

suffered torments and anguish taking the part which it was his duty to take in the enforcement of a law very abhorrent to his sense of justice and of right.

We are joining in an Address of thanks to His Excellency for the gracious Speech he has been pleased to deliver. Without in the least degree reflecting on His Excellency, for we all know that no one except ourselves here had less to do with the Speech than had the Governor General, I think this gratitude on the part of the House is a tribute to our sense of humour. There is not much in the Speech but water. What there is of substance will prove very indigestible if I judge it from past experience.

I comment first on the absence of a reference which was to have been expected. The real problems of Canada are domestic. Fortunately we have no very serious or troublesome outside problems now. But one event has taken place in very recent times in which the government has participated, an event of considerable consequence, to which reference might have been expected—I refer to the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations, and especially to what is known as the Geneva Protocol. This was a protocol in which the great majority of the league concurred, including, as the report showed, the British government and the representative of the government of Canada. I do not feel that I should discuss the protocol at all, much less go into it in detail. But, inasmuch as Canada's representative there, if I may refer to him by name, Hon. Senator Dandurand, concurred in the terms of the protocol, and we are to presume that Canada adheres thereto until at least we are differently informed from the government, ratification is, of course, in order if we as a parliament are to concur. If the government does not feel like asking parliament for ratification a statement of its attitude would undoubtedly be in order. It is of immense importance to us whether we are to concur or not. This protocol embodies a series of sanctions applicable after the event of a disarmament conference and applicable then to any agreement which may be arrived at at such conference and, as well, to the general relations of the concurring powers thereafter. To me it is difficult to understand why at least the example of the British government in this respect should not have been followed. It was the late administration there, the Labour government, which gave its adhesion to the protocol. The succeeding government, that of Mr. Baldwin, holding apparently somewhat different views, declines to ask for ratification

‘Mr. Meighen.]

for the present, but gave a resumé of its position and stated that negotiations with regard thereto are being carried on. In the Speech from the Throne we are left entirely in the dark as to what the mind of the government is. I make only this comment, and I do so at present in no spirit of criticism: I do not think we have yet arrived at the time by many years when the League of Nations, of which I am a sincere supporter, can become anything in the nature of super-state or other than a new and better method for conducting international affairs; and I think it would be a very grave step on the part of this country to so contribute its own view as to virtually advise Great Britain to underwrite the security of the world.

There are one or two other features of the Speech from the Throne to which I now make reference. It is much shorter than last year. It contains the customary eulogy to the government itself, and the customary proclamation that everything is going well in the country. We are making, it says, substantial progress. It was declared substantial two and, as well three years ago, and it is now more notable than ever. To this I will return later.

Following those words, however, the Speech goes on to mention that the cost of living is now the chief subject which possesses the minds of the administration, and states that, exercising all the economy in their power, they are not able to take care of it. Something it says beyond economy is essential. Then the government states the reasons for its impotence. What the object of the paragraph could have been I am at a loss to know: It is a compound of retrospection and despair without what you would expect—an element of remorse. There is nothing in the way of a promise of legislation; it has no useful place in the Speech at all.

From this, reference is made to the need of immigrants. We are assured that the government has been exerting every effort to attract the right class of immigrants to Canada, and in the same paragraph we are told that though every effort has been exhausted they are going to exert some more. I am not sure whether this is the thirteenth or fourteenth statement of immigration policy which has come from the administration. The only comment I make at the moment is: Where are the immigrants? Last year there was some accretion, an improvement over 1922; I think the numbers were about 137,000. For the year 1923, this is reduced to 124,000; but the trend is the more apparent from taking more recent months of each year. For