

felt it my duty to consecrate the greater part of my time and of my efforts. In my view the canalization of the Ottawa is a work absolutely indispensable for our commerce, for the transportation of the products of our vast field in the west and the development and the progress of the country, and it is the only means by which we can assure ourselves of the supremacy in the transportation of the products of the American continent to which we are entitled by reason of our magnificent waterways, the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, and our proximity to the great ports of Europe.

If I have allowed myself to change the order of the speech of His Majesty's representative, in order to analyze it, however imperfectly I have presented it, and if I have reserved to the end my views of the paragraphs of the speech which relate to the Imperial conference and the negotiation of a treaty between France and Canada, it is that, in my humble judgment, these paragraphs form the most interesting part, the most important and the most encouraging in a speech so full of interest and hope. The news that the Canadian government had, through the Finance Minister and the Minister of Marine, negotiated with the government of the French Republic a treaty in virtue of which our commercial relations with France will be greatly facilitated has been welcomed with general satisfaction. Everyone sees in that important event an immediate consequence, a happy result of the entente cordiale towards which His Majesty, our Illustrious King, has so largely contributed.

This treaty and the more direct and frequent intercourse and consequently more amicable relations which will flow from it, will contribute to the material progress of the parties immediately interested, and will serve at the same time to draw closer the ties of friendship and sympathy which the alliance of France and England have created.

This new treaty of commerce constitutes equal proof of the very real effect of the entente cordiale, and that it has already produced tangible result.

Canadians believe firmly that their loyalty to the British crown is in no wise incompatible with their desire and their determination to maintain and assure to the Dominion

the most complete liberty in all that which concerns its interests and its own affairs, and they look upon the exercise of the right of negotiating their treaties of commerce, as a right which has been freely conceded to them under the circumstances, as the emphatic consecration of their national autonomy.

But the Imperial conference which preceded by some weeks only the negotiation of the treaty, had for its principal result the establishment of the real existence of our autonomy, and furnished the means, as well as the occasion, to proclaim it with solemn sanction. Through our eloquent and fully authorized representative, the first citizen of the Dominion, Canada refused to mix herself in the affairs of the United Kingdom, whilst claiming for herself complete liberty of action; this should be for all of us a subject of satisfaction and rejoicing. It should be for all of us a subject of gratification that the conference has served to consecrate and proclaim in a manner as solemn as explicit, the blessing of our national autonomy which a group of unenlightened and badly advised citizens appeared willing to have curtailed.

The parliament of Canada, in affirming its approval and its gratitude for the firm, dignified and enlightened attitude of its representative at the Imperial conference would only be faithfully interpreting the views of all the inhabitants of confederation. Everybody throughout Canada has applauded the admirable manner in which our representative acquitted himself on the difficult mission which had been confided to him at the Imperial conference, of which it is strictly true to say that he was the inspiring genius, the sure guide and the directing force.

The brilliant picture which His Excellency submits to us would not be a complete painting if it did not contain a shadow, and in the recital of the striking events of the year 1907 we would have felt that the speech of the representative of the King would have been defective if it had not made mention of the great disaster, the falling of the Quebec bridge and the terrible loss of life which resulted therefrom. It is to be hoped that the loss caused to the country, as well as to the families of the