

Speech from the Throne commits them, this adventure is going to be confined to reducing the tariff on the implements of production.

We will all welcome reduction of taxes. Sometimes I have made a prediction as to what will happen in the course of a session. I will make one now. I will ask honourable gentlemen to carefully watch the scope of this tax reduction venture. I ask them just to measure the extent of the reduction and compare it with the extent of the increases, the additions this government has put on in previous years. One cannot help but observe that all of the additions of 1922, all the increases of 1923 were not heralded with any pronouncement in the Speech from the Throne, though I venture to say they were infinitely more important and momentous in their consequences to this country than any reduction we are going to get this session.

Intimation is given—at all events it is interpreted that way—that the proposal of the government is to take the duty off agricultural implements. This is the acceptance applied throughout the country, and the government by reason of its language is responsible for that acceptance. Since when has it been the practice in this Dominion to notify the country in advance of specific tariff reductions in the Speech from the Throne? Always in the life of Canada, yea and in every other country where parliamentary government prevails, the essential practice is that no intimation shall be given of any reduction or increase in the schedules of the tariff until the budget comes down. Why is there a departure from that practice this session? I do not need to ask honourable gentlemen to my left. Everyone of them knows. These are the “white round stones” which are expected to do the work. This is the bid that is made for the support of hon. gentlemen to my left, pending the production of the budget. What matters it to the government if business is disturbed? What matters it to them if there is a dislocation of trade? What matters it to them if capital is timid and the hand of investment is withheld? What matters it to them if artisans by the thousands apprehend the loss of their positions? These things do not matter if, forsooth, they can get enough votes from my hon. friends to my left to hold them in office till the budget comes down.

Then further on in the Speech from the Throne we find a lot of ruminations about what the opinion of the government is on this thing and on that, and the effort the government has made on one subject and the effort it is going to make on something else,

what the trouble is here and there, and how much consideration the government is giving to it all. We find a prediction that this session there will be a balanced budget, and an implication through the mouth of His Excellency, that this must be the best government we have had for years because it is twelve years since such a thing has been done before. Never did self-puffery get to the stage of perfection that it has reached in this Speech from the Throne.

National unity not less than national prosperity—

Will hon. gentlemen be good enough to give attention to this reading, and try to divine what place it has in a Speech from the Throne, or what on earth it means in the way of a proposal to parliament.

National unity not less than national prosperity depends upon the surmounting of those barriers which have tended to separate western from eastern Canada and to discourage permanent settlement upon the land. Foremost in this regard are the problems incidental to tariff readjustment and to the marketing of agricultural and other national products.

What better is parliament to be in receipt of that philosophy? What does this look to? What is the idea? Passing on, we find the following:

The stabilization and control of freight rates on grain from the head of the Great Lakes to Canadian ocean ports and thence to Liverpool are receiving the closest attention.

We will all hope for a fruitful incubation. What control has this government over ocean rates? What is to be the nature of the operation? What do they propose in the way of legislation? In what direction are they looking? What specifically have they in mind? Or is this simply a sort of declaration of faith, in the hope that faith will be received even as works? In the same paragraph and therefore relating to this topic we find the following:

It is hoped that the report of the Royal Grain Inquiry Commission authorized last session to inquire into the subject of the handling and marketing of grain will be available for presentation to parliament this session, and that legislation based upon its recommendations may be offered for your consideration.

Well, as there are no recommendations yet, what is the ground for “hoping” that legislation may be necessary? Certainly we hope the commission will be through. Our concern for the treasury is sufficient to ground that hope upon. If it does not have some recommendation, it will not be because it has not travelled far enough, or has not had a long enough retinue or that it has not cost the country enough; but I venture to say that its recommendations will bear the same relation