

in the Speech, to depart at this day from the course which, at the request of the hon. gentleman opposite, I chalked out for myself upon previous occasions. There was a time when I thought it right that we should speak. It was a time when action of a particular description ought, in our opinion, to have been taken, and, when the Government declined to take that action, we felt it our duty to invite the House to agree that that action should be taken; but since these negotiations have been going on, we have known little and we have said less. I am told—I have not had the good fortune of seeing them—that important state papers on this subject have been distributed in the Imperial Houses and in the Congress of the neighboring country. I see by the Speech that at length we are to have some too, but as they have been published to the people of the Empire through the proceedings in the Imperial Parliament, and as I believe they have been published to the people in the United States, to a large extent, through the proceedings in Congress, I trust the promise which is made in the Speech will be redeemed at the earliest possible day, and that the papers will be laid before us, not in manuscript but in printed form, which I have no doubt the Government, according to its duty, has taken order for, even before the commencement of the Session. The rule I have just stated for myself precludes me until these papers come down from considering whether it is fit to engage in a discussion of the situation. I confess to some regret at the very faint character of the language in which we are permitted to hope for an adjustment. I observe that all that is said is that negotiations are still in progress, and will, we may be permitted to hope, result in an arrangement honorable and satisfactory. That certainly is not a very great encouragement. I hope that the results will be even stronger—well, they could not be weaker—than the statement. Nor is that statement, faintly encouraging as it is, altogether without some drawback. In another portion of the Speech, we find that, expressly with a reference to the possibility of the interruption of intercourse, and that necessarily in view of possible retaliatory measures by the United States, we are called upon to make an appropriation for the construction of a Sault Ste. Marie Canal, and so the completion of the much-despised water stretches of my hon. friend from East York (Mr. Mackenzie). Now, I said that the Speech itself contained a reference of a topic which indicated the importance of the removal of that blemish on the jubilee year of the Queen, to which I referred, and the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon), in the observation which he made, in many of which I am glad to be able heartily to concur, as to the conduct and character and temper of the United States, touched upon something which I think deserves the least word of supplement. He said, and I hope he was right in saying it, I believe he was right in saying it, that there was much dependence to be placed upon the common sense and just spirit of the people of the United States. But, Sir, I would wish to remind him and all of us, that independent altogether of the difficulty which is created by the local feeling and the special personal interests of the fishermen of the United States, and independent altogether of that general feeling of a disposition to assert a supposed national dignity, sometimes unnecessarily, on the part of a great power like the United States, there is always before us this, that the sore with reference to Ireland creates a body of public feeling in that country hostile not to Canada because it is Canada, but to Canada because it may be a means of humiliating and interfering with England; and, therefore, we have an additional reason for the hope which I ventured to express as earnestly entertained by one, and, I hope, by both sides of the House on this question. The hon. gentleman alluded to the additional step which we find has been for these many years designed for the promotion of trade and commerce. We have been going on since 1880 promoting our trade and commerce.

We have been told since the year 1880, Session after Session, not merely with that spirit of optimism which distinguishes speakers who move and second the address, but also with rather an extension of that spirit on the part of hon. gentlemen controlling the affairs of the country, and their supporters, that the extension and development of our trade and commerce were most satisfactory. Each year we heard the same story. But one hon. gentleman has told us that in view, once again, of possible difficulty with our neighbors, an extra effort is now required, and it seems that effort is to take the form of another department. I remember the last time when an increase in the number of the Cabinet Ministers was proposed in Parliament. It was in the fall of 1873, in the Session in the course of which you first made your appearance on the floors of this House. You had not an opportunity any more than myself of expressing an opinion upon that proposition. But circumstances, to which I hope the state of feeling and the harmony of the proceedings of to day would make it almost unmannerly to allude further, rendered that proposition the object of a premature death and of a silent burial. But at length, fourteen years later, it is revived. I hope that everything that can be done for the promotion of our trade and commerce will be done. I hope, however, that in promoting our trade and commerce it will be found possible to combine the accomplishment of that object which we have so much at heart, with the utilization of some of the existing light offices, so that we may not at the same time add still further to the taxes and the expenses of the Government. We have got a President of the Council, we have got a Secretary of State, whose official duties are very light, I think. I said official duties. There are other duties which I know the hon. gentleman who shakes his own head—and shakes his head for the hon. Secretary of State as well—performs, that are very onerous, very onerous, indeed, but I am not quite certain that the character of those duties is such as ought to induce this House to agree to the creation of a new Minister in order that the present Ministers may have more leisure to discharge those duties. Now, Sir, this appears to be the main proposition. We find some statements, more moderate than statements that I have seen on former occasions, with reference to the condition of the country, statements which we will be better able to analyze and discuss when we get the public documents which are awaiting us, and on which I need not trouble the House just now. You have also a reference to some proposed improvements, some small matters of administration, and very little else. It appears that it is intended, in so far as Government business is concerned, that we shall not have very much to trouble us this Session. I never read a Speech from the Throne which was less promising of good things. The only plum, in point of fact, that we are promised is a new Minister, who is not, I suppose to be a Plumb. But, Sir, as there is so little here, as we are met here very late, and as consequently we are all desirous of getting to the real business of the Session, I propose, as I said in opening, to follow the suggestions made some time ago on two other occasions by the First Minister and so admirably seconded, in fact, if not in words, by the mover and seconder of this Address, not further to protract my observations, in order that we may, as soon as we can, enter upon the duties which we were elected to perform.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is quite evident that we are a happy family, at all events to-day. Both sides are agreed, both sides are shaking hands, metaphorically, across the floor. The hon. gentleman has extended his favor to the Speech from the Throne, so far as to say that it was harmless. He joined with me—he could not help joining with me and with the House—in expressing himself favorably and eloquently as to the character of the speeches of the mover and seconder of the Address. The whole