

Although at the present moment business is slightly restricted—

I can imagine my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance (Mr. White), saying: I made a speech a few weeks ago saying that the crisis was over. How can I say that it still exists? He was drawing too long a bow at Montreal. The Speech only says what is in everybody's mind, and puts it very mildly and gently when it says that business is slightly restricted. But when we have the admission from the Government that business is not in a satisfactory condition, what are we to say of the conclusion which is reached by the Government? We have the admission that the economic condition of the country is not satisfactory, and a confession on the part of the Government of its impotence to deal with such a problem. When the Government stated in the Speech—a statement which I am sure they placed very reluctantly in the mouth of His Royal Highness—that the economic condition of the country was not satisfactory, all that they did was to express the highest hope that matters would rectify themselves. They say that the resources of the country are boundless. So they are, but is it the business of the Government simply to rely upon the resources of the country? Are they to do nothing themselves? Are they to be simply flies on the wheel? Are they not to take any action at all? It is very true that the resources are boundless, but it has been shown that the resources of the country do not yield their treasures to those who rely simply upon statements; they want to be tapped; they want men to use power and judgment in order to develop them. This is not what is done by my hon. friend the Minister of Finance. The Government thus stands to-day convicted before the people that, while admitting that the economic condition of the country is not satisfactory, they have nothing to suggest in order to make it any better. Is this what we are to expect from the Government? Is this what the people of the country have reason to expect in view of the fact that two years ago they placed the government of the country in the hands of the gentlemen who now occupy the treasury benches? Are we to be told in this age and at this day that the Government are in power simply to enjoy the sweets of office and to take no responsibility to better such a condition of things as exists to-day? If the Government will not take any responsibility, perhaps it may be well that I should tell them that they must act. They cannot afford to remain silent. They must act in order to carry out the duties which they

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have to perform. What action are they to take? There are several things which they can do, which they ought to do, and which the people expect them to do.

In the first place, they must give to the country, which is a young, expanding country, as stated a moment ago by the hon. member for York, N.B., wider markets than it has at the present time. There is one thing which they can do simply by a stroke of the pen; they can give to the producer of wheat the American market. They have received delegation upon delegation asking for that. I understand that my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers), who told us last year that he knew how to win elections, stated, during the election in Macdonald, that, if it was in the interest of the people to have free wheat, free wheat it would be.

What more evidence does my hon. friend want? He has received a delegation from the grain growers of the western provinces asking for free wheat. In the very legislature of the province which he represents here a resolution has been passed unanimously, not moved by a Grit but moved by a Conservative, to the effect that wheat ought to be made free. There was a delegation only a few days ago of some twenty members of the Alberta Legislature asking for free wheat. How is it, then, that the Speech from the Throne does not contain the announcement that wheat will be made free? When this admission was made that the economic condition of the country was not satisfactory, we had reason to expect that some action would be taken. We have been disappointed in this. Is that all they should do? No, they ought to do that which they have been asked many times to do,—they ought to relieve the farming community of the burden of taxation which the farmers are carrying at the present time. There is one fact that is beyond doubt, a fact on which we must have more explanation before the session passes. Everyone knows that in regard to many commodities of which at one time we produced far more than we consumed we do not now produce enough to meet the home demand. Years ago we produced a surplus of butter and of meat of many kinds; at present we are importing butter, mutton and other commodities. The agricultural classes have found labour so expensive that they have been unable to carry on their operations as they desired to do. It becomes more and more evident that if you wish to stimulate the farming industries you must provide wider markets than you have provided up to the present time. By a happy circumstance for which the