

It is a curious coincidence that the session begins at the same time as the reign of the new King, that we welcome among us a new Viceroy in whom we greet a brilliant representative of the intellectual élite of the British nobility, that a new Government is in power, and that this Chamber has a new Speaker, who, we are quite sure, will display in the discharge of the duties of his high office the knowledge and experience demanded by it, and the tact and dignity which we know him to possess.

The Speech from the Throne we heard on the day of the opening augurs well for the future. It would be contrary to our duty and our constitutional role to show an irreducible and intractable partisan attitude, but we surely have the right, indeed the moral obligation, to ask ourselves if the country is wisely governed, and if the policies of the new Government follow the right course. Without losing sight of the superior interests of the nation—which must remain our paramount object—let us look at the facts. I mean to leave aside all election disputes, all criticism, all rejoinders, all the glittering theories used to charm the electorate, which is too often treated lightly. Within these walls, where moderation and cool judgment should prevail, where we expect to find a serenity which takes a correct view of the situation, let us ask ourselves if the position of Canada has not improved somewhat during the last few months, either in the domain of interior politics, or in that of external affairs.

Again, let us face the facts. The new Ministry, in power for only three months, immediately settled down to the task of remedying the economic distress. The undertaking is gigantic: to combat unemployment, check the fall of our trade barometer, help distressed agriculture, face the general discontent—so pronounced at one time that the West went so far as to mention secession—consolidate the unity of Confederation, where cracks and fissures are appearing, prevent misunderstanding between the East and the West, etc. The new facts coming to light in the course of the last few months and the Speech from the Throne are proofs that the Government has vigorously set to work. The clouds overshadowing our country yesterday did not make pessimists nor defeatists of true Canadians. They have hopes for the future, and rightly so. This terrible depression must be temporary. As governments succeed each other, they try, each in their own way, to solve our national and economic problems. Far be it from me to blame our governments for the depression:

to do so would be both wrong and unjust. But there are many methods of government: some really bad, some good, and others better.

The sessional programme obviously reflects the Liberal party's programme as expounded by its leader, which deals with fourteen points:

- (1) Unemployment, the most urgent national problem;
- (2) Freedom of external trade;
- (3) Freedom of internal trade;
- (4) Encouragement of basic industries;
- (5) Credit control through the establishment of a Central State Bank;
- (6) Investment control bureau to save the public from exploitation;
- (7) Preservation of the Canadian National;
- (8) Democratization of industry;
- (9) Return of responsible government;
- (10) Repeal of section 98 of the Criminal Code;
- (11) Electoral reform;
- (12) A balanced budget;
- (13) Co-operation aiming at maintenance of international peace;
- (14) A just distribution of wealth.

In less than four months the new Government has undertaken and carried out many things in accordance with this programme.

In order to secure the goodwill and co-operation necessary for the solution of some of our main domestic problems, a Dominion-Provincial Conference was called. This conference set up various permanent committees to study the most important matters, especially unemployment and the revision of our Constitution. Such co-operation between the provinces and the central Government cannot but revive confidence throughout the land.

In the foreign field the expansion of our trade was the chief concern of the new Administration. Less than a month after its coming to power the Government signed a commercial agreement with the United States. By the new reciprocity treaty between Ottawa and Washington, Canada will share in the benefit of the decided revival of business which has been in evidence in the last few months in the neighbouring country to the south. As a matter of fact, this treaty includes the interchange between the two countries of goods at present totalling in value more than one hundred millions of dollars annually.

On January 1, commercial relations with Japan were restored.

Another stimulus to trade: from January 14 Brazil extends to Canadian products the tariff concessions made to the United States through a reciprocity treaty arrived at between those two countries.