

government. However, I will ascertain if the situation can be dealt with, and if we can do it. I'm not prepared to scrap the constitution and say the primary responsibility can be shifted to the Dominion government."

He said he felt it unfair to expect the Dominion government to accept this additional responsibility. It was a provincial matter, he thought, and to pass it on to the Dominion government was merely shifting one of the provincial government's primary responsibilities.

"If, as requested, the Dominion government undertook to supervise relief administration it would divest the cities and towns of control and would place in their stead a commission appointed by the government."

But, Mr. Bennett said, he had not yet reached the point where "I think the Dominion government is better equipped to deal with these matters than either the provinces or the municipalities."

That extract is taken from the Montreal Gazette of September 7, 1932. Could anything be more completely contradictory of the policy previously stated than the attitude expressed there? First, there is a declaration that the problem is a national one and that the government's policy is one of providing work—such were the pledges given—and now the Prime Minister, after being in office over two years, states on the eve of the fourth session of parliament that the problem is not a national one; that he proposes not to go on with any constructive program of supplying work but that hereafter the most the government may do may be something in the way of a contributory dole. I wish to say to the Prime Minister that that kind of repudiation of pledges made is immensely aggravating the situation in the country. It is that sort of thing which more than anything else is creating resentment as well as unrest in Canada. Is it any wonder that working men are losing faith in governments? Is it any wonder that the people are beginning to become cynical about the pledges given them by those who are administering the affairs of the country when there can be such a complete contradiction, such a complete repudiation of pledges made, through which power has been acquired?

The government now confesses its inability—the speech from the throne frankly admits it—to deal with the unemployment problem. May I then repeat to the Prime Minister what I have said at each previous session: Can he not turn over the problem to some group of persons who at least are in a position to help to work out some kind of solution with respect to it? I come back to what I proposed at the special session when parliament was called to deal with this question, and what I have repeated at each session since, namely: that there should be appointed

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

a national committee or commission which would have to do with the administration of moneys voted by the federal treasury for the purpose of unemployment relief, that in an emergency such as exists at the present time this committee should have regard for the problem as a national one and should work in conjunction with the provinces and with the municipalities not doing their administrative work, but having a say in the manner in which federal moneys shall be expended. I have heard the Prime Minister say on previous occasions that this was taking the matter out of the hands of the municipalities and the provinces. It is doing nothing of the kind. All I am suggesting is that a commission be appointed by the federal administration to advise upon and supervise the expenditure of moneys that are voted by this parliament; that through some minister of the crown it be responsible to parliament for the way in which those moneys are spent. This is a time of great emergency and emergent means of dealing with a situation of this nature are necessary.

During the period of the war there was an imperial munitions board to deal with the question of munitions; there was a food control board to deal with food supplies, and there was a fuel control board to deal with the fuel problem. Are not food and fuel the two factors which above all others are the most important in the matter of relief? Why then should this country, in dealing with a great national problem of this kind, not have the benefit of the services of a group of experts brought together with authority as a commission to deal with the question in an effective way? During the period of the war there was also a national committee that dealt with the patriotic fund. The patriotic fund was subscribed to from dominion sources, from provincial and municipal sources. It was subscribed to by private individuals. Through a dominion committee all the effort throughout the dominion from coast to coast was correlated and means that were most effective in enlisting the active support of all classes in all parts of the country were put into effect. I say that even yet that step is necessary. It is perhaps more necessary to-day than it was two years ago, because since that time it has become perfectly clear that the government is wholly incapable itself of dealing with the question.

What I suggested first, what I have repeated each session, and what had been intended by the Liberal administration had it been returned to power was that in the first instance there should be called a conference, that would be representative of the