

Those, Mr. Speaker, are figures which speak for themselves. Those are the indices by which the country will find it possible to estimate whether or not the business of the country was being satisfactorily administered under the government which preceded the present one. These are the indices which tell whether the policies which were being applied were wise, right and helpful. Under the policies of the Liberal administration we had this vast increase in trade and this decrease of public debt. In seven out of eight and a half years we had a surplus. There was a steady decrease of taxation, and all was accompanied by a spirit of harmony, unity and good will between the governments of the provinces and the government of the Dominion, a spirit such as had not prevailed for many years previously. Unquestionably we have not that spirit at the present time. In addition, Mr. Speaker, we had a spirit of unity and good will between this country and other parts of the British Empire and particularly between Great Britain and Canada. That also is something which cannot be said to exist at the present time.

Let me come now, Mr. Speaker, to the references in the speech from the throne to the legislation passed at the special session. I shall not go into that at any length at the moment except to direct attention to the fact that even the government itself has not ventured to assert that it has in any way redeemed the pledges and the promises which it gave to the electors at the last general election. My right hon. friend opposite came into power in virtue of certain definite and distinct promises which he then made to the electorate. He said he would end unemployment, he said he would end rural distress; he said he would do all of these things, or perish in the attempt. He has not ended rural distress; he has not ended unemployment; and he has not yet perished in the attempt. He has not ever fulfilled that promise, but I tell him he will perish in the attempt before the other promises are ever fulfilled, because he will never be able to fulfil them.

The address says:

Although in the interval world conditions have changed but little for the better, this tariff legislation has resulted in a marked improvement in the domestic situation.

Market improvement! Where is the market improvement! I am not going to take up the time of this house by endeavouring to tell hon. members and the country what they all know. It is not necessary for

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

any one to assert that conditions have not improved, that they are worse than they were, because every man, woman and child knows that to be the case. The mere putting of these words into the lips of His Excellency the Administrator will give little in the way of comfort and satisfaction to those men and women in all parts of Canada who to-day are still seeking employment, who are still trying to meet the obligations on their farms, who are still trying to avoid placing mortgages on their homes, who are seeking a bare livelihood and trying to get free of being obliged to resort to the good offices of the Red Cross society and other charitable organizations for whatever sustenance they have. I say, Mr. Speaker, that conditions are apparent and well known by the country generally. Everyone who has studied conditions in Canada at all to-day knows that unfortunately it is only too true that so far as certain parts of our country are concerned—and I refer more particularly now to the middle west—matters are in a desperate plight, that many people there are on the verge of destitution. In short, a condition exists in this country at the moment the like of which, fortunately, it has not witnessed at any time heretofore in our history.

An hon. MEMBER: When did you notice it first?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Notice it? It has been noticed by everyone since this administration came into office. Now, Mr. Speaker, may I say—and I wish to make this point very clear, for it helps to answer the interruption of my hon. friend—the government can in no way say that they have been impeded in any of the policies that they have put forward, that they have been in any way obstructed in the carrying out of the pledges or promises which they made to the electorate. I think I can say without fear of contradiction that with the exception of what it became necessary for me to say publicly in the short period of two weeks during which we had the special session of parliament, I have not raised my voice publicly in criticism, or with one or two exceptions, by way of comment, from the day the present administration took office until this afternoon. What I am saying with respect to myself is equally true with respect to the great body of members of this house who belong to the party which I have the honour to lead. We have given to hon. gentlemen opposite the freest possible hand. We have done that in order that they might demonstrate, if they could, what their policies were capable of doing. May I say this also, Mr.