

rule and law which they acknowledged was their own fantastic will. For my part, I would be sorry to see a single item removed from the constitution which would mar its elasticity. I would be sorry to see it more drastic. I would be sorry to see it follow the American precedent, but I remind the House, and I am sure in so saying no one can gainsay me, that if we want to work the British constitution in this country with the same benefit and advantage that it has been worked in the old country, the Canadian people must act in the same spirit as is shown by the British people, that is to say, that they must see that there are no undue liberties taken with the privileges of Parliament, whether they are written or unwritten. Though I have no fault to find with my hon. friends with the manner in which they have discharged their duties, I venture to believe that on reflection they will agree with me that they would have discharged these duties more effectually, and with more profit to their country, if they had spoken upon this subject, which I suppose is before their minds, as it is before the minds of everybody else, with the exception, perhaps, of the gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches. I venture to believe also, that better counsel would have prevailed if the hand of fate had not removed him, of whom my hon. friend from Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) spoke so feelingly, and of whom it might be said, that though perhaps not altogether free from blame in that respect himself, yet Sir John Thompson always, while he was leader of the Conservative party, insisted on the maintenance and preservation of parliamentary laws and parliamentary rules. I think I might say also that on some occasions he defended those laws and rules against the encroachment of some of his colleagues. My friend from Simcoe (Mr. Bennett) spoke eloquently and well, and most feelingly, on the death of Sir John Thompson. I can re-echo everything he said in that respect. The death of Sir John Thompson was a most shocking one. When a man is struck by the hand of death in the fullness of his years, after a long career, after a career of great usefulness to himself and his country, there remains a feeling even above the poignancy of grief, that after all death has dealt kindly with him. Such was the death of Sir John Macdonald. But when a man is struck down, when he has hardly reached the summit of middle life, when he has attained the full measure of his power, when his friends and his country could look to him for years of useful work, then, Sir, death carries with it a sense of inexpressible bitterness. Such was the death of Sir John Thompson. In that respect it is, perhaps, one of the saddest, perhaps altogether the saddest that our history records. In other respects I look upon it as one of the most glorious. This Can-

adian Minister, this colonial statesman died under the roof of the old Norman Kings, when he had just been sworn in as a member of the Privy Council of that mighty Empire, of which the old Norman kings laid the foundation, but which has reached dimensions which their wildest dreams of imagination never, I am sure, contemplated. Perhaps it is that such a death, under such circumstances, sad as it be, may be looked upon as a sacred consecration of the majestic principle of the unity of the Empire; unity, not only of land and water, unity not only of islands and continents, but a unity of all the creeds and races embraced in that mighty Empire, giving to all while preserving their individuality, a common aim, and a common aspiration and teaching to all the salutary lesson of tolerance and mutual forbearance. If the death of Sir John Thompson were to result in such a lesson being learned by the Canadian people, I am sure we must all agree that glorious indeed would be his death, and I am sure that for all ages, his name would be surrounded with a halo of imperishable fame. Now, Sir, coming to the Speech from the Throne, I do not know that it calls from me for any extended remarks. The Speech from the Throne has been, for some years past, a very dry skeleton. This year it is drier than ever, and the few bones that are in it rattle against each other with a most ominous sound. Perhaps this paucity of substance, this dryness of material, may be the result of the return to the fold of my hon. friend the Minister of Justice, though, if we are to credit a certain press—not that scurrilous ministerial press that is not to be depended upon, but the Opposition press which has never been accused of untruthfulness, at least by its friends—one of the conditions of the return of my hon. friend to the ranks was that there should be no important legislation this session. Well, Sir, I do not know whether that be true; but, at all events, that would be a very light way of looking at a situation so full of gravity as the situation of this country is to-day; for I submit to the consideration of the hon. gentlemen opposite that we have reached a period of the very greatest importance to the interests of Canada. We have reached what perhaps we may call a day of reckoning. Yet on this grave subject the Government are silent. The altered tone of their speeches compared with those to which we have been accustomed to listen in former years on the occasion of the Address being proposed and seconded, is most significant. On previous occasions the burden of all ministerial speeches was a song of triumph, a paean of exultation, even in the face of the most damaging record—even when the figures of the census had ruthlessly dispelled the illusions long cherished by the supporters of the ministerial policy. Even then the burden of all ministerial speeches