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Leaders Speak On Big Issues

(Continued from page 4.)

...to make commitments amounting to from twelve to twenty millions for supplies with out coming to Parliament?" he asked. (The Government should have ascertained the needs of the railway in time to provide for them in last session's estimates.)

"The Government has some explanation to make to this House as to why it has joined with the new board of directors in binding the country to millions of expenditure," he declared.

The Government had promised a thorough investigation into the finances of the Canadian National System at the last session of Parliament. Had this inquiry taken place? Mr. Meighen asked, and if so, what was the result of it?

"I venture to say that this is one of those alluring programmes that are made only to be forgotten," he added.

In 1922 the speech from the throne had emphasized that the administration realized the importance of an aggressive immigration policy and was addressing itself to its formation. During the present fiscal year up to the end of December, said Mr. Meighen, some 60,000 immigrants had been added to the population, and a 25 per cent. fall in the number of British immigrants had almost entirely disappeared, and while immigration was thus standing, emigration appeared very virile.

Emigration from Canada.

Canada's latest export figures were not something which called for unqualified satisfaction. Menhaden and settlers' effects were among Canada's exports which had shown very considerable increase.

The United States immigration figures for 1927 stated that the population of Canada was crossing into the United States at a remarkable rate. "This is the main cause," said Mr. Meighen, "of the diminution of employment in the largest cities of Canada today. The artisans of Canada have gone across to America, where they are getting work not to be obtained in this country."

Canada, said Mr. Meighen, had not turned a hand to make work for the unemployed of this country, nor had it done anything to bring extra taxpayers to Canada. "Considering that Canada had had an immense wheat crop last year, and that her oats and barley crops had been the largest in her history, it was inevitable that this volume of grain should find an outlet. This was the other main reason for Canada's high export figures."

A year ago, said Mr. Meighen, the speech from the throne had announced that the long standing question of the return of the natural resources of the provinces had at last been solved. Year after year incompetent men had struggled with it, but new men had come to power and in the space of a few short weeks they had solved the question by the application of the spirit of justice.

The speech from the throne this year, said Mr. Meighen, was entirely silent on this question. "As a matter of fact, the question stands now," he added, "just where it has ever stood, not one foot of progress made, save a single conference, after which each participant announced that he came down, discussed the question and went home again."

Tariff Revision.

Tariff revision promised in the 1922 speech from the throne had also proved a disappointment. It was a fact, Mr. Meighen claimed, that the tariff averaged today higher than it averaged when the present administration came into power.

The present Government in its year of power had managed to collect eighty eight millions in taxes on imports of five hundred and six millions, while the year previous the late Government had collected seventy eight millions only on five hundred and two millions of imports. Under the late Government the rate of taxation was 15 1/2 per cent.; under the present it had been 17 1/2 per cent. Such was the fulfillment of the fa-

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...mous 1919 platform.

Dealing with finance, the Opposition leader contrasted the "improvements of members of the present Government" for reduction of debt by its predecessor with their own performances when in office. Liberals had demanded that the late Government reduce debt at a time when re-establishment policies were involving large expenditures and the pension list was growing. Today all expenditures, including pensions, were being reduced; and yet the Government four years after the war had added forty five millions to the national debt.

Meanwhile the present Government, instead of reducing expenditures, had spent its ingenuity in ascertaining what new taxes could be placed on the backs of the people of the Dominion. Tens of millions of a tax burden had been added by a fifty per cent. increase in the sales tax, while other taxes had been added until business was being clogged. Yet the Government considered it a matter of boast about that the post office would have a surplus this year, the reason being that the people had to go every day to the post office to buy stamps with which to plaster over business documents.

The late Government had laid the foundation for the saving of millions by its reorganization of the Printing Bureau, the Post Office, and the Customs Department. The same policy should be pursued by the present Government.

It had been said that we could not pay our share of the burden of Empire because of the great debt which Canada was carrying. Britain was paying two-thirds of its revenue in interest on a debt contracted that the liberties of the world might be saved, and yet the British Government was able to reduce its debt. This Government had to pay only one-third of its revenue in interest on the debt, yet it had added to that debt forty five millions.

Debt is increased.

Much had been said in the speech from the throne about the improvement in conditions in the country. No one had higher hopes of the Dominion than Mr. Meighen, but he had not observed those improved conditions. During the war, under the policy of the late Government, \$550,000,000 had been added to the people's savings and \$1,700,000,000 of the national debt had been taken up by the Canadian people, while up to the end of 1927 the people of Canada had spent \$600,000,000 in automobiles. But such conditions had not been continued. Even though they started with such conditions as he had just sketched, the present Government had not been able to reduce the debt, but had added to it.

It was true that Canada's wheat harvest was larger than it had ever been, but it was necessary to point out that the western farmer was more overshadowed today by debt and trouble than at any time for the last fifteen years. The Government said that the condition of Europe was responsible for the low price of wheat, and there was a good deal of truth in that statement. There was a close connection between the price of Canadian wheat and the restoration of security and monetary soundness in Europe.

The speech from the throne contained no reference to the efforts of the British Government last summer to draw the different parts of the Empire to her support in Southern Europe. Therefore, he proposed to make a reference to this matter. He would only say that the speech from the throne appeared as barren in this respect as the Government had been in September last, when the call came to lay before Parliament all correspondence relating to the matter, so that the people of Canada could judge what their duty was.

The Government claimed credit for the removal of the embargo on Canadian cattle, said Mr. Meighen. But it must be known that whatever was acceded by Great Britain was the direct result of a promise made in 1917 to the Canadian Government.

"And," said Mr. Meighen, "is the embargo even yet removed? The Minister of Agriculture is in his seat. He says 'no.' Of course the embargo is not yet removed. There isn't an animal in this country today that could horn itself into the British Isles."

Premier King's Speech.

Premier King said that Mr. Meighen's speech had been marked by the spirit of moderation. He would endeavor to follow him in the same spirit. He expressed regret at the withdrawal of Mr. Creighton from the leadership of the Progressive party and congratulated Mr. Forke on his elevation to that position.

The Premier said that Mr. Meighen's criticism of the administration with regard to railroads was absolutely without foundation. The Grand Trunk System, said Mr. King, no longer existed as a separate system. The National System and the Grand Trunk had been amalgamated. There was now only one management and one board of control.

Only Hon. Arthur Meighen had been asked who, then, was the traffic manager of the combination.

Mr. King requested the House

Eastern Guardian

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to have patience and reiterated his assertion that the amalgamation had been brought about.

Replying to Mr. Meighen's criticism of the Government's immigration policy, Mr. King asserted that the very small number of immigrants was directly due to the policy of the former Government. When the former Prime Minister and his colleagues should have been busy in securing settlers for Canada, they had been occupied in campaigning in order to secure the confidence of the voters.

The natural resources problem, said Mr. King, was one that could not be settled of hand. The Government had not been prepared to go so far as had been desired by the western provinces, but progress had been made and he hoped that with further conferences the matter would be settled.

Referring to recent correspondence between the British and Canadian governments on the Near East question, the Premier said that the Government had always hoped that it would be possible to bring this down, but the British Government had emphatically indicated its wish that the correspondence should not be laid before Parliament. However, the British Government had stated that no exception could be taken by them to a statement being made by the Premier as to what had taken place.

NEAR EAST DESPATCH

Premier King said that about midnight on Friday, September 15, a despatch was sent from Great Britain to Canada, and he understood to the other Dominions, with respect to the situation in the Near East. The despatch was received in Ottawa the same evening, in cypher.

As usual with such communications, the despatch went first to the Governor-General's office and thence to the Prime Minister's office. It had reached the latter office between two and three o'clock on Saturday afternoon.

Meanwhile the press of this country had received a cable communication from the Old Country to the effect that the British Dominions had been invited to send a contingent to the Near East, and the Saturday papers between 12 and 3 announced that the Government of New Zealand had responded to an answer promising a contingent.

On the particular Saturday Mr. King was in his constituency of North York. When he reached Ottawa the following morning, he immediately sent a despatch to the British Government asking for an explanation as to how it came about, but before any word had reached the Government at Ottawa the press of the country had had a statement to the effect that the British Government had invited the Dominions to send contingents to the Near East. Mr. King communicated at once, he said, with the Canadian delegates at Geneva in order to have the benefit of their counsel and the knowledge at their disposal.

The substance of the despatch, Mr. King added, was that the British had decided to resist Turkish aggression in Europe and to secure the freedom of the Straits, that the British Government had advised Mustapha Kemal to this effect, that the British Government would be glad to know whether the Dominion Government wished to associate itself with this action and whether it was its desire to be represented by a contingent. This, said Mr. King, constituted the main part of the despatch. Mention was made in the despatch why some of the Dominions would particularly wish to be represented by a contingent.

Premier Smuts, said Mr. King, told his Parliament that the despatch had been addressed primarily to Australia and New Zealand, and that the British Government had interest in the Near East situation. The despatch had later been sent to the other Dominions since it had been felt that they would be included.

In view of his anxiety that it should be thoroughly understood, so that nothing was being withheld, Premier King proposed to hand over the despatch to Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, as he was a mem-



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ber of the Privy Council, in order that he might peruse it. He also thought it might be well if Robert Forke, leader of the Progressive Opposition, should also read the communication.

Mr. Meighen remarked that he felt the communication should have been submitted to him earlier. Whether or not it should be submitted to others beside himself was a matter for the Government to decide.

Mr. King referred to the announcement that Canada had been invited to co-operate with Great Britain, which appeared in the press. He stated that he had called to the British Government, saying that the Dominion Government had been embarrassed by this announcement, as it was in possession of a message in cypher marked "confidential." He was being asked for the text of the message. Therefore, he wished to know what parts he was at liberty to make public. He had asked the British Government to make the correspondence before answering. Later, said Mr. King, that the Canadian Government would be confronted with a request for the production of all correspondence as soon as Parliament assembled. The reply that he received from the British Government was that the despatch was not suitable for publication.

With regard to Mr. Meighen's reference to the importance of mentioning the various parts of the British Empire, Mr. King said the Canadian Cabinet was prepared to hold daily sittings. He also asked the British Government when only be done if full recognition of the rights of the Empire, which involved the whole people of the country, must be left to the representatives of the people.

Adjournment of the debate was then moved by Robert Forke, Progressive leader. The House adjourned until to-morrow.