

The Address

reference in the Speech from the Throne itself, to the conference that has just been concluded at Washington. I am sure the words of the Speech in that regard and the words of the mover of the motion as well find unanimous and hearty echo from us all. The purpose of that conference is not misunderstood by those who have read the press. I was anxious—and I think I succeeded in my desire—not to impart into the late party contest any questions of external policy of this country, any question as to the conduct of our affairs in relation either to the Empire or to the outside world. It is, however, only fair to say that in the bringing about of that conference this country took its part as other countries did, and in the earnest hope that something real, something practical, has been effected in the alleviation of the woes and miseries from which the world has suffered and suffers to-day in the lifting of the clouds that are before the world to-day, Canada's anxiety, Canada's earnestness takes second place to that of no other country in the world. That the Conference has had practical results should be a matter of congratulation; that there have been practical results I have no doubt at all. I am sorry that the purpose of the conference, that Canada's participation therein, should have been a subject of misconception even in the last election contest in Canada; but it is well in that respect to let bygones be bygones, and I make no further reference thereto.

The first paragraph in the Speech from the Throne makes comment on the present condition, commercially and industrially, of this Dominion. All of us were glad to see that paragraph inserted, and I think we understand the significance intended thereby. It is as follows:

Our Dominion has not escaped the world-wide economic disturbance and industrial depression, but has suffered less from it than other countries. Keen observers of the business barometer feel that the worst is about over and that at an early date we may look for a substantial revival of activity.

Those words are true. I find no mention in the Speech from the Throne of a very outstanding fact that might, I think, have appropriately been referred to—namely, what has been disclosed as regards our population in the recent census returns. It is true that those returns are not to the last fraction of percentage complete, but they are substantially complete, and what is known of them is a matter for congratulation on the part of all our people. Our population has increased from

[Mr. Meighen.]

less than seven and a quarter millions to well over eight and three-quarter millions. In a speech which I read in the press recently, delivered by the chief statistician of the Dominion in the city of London, he called attention to the fact that the rate of increase has in these ten years been the fastest of that of any English-speaking country in the world, inclusive of all the British Dominions and the United States. We have passed the 21.5 per cent rate—that is the highest rate. In that speech emphasis is laid on the fact that this increase has been achieved against the handicap of the war. And Mr. Coates says that Canada would have passed the nine million mark but for the losses in men and women and in the birth rate due directly to the war. The fact, however, that we have surpassed the record of the world in this regard, at a time when the greatest difficulty was encountered in doing so, and when some of the other great countries of the world outside the English-speaking countries sustained a loss in population, is a matter for pronounced congratulation.

This increase in our prosperity, as evidenced by our increase in population, has been accompanied by an expansion of our trade unprecedented in our history. Our trade has expanded to proportions undreamt of ten years ago. In making that statement I have reference not to the inflated figures that obtained during the war, but to the 1921 figures obtained during the very depths of the post-war deflation. Comparing those figures with the figures for the ten years preceding 1911, our exports have multiplied almost three times over in that decade, as opposed to the increase of less than twice in the fifteen years that went before. Therefore there was a very considerable basis of fact for the assertion in the Speech from the Throne that this Dominion, which took a place of honour and of great value in the most terrible conflict the world has ever known; this Dominion that performed the stupendous task of placing on another continent five hundred thousand of her sons; this Dominion that took upon her back a debt of over \$2,000,000,000 for the sole purpose of prosecuting to victory a war for human freedom—this Dominion finds itself to-day, as acknowledged in this Speech, in the best position of any country in the world. And I am disposed to believe that when the Speech from the Throne enters into the realm of prediction it does not go