

from the throne, that the Imperial Parliament has recently taken action, freeing them from this disability, and in this fact we see the first fruits of the Colonial Conference held last year in this city, and are led to entertain the hope that further suggestions emanating from that conference, are likely to receive favourable consideration by the Imperial Government. The fact that Her Majesty's Government was becoming alive to the possibilities likely to result from a mutual interchange of commodities, and the establishment of closer trade relations between the different colonies, even before the conference met, was made manifest by the appointment to that conference of their very able and experienced representative, Earl of Jersey, whose report to his government is believed to have been very favourable. If we associate with these proposed new conditions, the construction of a line of cable between Australia and Canada, it would, I think, be difficult to over-estimate the value of the benefits to accrue to Canada and to the empire at large from such a new order of things. To my mind it is "a consummation devoutly to be wished" and should it ever be achieved, Her Majesty's Government, this honourable House and this country will, I am sure, be ready to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which they will owe to the minister who personally visited these far distant colonies, and by his extensive knowledge of the principles of trade, by his energy and skill, piloted the movement through its initial stages, some day, ere long, we hope, to reach its beneficent consummation. I refer to our distinguished premier and leader of this House, the Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell; and as I happen to be the first speaker at this session, I shall take *carte blanche*, and with its permission constitute myself, for the moment, the mouthpiece of this honourable House in expressing to him the ardent wish that he may long be spared to enjoy and worthily wear the honours which Her Majesty has recently conferred upon him, in recognition of his distinguished services, and also to convey to him our warmest congratulations on his promotion to the premiership of this great Dominion, to the discharge of the onerous and responsible duties of which he brings all the ripe fruitage of a long parliamentary experience.

In the matter of the Manitoba School case, the Lords of the Privy Council having

decided that the rights of the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba had been infringed upon, by the provisions of an Act intitled "An Act respecting the Department of Education," and an "Act respecting Public Schools," and that they had the right of appeal to the Governor in Council, and their appeal having been heard, the Governor in Council was pleased to decide and declare, that "it seems requisite that the system of education embodied in the two Acts of 1890, shall be supplemented by a provincial Act or Acts which will restore to the Roman Catholic minority the rights and privileges of which such minority has been deprived," and it is earnestly hoped that the Manitoba Legislature will at its approaching session, enact such legislation as shall remove all ground of complaint, and restore harmony among Her Majesty's subjects in that province.

The speech refers to the depression in trade which has been so general throughout the world for the past few years, and frankly makes the admission, that that depression has made itself felt in Canada. It would be a very extraordinary thing indeed if it had not done so; no nation in the world, however vast may be its resources, however intelligent, energetic, and self reliant its people, is so entirely self contained, so thoroughly independent of existent conditions in other countries, especially in those contiguous to its own borders, as to have complete immunity from a share at least in the experience of such general depression, but we are pleased to know that it is a fact, and a fortunate one too, that Canada has experienced that depression to a less degree than other countries. It has not, however, resulted in any considerable decrease in the volume of our foreign trade, a statement which, I think, will be verified on consulting the Trade and Navigation Returns, but whilst the volume of our foreign trade has not materially decreased, the values have; and as quite a number of changes were made in the tariff from specific to ad valorem, and quite a number of articles transferred from the dutiable to the free list, there has resulted a serious decrease in revenue derived from customs and excise, a condition of matters which as the speech states, calls for the greatest possible economy in the appropriations for the various branches of the public service.

In the next clause of the speech, His Ex-