

Speaker, that we have recognized the seriousness of conditions in Canada. We recognized them throughout the campaign, we spoke of them and of their causes, world and domestic causes, in the course of that campaign, and we indicated policies that we believed would help to relieve the situation. When the electorate decided that it preferred to accept the promises and pledges of hon. gentlemen opposite, we said, "All right, it is for the electorate to make its choice; we will not interfere in the least with the putting into force of any policies which hon. gentlemen opposite wish to put into force; we will give them a fair chance to show what they can do." They have had now nearly eight months; they have had a special session of parliament where they were free to bring down whatever legislation they pleased, and no restriction was placed upon them whatever in voting the money they asked for, or in amending the customs tariff in the way in which they desired to amend it, or the Customs Act so far as they desired to amend it. They were free to bring in whatever legislation they wished. They were given a free hand at the Imperial conference. They have had everything their own way, and if today conditions in Canada are worse instead of better the fault lies on the shoulders of my right hon. friend and his colleagues and followers. From this time on, I think he can no longer claim exemption from criticism by the opposition.

Mr. BENNETT: He has never claimed it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My right hon. friend says he has never claimed any exemption from criticism. What was the substance of the speech he made at Regina when he began to talk about the extent to which those who ought to know better were putting obstacles and difficulties in his way?

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend is very quick to say he never claimed exemption from criticism, but there is not a man living who is so sensitive to criticism as my right hon. friend. If, Mr. Speaker, you want evidence of that fact you have only to notice the way in which my right hon. friend has risen to the bait two or three times already.

Mr. BENNETT: I rise as a matter of common decency.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There my right hon. friend is biting again.

Mr. BENNETT: I rise as a matter of common decency.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not wonder at hon. members laughing at my right hon. friend's sensitiveness.

Mr. BENNETT: As a matter of common decency personal letters should not be published.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is my right hon. friend still biting?

Mr. BENNETT: No. He is hurt to think that an ex-Prime Minister is capable of such a thing.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What is the matter?

Mr. BENNETT: Nothing in the world. I simply said, and I repeat it now, there is nothing I have seen in the history of parliament that quite equals an ex-Prime Minister giving the purport of a letter marked "personal."

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, that shot must have gone pretty deep. It wounded my right hon. friend twenty minutes ago and he is still licking the wound. May I come now to the next clause of the speech from the throne which refers to the Unemployment Relief Act. Here we are told that this also has proved "equally beneficial." Well, I think "equally beneficial" is probably accurate when you compare the beneficial results of that enactment with the beneficial results that came from the other legislation then passed, but it does not say much for the extent of the benefit in either case. But, curiously enough, in that very paragraph the administration admits the extent of unemployment to be greater than it has ever been at any time in Canada. Take the last half of the paragraph:

—yet its careful administration by my ministers, ably aided by the provincial and municipal governments and the two great railway systems, has resulted in the institution of a nation wide program of public undertakings, each one a unit in a scheme of national development, which have collectively provided work for the greatest number of men who have ever been employed through the direct efforts of the federal government.

In other words, there never was a time in the history of Canada when the federal government had to come to the relief of so many men. This appears in the speech from the throne itself, confirming the very view which, we have all along contended was the correct one.

May I now refer to the third subdivision, which has to do with the Imperial conference. I intend to speak at perhaps a little greater length with regard to the Imperial conference