

Now, Sir, I may say that anxious as I understand the Government are to proceed with the public business of the country with all possible promptitude, and overshadowed as every other question that has been placed before us in the speech from the Throne is by the reference to the position the empire now occupies, I do not propose to make any reference to any of the subjects which have just been discussed in the very able speeches of the hon. mover and seconder of the address other than that of the troubles in the Transvaal. The debate on the Budget, which we shall probably reach at an early day, will enable us to deal fully and completely with a large number of the matters that have been referred to by these hon. gentlemen; and the other measures foreshadowed in the speech will be more conveniently dealt with when we have the measures themselves before us. Therefore, I think I shall be consulting the wishes of both sides of the House if I adopt the course at the present time of dealing at not too great length, I hope, with that great transcendent question that occupies the thoughts of all of us to-day, rather than to go into those other questions, which may be dealt with more fully and completely hereafter, and when they are dealt with, I am afraid I shall be obliged to differ in some degree with many of the statements that have been made by the hon. mover and the hon. seconder of the address. I may say that since the first day the parliament of Canada assembled in this Chamber, we have never met in such a position as that in which we now meet. Never have we met on any occasion when the Imperial government stood in any position at all to be compared with that in which it now stands. Some parties, labouring under a very great misconception of the struggle in which the empire is now engaged, altogether underrate it. The position in which the government of the empire finds itself in, carrying out the policy to which it has been compelled to commit itself, is without parallel since this confederation has been established. I may say that from one end of this country to the other, there is no question on which men of all classes, of every section of the community, feel so strongly as on this great transcendent question that occupies our minds to-day, and the minds of all British subjects in every portion of Her Majesty's Empire. As I have said already, I propose to confine myself therefore, on the present occasion, to some reference to the existing condition of things in that regard. I may say that it is with the deepest possible regret that I feel myself compelled to dissent from the statement made in the second paragraph of this address regarding the position that we occupy. I must take exception to that statement that:

We have received practical evidence of the profound devotion and loyalty of the entire peo-

ple of Canada to the sovereign and institutions of the British Empire.

I need not express to members of this House, or to any one in this country who has any knowledge of the opinions I have always entertained upon this momentous question, the extreme regret with which I feel compelled to declare that the term 'entire' would be better replaced by the term 'the overwhelming mass of the people of Canada.' No one can regret more deeply than I the fact that I am obliged to make that qualification; but it is worse than idle to conceal from ourselves the actual position and facts as are known to hon. members on both sides and all the intelligent people of this country; and no terms that we can use in the speech from the Throne, unless they are sustained by the actual, existing facts, can be used with any advantage, either to the House or this country or to the empire.

Now, I may say that I have always treated this question of the Transvaal war and the part that I felt Canada was bound by every possible tie and obligation to take in it, as one above and beyond any party consideration. From the outset I have treated it from that standpoint.

An hon. MEMBER. Oh, oh!

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I hear an expression of dissent from that statement, and therefore the House will perhaps be indulgent if I draw, for a few brief moments, its attention to the grounds upon which I claim that that is the position I took from the first. When this question was first drawn to the attention of this House, what was the attitude that I assumed? The hon. member for North Victoria (Col. Hughes), whom I may venture to name, under the circumstances, brought to the attention of the right hon. First Minister, on the 12th of July last, the fact that Queensland, one of the Australian provinces, had already offered to send a contingent of volunteers to aid Her Majesty's government in South Africa, and indicated to the government that, in his judgment, it was desirable that Canada should take similar action. But the right hon. gentleman, who leads the House with so much ability, met that suggestion by the expression of the hope, in which we all concurred, that, menacing as events were, there would be no war, but that a peaceful solution would be arrived at. What then did I do? I ventured on that occasion to suggest—and it was a suggestion made, I have no hesitation frankly in saying for the purpose of obtaining the united, hearty, spontaneous expression of both parties in this House, and all parties in this country, in relation to the question to which I attach so much importance—on that occasion I ventured to suggest to my right hon. friend that if a peaceable solution were to be ob-