

won all Canadian hearts by the simplicity of her manner, the dignity of her bearing, the kindness of her disposition. From her we have learned that dignity and simplicity of manner and kindness of disposition, appreciable in every walk of life, have a double charm when found in the most exalted station.

As to the speech with which His Royal Highness has opened parliament there is not much to be said. The measures suggested in it are not of the character to invite any criticism at the present time. It promises we shall have measures for the improvement of highways, for the aid of agriculture, and for the establishment of a Tariff Commission, all of which may mean very much or very little, and until we have their details it is impossible to make any comment on them. But, there are words placed in the mouth of His Royal Highness by his present advisers which we on this side of the House have every reason to be proud of. It is stated in the speech:

It affords me great pleasure to congratulate you upon the continued and increasing prosperity of the country. Our trade, both with British and with foreign countries, is rapidly expanding, and there is every prospect that its volume in the present year will be largely in excess of that attained at any time in the past.

Sir, when we took office fifteen years ago, such compliments could not be paid to the outgoing government as are now paid to us. Fifteen years ago the country was not in the condition in which we have left it to our successors; fifteen years ago agriculture was in a languishing condition, industry was perishing, the people were on the verge of despair. To-day, the treasury is not only full but it is overflowing; agriculture is in a flourishing condition, industry never was more active, the Canadian people are prosperous and happy. Fifteen years ago, Canada was nothing but an obscure colony; to-day, those hon. gentlemen who preceded me in this debate admit that our country has reached the dignity of a nation, and that upon her is fixed the admiring gaze of the world. If we scan the pages of history, I do not think there ever was an administration which went out of office under such circumstances as ours. As a rule, governments are beaten because the people are not satisfied with the prosperity of the country, but we have gone out of office because, having done so much for the country, our opponents told the people that it was better not to go further, and that they should take the administration from the hands which had guided the country with such success and place it in hands less enterprising. I believe, Sir, that a better epitaph could not be written for the late administration than these words put in the mouth of His Royal Highness by his present

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

advisers, and these gentlemen will be happy indeed, if when the day comes that they must relinquish their trust, as much can be said for them as has been said for us.

There is another reference in the speech on which we have reason to congratulate ourselves. It is stated that the government have already opened negotiations with a view to having improved trade relations with the British West Indies and British Guiana. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster) will remember that in former days he tried his hand, but with little success, to improve our trade with British Guiana and the West Indies. He knows also, and I regret it is a fact, that there is not much to be had in the way of trade with these countries, even under the most favourable conditions. I do not say that to discourage his efforts; on the contrary, we on this side of the House approve of any attempt which may be made by this administration to find markets for our products, whether it be in British or in foreign countries, because what we want is improvement of our trade. But, Sir, the present administration have rejected that agreement, in which there was a good deal to be had for the people, on the ground of sentiment, and I am afraid that in the present trade negotiations there is more sentiment than business reality.

This brings me to refer to the remarks of my hon. friend from Calgary upon the question of reciprocity, upon which we went to the country and were defeated. Sir, under our British system of government, the loss of power by one party and the accession to power of another party is a matter of little consequence in itself but what is of consequence is that we should know exactly what are the present conditions and what are the duties devolving on the present government? I want to speak of this without any recrimination in regard to the decision of the country. Of course in my judgment, the country made a mistake, but we on this side of the House are prepared to accept its decision loyally and to act accordingly. At the same time, we want to point out the obligation which rests on the present administration in consequence of the change which has taken place. What is the situation so far as this question is concerned? It simply amounts to this, that the late administration negotiated a commercial convention with our neighbours, the great American Republic, to remove all legal obstacles to the flow of trade between the two countries so far as natural products were concerned. Such conventions are not new in the history of the world. They are as old as tariffs. From the day nations adopted tariffs and collected their revenues by imposing duties on foreign imports, from that day conventions of such a character have