

Mr. R. B. Hanson Takes Part In Debate on the Address

Member for York-Sunbury Made Vigorous Reply to Hon. Mr. Veniot—Subsidy Payments to the Maritimes Discussed—Says Freight Rate Schedules Do Not Fill the Bill—Some Lively Passages.

Mr. R. B. Hanson (York-Sunbury): any constructive policy, or that any single paragraph holds out the slightest hope to the business men of this country. Certainly it contains nothing that holds out any hope to the industries of the Dominion; there is no hope held out to those who are seeking employment—and in my part of the country they are many; there is no hope held out to our manufacturing industries, and it is absolutely mute on the question of fiscal policy. It is easy to say that the country is prosperous. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) said so the other day in the very eloquent and very extended remarks that he addressed to the house; but saying that a thing is so, and its being actually so, are two entirely different propositions. I submit that having had three or four good crops, and Providence having been kind to some persons in the Dominion, in that respect there is a substantial amount of new wealth. We are all glad of that, no one more so than I. But as to there being real prosperity, I have yet to be shown. In the province of New Brunswick I am very sorry to have to say that conditions have not improved. I say this very reluctantly, for there is no one in this house who takes a greater interest in the industrial development of my province than I do. I am doing everything that is humanly possible, within my humble sphere of influence, to extend industry in New Brunswick, and I shall continue to do so whether or not I am a member of this house.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that I should have had the temerity to intervene in this debate had it not been for the characteristically bombastic speech of the Postmaster General (Mr. Veniot) who has just taken his seat. Down in New Brunswick the utterances of the hon. gentleman amount to nothing, and I do not think they will mean very much here after the members of this house have had an opportunity of hearing him a few more times. The people of my native province have taken the measure of the hon. gentleman—

Mr. Veniot—And the courts have taken your measure.

Mr. Hanson—they determined in August, 1925, that he should no longer be premier, and he is here as a member of this administration by the pure force of circumstances.

Called to Order.

Mr. Veniot—What about the circumstances that brought you before the courts?

Mr. Speaker—Order.

Mr. Hanson—I do not intend to emulate the example of the hon. gentleman. I should like to see the debate conducted on a little higher plane, and for that reason I do not propose to follow him in the manner of his presentation; but I do desire to make a few remarks with reference to the subject matter of his address. Before I do so, however, I should like to advert for a moment to the speech from the throne. It is the most remarkable document of its kind that I have ever read. I defy anyone to say that it lays down

and in the course of this debate more than to remark that as a humble student of international law I submit this as a sound proposition, that Canada is not a sovereign state and never will be so long as she is an integral part of the British Empire. I am content that she never should be a sovereign state.

Immigration.

Just for a moment or two I would like to refer to the speech of the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Forke), who, I am sorry to see, is not in his seat. He made a speech in this house a day or two ago which I followed with the greatest possible care, as well as I could hear him. I have not taken the opportunity of reading his remarks as recorded in Hansard, but the impression made upon me by his speech was that it was a confession of impotence and inability to meet the situation. I have one suggestion to make. At the recent annual meeting of the shareholders of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Sir John Aird, that great financier who appeared before the banking and commerce committee of this house some time ago, made a most constructive suggestion. It was to the effect that if the Department of Immigration of this country found itself unable to cope with the situation, a round-table conference should be called with the heads of the colonization departments of the railways, the immigration departments of the provincial governments and all others interested in this great national work, in order if possible to arrive at some solution of this problem—because it is a real national problem which is capable of solution and should be dealt with at the earliest possible time if this country is to grow as very hon. gentleman in this house desires it to grow. I commend that suggestion to the Minister of Immigration. He will receive assistance from the members of the provincial governments; I know that the

government of New Brunswick are sincerely anxious to co-operate with the federal Department of Immigration in the solution of this problem, and I venture to give the minister the assurance that he will not find the provincial government of New Brunswick, Conservative though it may be, actuated in the slightest degree by any political considerations. What we in New Brunswick want in the first place is to retain our own native born, and then we want a healthy influx of desirable immigrants from the British Isles. I cannot place too much emphasis on

implemented eight out of the ten major recommendations of the Duncan report, is, in my humble opinion and in the opinion of other close observers, very wide of the mark to say the least. Let me take up some of the more important points to which my hon. friend alluded this afternoon.

Mr. Dunning—Would my hon. friend clear up one point for me? I would like to know whether there are ten recommendations or thirty.

Mr. Hanson—It all depends on what you call specific recommendations. I suggest that altogether, major and

then, only fifty per cent of the sum voted by parliament as a minimum lump-sum payment was paid, and at first it was proposed to hold the second payment until January 1 of this year. What did that mean? It simply meant that the provincial government of New Brunswick could not balance its budget for the ten current fiscal year end on October 31, and I believe in Nova Scotia the fiscal year ends on September 30, a month earlier. The idea was to hold back fifty per cent of the lump sum due to that both the provincial governments, which happened to be Conservative governments, would be compelled to go to the people and say that they had a deficit.

Mr. Dunning—Oh, no.

The Duncan Report.

Mr. Hanson—I have not a doubt in the world that that was the idea in mind. More than that: the Prime Minister, if I read his recent statement aright, and I think I do, did not on this specific recommendation accept the underlying principle of the Duncan report. As I understand the underlying principle of Sir Andrew Rae Duncan's recommendation in respect to this very vital matter, it was that this interim lump sum payment should be paid and continually paid until the whole question should be finally settled as between the federal treasury and the other provinces, but that these payments were to be over and above and outside any consideration which could be given to the claims of other provinces for increased federal subsidy. That is the way I understand that principle. The Prime Minister specifically said—if my recollection serves me aright, I am sorry at the moment I have not his actual words under my hand—that they could not accept that recommendation. Now what does that mean? It means that my friend the Premier of New Brunswick and my friend the Premier of Nova Scotia have got to convince the treasury not only of the dominion but of every one of the other provinces that we in the maritime provinces, because of what we lost when we went into confederation, are entitled to that extra lump sum over and above any other consideration that may be given to the other provinces. Not only have we got to fight a battle with the treasury department of Canada; we have to fight it out with every one of the other provinces. Surely that is not what was recommended. We do not know exactly what happened at the Dominion-provincial conference, and I shall have something to say about that in a moment. For reasons which seemed to be good, and perhaps were good, we have no official report of the debates which took place at that conference. However, I do know that "the coon came down" and the payments were made less what this government kept back from Nova Scotia. Ultimately the payments were made—because I believe, of the good sense and the good conscience of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb); I want to pay him that tribute.

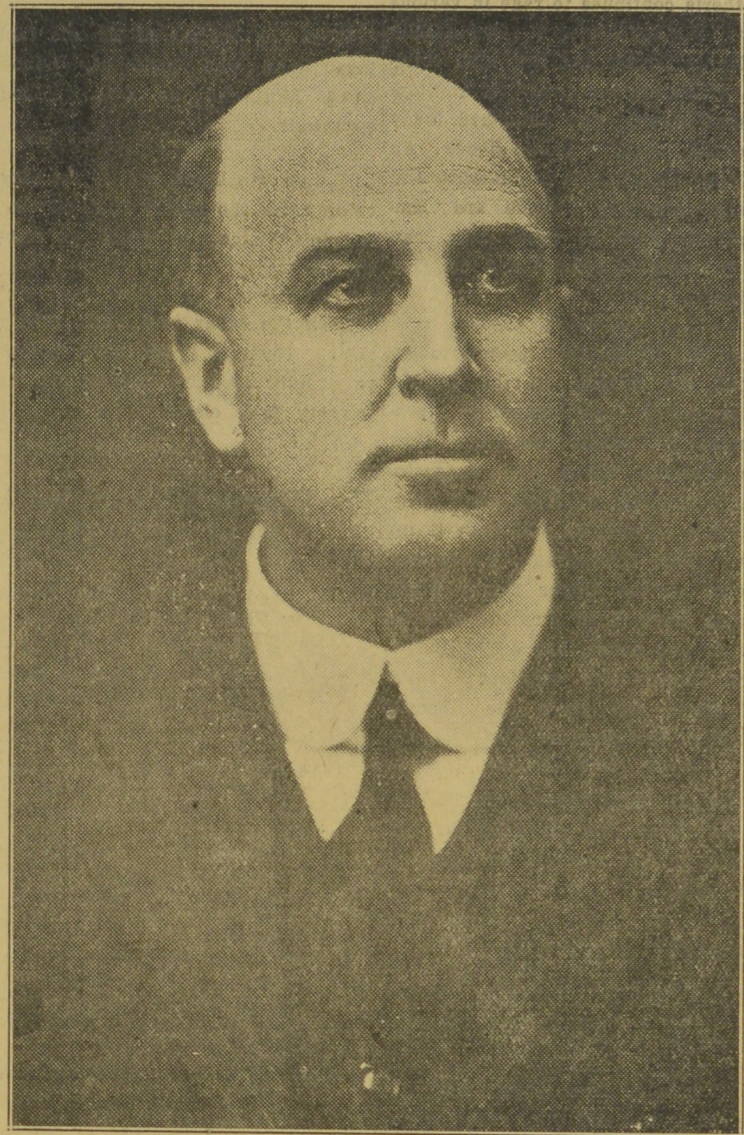
An Intricate Matter.

Now with respect to freight rates: this is an intricate matter, which no hon. member can hope to encompass in the course of the few minutes that are allowed under the present rule, but he can at least present a summary. The maritime freight rates act did not contain all the things which it ought to have contained. Primarily, I think, the Minister of Railways is responsible for that, and accepts full responsibility. Under that act the Canadian National Railways did file their tariff. My hon. friend the Postmaster General laboured at great length this afternoon to prove that under these schedules the national system had given more than a twenty per cent reduction in the rates covered by the act. Well, my answer to that is this: If more than seven months have elapsed since those schedules were filed with the railway commission, why have they not been approved by the commission? Does it take seven months to check up the schedules that were filed on June 29 last? There is another reason. It is that the schedules as filed do not, I believe, in the opinion of the railway commission fill the bill under the act.

Mr. Dunning: Can my hon. friend show that?

Mr. Hanson—No, I cannot. I am trying to reason as closely as I possibly can, and I am expressing that as a proper inference from the non-activity of the commission in the matter. Now what do we find? We find that the

(Continued on page 6)



MR. R. B. HANSON, K. C., M. P.

the word "British", because if you look back on the experience of the United States, particularly during the year 1917, but both before and after that time as well, you will see the result of the mixed immigration policy pursued for so long by that great country, which brought about the quota system and a policy of discrimination that should be adopted by any country desiring to remain white, or to remain British, as is the case with Canada.

I am sorry the Postmaster General is not in his seat. I do not for a moment venture to suggest that he has left the house because of anything I might say, because I am quite sure that the hon. gentleman has courage; I have never known him to run away from a fight.

Mr. Dunning—Hear, hear.

A Professional Politician.

Mr. Hanson—Neither have I. He is a professional politician, and I do not use that term in any derogatory sense at all, because I quite appreciate that a man who becomes a member of a federal cabinet must become more or less of a professional politician. I am not a professional politician but a commercial lawyer, and I feel it is due to the people of New Brunswick whom he has attacked here this afternoon, and especially the associated boards of trade of the maritime provinces, that there should be some reply to the references he has made.

The hon. minister referred at great length to the Duncan report and to the carrying out of its terms by the present government. I should like to refer for a moment to what took place in this house last session with regard to that report. We have all read the Duncan report many times; personally I have studied it with the greatest possible care. We all heard the Prime Minister read a very carefully prepared statement in this house last session as to the attitude of the government in regard to the recommendations of Sir Andrew Rae Duncan and his associates, and I am bound to say that the people of the maritime provinces were heartened both by the report and by the attitude of the Prime Minister as representing the government of the country. But to say, as the Postmaster General has said, not only from his seat in the house this afternoon but at two public functions in the maritime provinces within the past few weeks, that the government has

minor, there are thirty-two recommendations.

Mr. Dunning—Everyone who reads the report gets a different idea as to the number of recommendations.

Mr. Hanson—I suggest to the hon. gentleman that he read it again and make up his own mind.

Mr. Dunning—I have done so, and have honestly endeavoured to carry them out.

Freight Rates.

Mr. Hanson—I know my hon. friend has read it, but as to the last part of his remark, I say to him that he has only partly carried out the recommendation affecting his department, and if I have time I intend to refer to that recommendation dealing with international freight rates which, so far as I know, he has not attempted to put into effect.

Now let us refer for a moment to the money grants, which are of such great importance to the provincial governments. There is no doubt that the recommendations of the Duncan report in regard to this matter were as clear and as specific as the English language could make them. If anyone desires to look them up they will be found at page 19 of the report, and at the risk of taking up some of my very valuable time I will read them. I find this forty minute rule a very cramping thing, although I must confess that I was a party to it in the special committee last year. This is what I find in the report:

We do not feel, however, that it would be right or wise that the maritime provinces, in their present state of grave necessity, with deficits accumulating against them in their ordinary revenue and expenditure, should be left in suspense until a re-assessment is made by the Dominion government, and accordingly we recommend that immediate interim lump-sum increases should be made in the payments to the three maritime provinces.

Subsidy Payments.

If that meant anything at all it meant that just as soon as the government received authority from parliament, immediate lump-sum payments should be made, but that was not done. If I remember correctly parliament prorogued on April 14, and the first payment was not made until July 1, which is not "immediate" within the terms of the Duncan report. Even

JOB PRINTING

All work guaranteed Finest Quality
and Artistic Workmanship
The Largest Plant in the City



LETTER HEADS

PROGRAMMES ENVELOPES CIRCULARS
BILL HEADS WEDDING INVITATIONS
REPORTS POSTERS CARDS BOOKS
BUTTER WRAPPERS HONEY LABELS
LEGAL FORMS AUCTION SALE HANGERS
and all other JOB PRINTING WORK

Come in and see our sample of any of the above
Orders by Mail Promptly Attended to

We Aim to Satisfy The Most
Exacting Customer

No Job too large or too small to receive our
immediate attention

MAIL PRINTING CO.
FREDERICTON, N. B.

It Pays to Advertise in the Mail