longer be put off with royal commissions or commissions of any other kind.

We have had a great many commissions, royal and otherwise, one of which a year or two ago investigated the fishing industry of the Dominion. I have under my hand a copy of the report of that commission which travelled all over the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and which consisted of the following members: William Duff, Chairman, the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg; C. H. Dickie; L. H. Martell, now a judge; W. G. McQuarrie; A. W. Neill, and Alfred Stork. I do not propose to go into the details of that report but I would ask this simple question: What if anything has been done in the interests of this Dominion as a result of the labours of that commission? Has there been any important development in the fishing industry as a result of the expenditure of time and money in this particular inquiry? What