

to-day? I have the Department of Munitions and Supply sheet issued on February 15, and in it I read the following words concerning a gentleman appointed as motor vehicle controller.

Mr. MARTIN: A good man.

Mr. BLACKMORE: He needs to be a good man to fill that position justly and equitably. I read the following words:

The motor vehicle controller has wide powers to control and regulate the entire automotive industry. He can license any person or company manufacturing or dealing in motor vehicles. He can license manufacturers and distributors of trailers, tires, and all other motor vehicle accessories and parts. He can issue licenses to manufacturers of materials entering into the making of motor vehicles.

Again:

The controller may prohibit any person from making or dealing in motor vehicles, either entirely or to such an extent as he may see fit.

Subject to the approval of the minister, the controller may establish a quota or quotas prescribing the kind, type or model of motor vehicles, and the number of any kind, type, or model that may be made or dealt in by any person or company.

I am not going to discuss the advisability or the inadvisability, the necessity or the lack of necessity, of conferring upon such a man such powers as those. But I am going to observe that in a large measure that amount of power nullifies, during the progress of the war, the all-important provincial power over property and civil rights with respect to motor vehicles. If this man does not exercise the powers of his high office with justice, broad-mindedness and interest in the welfare of northern Saskatchewan and southern Prince Edward Island as well as of Quebec and Ontario, then the result will be a concentration of power which may injure this country quite seriously before the war is over.

Other controllers have been appointed, of whom I might mention just two, the fuel controller and the sugar controller. The powers conferred upon them are well-nigh boundless. As I understand their powers, they can close up a sugar factory or an oil well, or they can put either enterprise under such handicap as will render it economically unsound in a very short time. Should a man in one of those positions wish to destroy industry, we will say in Manitoba, in order that industry in Ontario might get the market, it would be within his power to do so. This could be done by secret devices which would not be observable to the ordinary citizen.

Some provinces are already suffering from the disastrous effects of centralized power which has been used in the past to the benefit of certain interests in the two central provinces. Several of the major disabilities of the provinces have developed as a result of the

[Mr. Blackmore.]

possession and exercise by Ottawa of the power to disregard the will and the welfare of the provinces. Among these disabilities I would mention, first, the deterioration of industry or its inability to establish itself in any given province. To-day industry languishes in seven of the provinces. As an example, may I cite the state of industry in New Brunswick? Formerly that province was great and well to do, having a rich industrial life and a happy people. In support of my statement I should like to read from page 76 of the brief submitted by New Brunswick to the royal commission. I quote:

New Brunswick was in a quite different position. It was regarded as the wealthiest section of British North America. There was no racial controversy. The economic situation was satisfactory. The relations with the other provinces were amicable. It had relatively large manufacturing and commercial organizations. Banking houses, financial institutions and insurance companies were established and were giving service in the assistance of industries. The people were contented, well-ordered and enterprising. . . .

Now let hon. members recall the first statement which I read from the supplementary submission of New Brunswick; then let them ask themselves whether or not there is something that can and should be done by the members of this house to help that province.

May I read next from the New Brunswick submission at page 49, where I find a hint of the condition of industry in that province at the present time, and of the underlying reasons:

The disadvantages from which New Brunswick has suffered in relation to the tariff were further accentuated and increased by the unauthorized burden of excessive freight rates on the railways in the maritime provinces after 1912.

Principally as a result of these two elements industries became centralized in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Large companies having their head offices in Ontario and Montreal bought up many industrial plants in New Brunswick and then closed them down. The manufacturing in New Brunswick at the present time is insignificant as compared with manufacturing in other parts of the dominion.

I ask hon. members, can this government be justified in expecting from New Brunswick the war effort which she could have rendered had she been kept as strong economically as she was when she entered confederation? There will be those who will say: But that was an impossibility. I challenge that statement. It is not an impossibility for the people of any area in this richly endowed Dominion of Canada to be prosperous and happy; and if any area has become poverty stricken, it is because of faulty principles applied in policies dictated from Ottawa and forced upon the provinces.