

successfully accomplished the task of controlling freight rates on land. There is much to be done there still. But when it undertakes, with a few inadequate tools at its command, to control the commerce on the high seas, I am afraid that it is facing an impossible task. I would point out to the Government also that there is a good deal of risk involved. The control of commerce on the high seas is a big undertaking. It involves serious responsibility, and if perchance it became necessary to protect the traffic by calling out the Canadian Navy, and perhaps other forces, in defence of the Government's action in controlling commerce on the high seas, it might result in a very complicated situation.

But let us consider seriously for a moment the effect, even though success may be attained. Let us grant for the moment that the Government does succeed in putting on and subsidizing a fleet of steamships, as is suggested in the information before us, for the purpose of carrying a substantial quantity, if not the major portion, of Canada's products to foreign markets. What is the proposal? It is not that the steamship companies should carry them at reduced rates. No. The president of the embryo ship company, only a couple of weeks ago, said in effect to his shareholders: "Hold your stocks. We have a deal on here that is going to make your stock worth par. We are going to have a flow of business here at profitable rates, and it will make our venture a success." That is the implication of his words. The Government proposes to turn the business of the country, as far as possible, through a particular channel at a rate which is admitted to be unprofitable to the carrier, and proposes then to subsidize that carrier out of your pocket and mine to compensate it for carrying out his part of the programme. What will be the ultimate result? It will be, that instead of the commodity bearing the cost of transportation to its legitimate market, people who are in no way concerned in the transportation of that commodity will be taxed to pay the subsidy. It does not appear to me to be a business proposition.

Furthermore, suppose that the arrangements were made and steamship companies were subsidized to carry the entire product of Canada to foreign markets, and that the people were taxed to pay the cost. What would be the effect of that on the cost of living in Canada? Would it be reduced, as the Speech indicates will be the result? I say no; the result would be absolutely and entirely the opposite. The effect would be to

make commodities scarce and dear in Canada, because the people here would be taxed in order that those commodities might be shipped away to a foreign market.

The Speech from the Throne indicates that the Government desires to make some amendment to the British North America Act that would affect the jurisdiction and the powers of this body. It is proposed to hold a conference to discuss this question with the provinces. I am sure that there ought not to be and probably will not be any objection to the Government holding any conference there with the provincial governments or the municipal authorities if they see fit, and that we need not waste any time in discussing that feature.

It is all well enough to stand up here and criticize the Government and the utterances of the Government as contained in the Speech from the Throne; but I wonder whether that is going to be very useful unless we also attempt to say a word or two that may be regarded as of a somewhat constructive nature. If the picture that I have feebly endeavoured to lay before you, indicating that there is great room for doubt as to the prosperity of the country during the past year, is a true one, and if, on the other hand, all the evidence that I have endeavoured to place before you indicates the true state of affairs, the result might be depressing. But it ought not to be. There is no place on the face of the earth that has the potential possibilities to compare with those of the Dominion of Canada.

My honourable friend from Moncton (Hon. Mr. Robinson) referred to the development of hydro-electric power which in years to come I think is undoubtedly going to bring untold riches out of the earth and will make this probably one of the richest countries in the world. But just for the present our responsibility is to the present generation rather than to future generations; and what can be done to overcome falling revenues, to stop the exodus of population and to increase it, and to increase the traffic on our transportation systems without which they can never succeed? It seems to me that the experience of those two great countries, the United States and France, and the policies that they have followed with such success, might with justice be carefully considered by Canadian citizens. If we can accomplish something by following a domestic policy directed towards the upbuilding of our own country, rather than concerning ourselves so much about the far corners of the earth, it seems to me that we shall serve Canada just as effectively. How can that be done? I had a letter the other day from the