

What is happening? We are taking money out of the federal treasury in millions of dollars and giving it to the provinces to help meet the cost of relief there. But instead of the federal government getting any credit at all for that, the people are told that all this has come from the provincial governments themselves. That is the situation. If federal members of parliament will be honest with themselves and with the people they will make a point of showing how under the British North America Act, as it is to-day, in order to solve this problem we must raise taxes federally and then hand over the money to some other authority, which has not been required to raise the funds at all, and allow that authority to spend the money. That is fundamentally wrong, and it is that circumstance as much as any other that is accountable for a good deal that is other than what we would wish it to be in Canada at the present time.

I am not going further into that question to-night because we shall be dealing with the whole question of unemployment at a later stage of the session. All I wanted to make clear this evening was that within the compass of our authority we are not only meeting all the obligations imposed upon us under the provisions of the British North America Act, and helping the provinces and municipalities as best we can, but we have been and are still trying to have this act amended in a way that will enable us to relieve both provinces and municipalities still further by assuming additional powers with regard to unemployment insurance, and we are taking steps which we hope will help us before very long to have the British North America Act still further amended in other ways which will be helpful alike to the municipalities, the provinces and the dominion.

I see that we are near the hour of adjournment. I shall therefore conclude with just one further word in reference to another remark which my hon. friend has seen fit to make to-night. The Leader of the Opposition has said that I have not been across this country since this parliament was returned and that I have not been in my own constituency since this government came into office. He is perfectly right in his latter statement. I stand here as representative of the constituency of Prince Albert. I have been returned election after election, and I still represent Prince Albert, which is more than my hon. friend can say with regard to the constituency of Fort William.

Mr. MANION: But no man in all Canada has been defeated as often as the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say this in reply to what my hon. friend has said. Anyone who holds the office of Prime Minister in these days must view his duties not from the point of view of whether or not he is going to be returned to parliament at the next election. He must not be thinking only of his own seat in the House of Commons—or even, may I say, mainly of whether or not his own party is to be returned. He has to do his duty as he sees it, day by day, in the light of his conscience with the knowledge of world conditions as they exist.

After all, we can each of us give only so much of our time and energy to our work. If there is any hon. member in the house who will point out to me wherein I have wasted any day in my life since I have been Prime Minister, and wherein I have not performed my public duty I wish him to speak now or forever after hold his peace. I confess I am not in a position to travel back and forth across the country and be in Ottawa at the same time. I confess I have been greatly concerned with international affairs—much more than I wish had been necessary. I said to the House of Commons during the last session that I thought we were in perilous times, that we were coming dangerously near to a crisis in the world's history. I have spoken to members of my party in party caucus perhaps much more confidentially than I should care to speak to the public about how little, in comparison, some of this petty strife amounts to with respect to the large concerns which ought to occupy the minds of men and women these days. So far as I am concerned, each day I have to ask myself: What is the most important thing to do this day, with the time at my disposal?

I came here after the general election, and the most important thing seemed to be to get under way the negotiation of a trade agreement between Canada and the United States. I went at once to Washington—I did not go to my constituency or out to Vancouver or Victoria. I went to Washington, with the result that we got a trade agreement which has been in force for three years. We now have another agreement which will be in force for a great many more years. And I venture to add that but for that agreement there would not to-day be the agreement which exists between Great Britain and the United States.

The next year was a year in which the League of Nations was holding an important