

Again, in a speech at Three Rivers on 21st November, the Minister of Justice said:

In case the Meighen or Crerar Government be adopted—

My hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. Crerar) is in the same boat as myself.

In case the Meighen or Crerar Government be adopted, farm land will be taxed, as well as urban and rural dwellings and the house of the rich as that of the poor. If we maintain the Meighen Administration, not only will your lands be taxed but you will never be so close to that annexation, which will soon be a reality in this country, if Meighen is elected.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And hon. gentlemen say "hear, hear."

Already, so to speak, he said, our country is palsied, and halted immobilized in its expansion.

This country which, let me repeat, is acknowledged in the Speech from the Throne to be in the soundest position of any affected by the war.

It makes no more progress; its population decreases while its indebtedness increases to a huge extent; its trade diminishes every month; uncertainty and uneasiness obtain everywhere, according to the own admission of the Prime Minister, and minds heretofore optimistic foresee only bankruptcy and annexation. The people are giving way under the burden of taxation, and in spite of that, deficits accumulate. Dulness is experienced in Government administration; industry is standing pat; trade is stagnant, and on the approach of winter unemployment prevails throughout the country. How can we be charged with exaggeration when the highest financial authorities of the country are frightened?

I draw the attention of hon. gentlemen to my left to the quotation of the hon. Minister of Justice of "the highest financial authorities" being frightened because of the course pursued by the late Administration.

Now, I need not make reference to utterances in the late campaign by which the entire anti-conscription feeling of any part of this country, but particularly of the province of Quebec, was turned against the late Administration. This from "Le Soleil," however, is typical:

The people's forces consist of all those who have wept when they saw their sons being hunted for the slaughter; of all those who were deceived by the false promises of ministers; of all the heroes who were deluded by those who drove them to carnage.

That is worthy of memory, and I am sure it will be remembered and will be done justice to by the hon. member (Mr. Crerar) who leads the Progressive Party and who had part with us in the, not pleasant but necessary, tasks—and onerous tasks they

[Mr. Meighen.]

were—imposed upon us during the conduct of the war. I doubt if I could point to any hon. gentlemen opposite coming from that province—although I think I should exculpate the hon. Minister of Justice in this regard—who did not make use of that appeal; who did not point out as the chief sin of the late Government that, in a time when the country was rocking in the very worst convulsions, struggling through the very darkest nights of a terrible war, that Government sought to carry out the undoubted mandate of the people to impose compulsory and equal military service throughout the length and breadth of our land in order that the honour of the nation might be maintained, in order that the men who fought for us might be supported—in order, in a word, that we might do in the best way we could what we deemed to be our duty in the most awful crisis of the world's history.

Now I pass to other and to me—because I do not desire unnecessarily to harp on the past—more pleasant subjects, so far as discussion goes, enumerated in the Speech from the Throne. The Speech makes reference to the return to the western provinces of their natural resources, and in a somewhat boastful way refers to the fact that already a definite proposal has been made to the prime ministers of the western provinces for the return of those resources. The Government appears to feel that as a consequence a settlement of the question is at hand. On the same subject the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. McMurray) too, is optimistic. He is hopeful that something will be done at once. It is stated in the Speech from the Throne that a proposal has been made to the several governments of Western Canada looking to the return of those resources. What the proposal is is not vouchsafed in this Speech. However, there has been given to the press, and to the public through the press, a full statement—I believe it is a full statement—of what the Government has proposed. That, I might remark, has been done notwithstanding the many protestations of the Prime Minister that Parliament always had to know Government policy ahead of the press and of the public. In the letter which has been given publication, the Prime Minister proposes to the three western provinces that the resources withheld from them when those provinces were established, or what remains of those resources, should now be transferred to them by federal statute, and that each of them should in return release any claims it may have to the