

*The Address*

and simply stated. We are here, not to oppose for the sake of opposing; we are here prepared to give the Government every assistance in carrying on the government of this country, when it gives the country the policies that we believe it should have. I say that we are prepared to do that, but we are equally prepared to oppose the Government and to criticise it when we think the Government is doing wrong or not adopting the policies that we think this country should have. That, to my mind, frankly and clearly states our position. My own hope, and I am bound to say that the words of my hon. friend the Prime Minister give some ground for that hope, is that the policy pursued by the Government in respect of the great vital questions before the country, to which later I shall make some allusion, will be such as to command our support. If their course is shaped in that direction so that we can support them, we shall do so, but if it is not, our duty then will lie in another direction.

I am among those also who believe that the Government should have a reasonable time to carry out its policies and to frame its programme. I quite realize the difficulties of the present situation, that a government coming into office only a few months before a session is called has not had the opportunity to familiarize itself with all the questions of public administration, and perhaps not the opportunity to make a full inquiry as to the lines of public policy that should be followed, and we are therefore prepared to give the Government every reasonable time to shape its course and decide upon its line of action.

I desire to speak, and I shall not detain the House at any great length, upon the subjects dealt with in the Speech from the Throne. It was a good speech as such speeches go. My right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition was on rather poor ground yesterday when he criticised the tariff plank in the Speech, because I recall that a year ago we expected from the Speech delivered at that time, that definite tariff proposals would be laid before Parliament. There is one thing that strikes me, Sir, in respect of the recent Speech and it is that there are in it no decided statements of Government policy excepting perhaps on one or two particulars. There is the suggestion that several branches of defence in Canada should be co-ordinated or joined together under one minister. I think that is a step in the right direction, and I would commend to the

[Mr. Crerar.]

Prime Minister and to the other members of the Government that that course might very well be followed in respect to other departments of the public service. I sometimes think that this country is over-governed. I know that in the United States, with a population of 108 or 110 millions of people, the cost of the Federal Government is relatively much lighter than it is in the Dominion of Canada; and I trust that when the Minister of Militia brings down his estimates he will carry the good work further and pare those estimates as closely as he can. One of the criticisms I had to offer of the late Government was the fact that it did not practise economy as it should be practised having in view the conditions and the circumstances of the country, and I trust that we shall not be obliged to level the same criticism at the members of the present Government when its estimates are placed before the House.

The Speech refers to the existing worldwide depression. Well, we are all pretty well familiar with that. I think we have all, as a matter of fact, pretty much experienced it in our own pockets.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Hear, hear.

Mr. CRERAR: I am glad to hear that note of approval from my hon. friend the ex-Finance Minister because I think perhaps he had a very active experience during his tenure of office of this condition of affairs.

There is also a paragraph in the Speech from the Throne, and to my mind a very important one, dealing with the condition of agriculture in the Dominion. There is no doubt, Sir, that the condition of agriculture throughout Canada to-day is very serious indeed. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) is, I am sure well aware of that fact. After all when we survey this whole Dominion from one end to the other, when we take account of the great manufacturing establishments that we have built up, may we not properly ask upon what does the real prosperity of this Dominion rest? It rests upon our agriculture; and if the farmers of this country are not prosperous, if agriculture is not thriving, then there is only one inevitable consequence—the business of the country languishes and dies. What is the situation to-day? I venture to say that a great majority of the farmers of Western Canada, that portion of the Dominion with which I am more intimately acquainted, conducted their business last year at a loss. I believe it is true of other portions of the