

The Address—Mr. Fleming

have had attempts to use plausible and airily optimistic statements as a cloak for apathy and inaction.

It will not be forgotten that the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) said in this house last April that our trading relations with the United Kingdom were normal. The only interpretation that can be made of that statement, if it is a true statement, is that the Minister of Trade and Commerce accepts as normal the loss of our market in the United Kingdom for our exportable food surpluses. Apparently the Minister of Trade and Commerce has somehow mesmerized the Prime Minister if the Prime Minister can make the kind of statement that he made in this house two days ago in the face of the way in which the Minister of Trade and Commerce misled the house—under the rules of the house I cannot say it was done intentionally. Nevertheless the people and the electors and this house were misled with regard to Canada's trading relations with the United Kingdom.

What goes on in the executive council when this question of the loss of vitally necessary markets for Canadian products is discussed, if it ever is? I am reminded of the chorus in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, the *Mikado*. One can just imagine the Minister of Trade and Commerce getting up and in his baritone singing, "I am right," and the cabinet replying in chorus, "And you are right, and all is right as right can be". Is that the only reaction we can get from hon. gentlemen opposite in the face of a developing crisis in our trading relations with the United Kingdom?

We see unemployment raising its ugly head in this country on a widespread scale. Just lately we have had nights here in Ottawa when the thermometer dropped to 21 or 22 below zero and we were glad to climb into our comfortable beds and pull up the covers. But there were men in the city of Toronto who had no beds, who had no covers to pull up. They have been forced to sleep in temporary shelters and in missions. There is the same story of frustration and the blighting of lives that inevitably follows unemployment. This house will be false to its duty if it accepts on the part of this government that same apathy, that same self-satisfaction in the face of this situation which it has manifested heretofore.

It is not enough for the Prime Minister to say that the municipalities of this country ought to be in good condition by now and should embark on public works. Are the municipalities of this country in position to meet emergent unemployment conditions? It is a thousand pities that hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches, particularly the Prime

Minister in the light of what he had to say in this house two days ago, have not had some experience in municipal affairs. If the Prime Minister had had some experience with municipal government he would not be saying the things he has been saying about the ease with which this problem can be fobbed off on the municipalities.

Those urban municipalities that are being faced with the problem of unemployment are municipalities to which the unemployed have largely come from other parts of Canada. It is grossly unfair to expect those municipalities to meet this situation. They are having a most difficult time in meeting increasing demands upon them. We have heard appeals in this house for increased support from the federal treasury for education because the burden of education has been falling so heavily upon the provinces and the municipalities. Yet in the face of that situation, in the face of sound arguments for federal assistance while preserving the autonomy of the provinces with respect to education, the Prime Minister says, "Let the municipalities undertake public works to provide employment for the unemployed".

Are we back in the same old plight of ten or fifteen years ago with the federal government just passing the buck? While we are not very numerous in this part of the house, I think I can say that we will maintain an unremitting fight against this government's attempt to fob off this problem on the municipalities and the provincial governments.

An hon. Member: What of it?

Mr. Fleming: My hon. friend over here can take what comfort he likes out of what I have been saying, but he will not get very much out of what I am going to say. If he is anxious to support the Minister of Justice in a deliberate and calculated breach of the law then let him vote against our amendment and condone illegality.

The Prime Minister had something to say about the dominion-provincial conference. We of the Progressive Conservative party were the ones who throughout the life of the twentieth parliament pleaded for a resumption of the general dominion-provincial conference and we can take a good deal of satisfaction out of the fact that at long last the government did reconvene a general dominion-provincial conference in January of this year.

When the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) talks as he did two days ago about the difference in tone of the deliberations, let me tell him that the extent to which the tone raises more hope of agreement was largely due to the fact that he abandoned the tactics that