

Mr. WILSON: Had we a tariff on barbed wire in 1898?

Mr. BROWN: No.

Mr. THOMAS REID (New Westminster): As one of the newly-elected members I am diffident about rising at this time to speak on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. There are, however, some matters to which I should like to direct the attention of the government, matters to which I think they ought to give some heed. One of them, which I believe is about to be mentioned for the first time on the floor of this house, is the question of hospital treatment for those ex-soldiers who are not in receipt of a pension from the government. Personally I should like to have seen some mention made in the address of state health insurance, believing that the time has now come in Canada when some form of state health insurance should be considered, if not inaugurated, on behalf of the great masses of people throughout the country who have not the means with which to meet hospital or doctors' accounts which they or their families must incur in connection with such necessary service, and who in many cases would rather suffer than incur debts they are unable to pay.

Regarding the ex-service men I believe I am safe in saying that in British Columbia to-day, owing to her mild climate, far greater numbers of ex-soldiers are domiciled than were enlisted from the province for war purposes. Many of these ex-service men are to-day suffering from various complaints engendered by way of service, and owing to the fact that their disability did not develop until after the close of the war they are not entitled to free treatment at military hospitals. This situation is adding a considerable burden to the cities and municipalities for hospitalization purposes, which burden will no doubt increase as the age of the ex-service man advances. The greatest hardship of all is placed on the ex-service man who frequently finds himself in need of hospital attention the cost of which he is unable to meet.

I would urge upon the government to take steps to provide free hospital treatment for all ex-soldiers who owing to war service have developed some complaint or disability requiring hospital treatment. On account of the lack of free hospital service many of these men have suffered inconvenience and hardship.

In the speech from the throne I note that mention has been made of some change with regard to old age pensions. While agreeing with the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) that

the federal government should assume a greater proportion of the cost of old age pensions, if not the whole of it, I personally should like to see the Dominion government not only assume the whole cost of old age pensions but also reduce the age from seventy years to at least sixty-five. Anyone who is conversant with conditions in the industrial field well knows that under our exacting social and industrial conditions to-day it is well-nigh impossible for the average person to put by a reserve for his old age, and with the labour markets glutted with thousands of young men ready and willing to work if given the opportunity, what chance has the man of even sixty of holding on to his job, let alone procuring one?

I note that the government has introduced a bill amending the Naturalization Act. I should like to have seen, if it were possible, some changes made along such lines as would more clearly designate who are Canadians as distinct from British; and I believe that some changes should be made to enable Canadians to register their children born in Canada as Canadians. It seems to me there is something wrong in this country when Canadians are warned, upon registering the birth of a child born in the country, that "Canadian" is no nationality.

Another matter I wish to speak about has reference to the paragraph of the speech which reads:

Pursuant to the fixed policy of my government to combat all influences which are inimical to the social and economic welfare of this Dominion, an order in council has been passed prohibiting the importation of certain commodities into Canada from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

I wonder if in regard to the fixed policy of the government to condemn all influences which are inimical to the social and economic welfare of the Dominion, British Columbia is too far away to be regarded as part of the Dominion. In that province, particularly in the lower mainland, we have a social and economic problem almost entirely confined within our own boundary and as to which I should be pleased to see the so-called fixed policy of the government put into effect. I refer to the Asiatic question. If ever there were influences inimical to the economic welfare of any part of Canada it is the enormous growth and influence of the orientals in British Columbia. No race can assimilate except by intermarriage, and intermarriage between whites and Asiatics is usually repugnant to both races. The seriousness of this increase of orientals in the lower Fraser valley can be best described by stating that