

petency and tests of efficiency should be established. I regret my inability to address this House even briefly in the French language, not only because it is the language spoken by so many who hear me, but because the county which I have the honor of representing contains nearly 12,000 French Acadians, and among them are numbered many of my best friends and warmest supporters. It has been intimated that to this fact is partly due my selection for the position, the duties of which I am now trying to discharge. However that may be, I can assure you that any honor conferred upon me as their representative I will always most highly appreciate, and any kindness shown me as a mark of courtesy to them will be most gratefully and cheerfully acknowledged. Had the county of Westmoreland two representatives in this Parliament—a right which with a population of nearly 38,000 she may fairly claim—I would have had one of their number as my colleague here to-day; but under existing circumstances I can only indulge the hope that when, before the next election, the hon. leader of the Government brings in a Gerrymandering Bill for the redivision of electoral districts in New Brunswick, will not be entirely omitted from the measure, and the rights of Westmoreland county will not be disregarded. In the meantime I am glad to know that a portion at least of the French people of New Brunswick, are so well represented by one who can claim with them a common language and nationality, as they are in the hon. member for Kent (Mr. Girouard). Mr. Speaker, permit me in closing to make one personal allusion. The duties which have been imposed upon me to-day are by Parliamentary usage ordinarily assigned to the younger members of this House. No one could have been chosen with more limited Parliamentary experience than myself, and no one could have risen to discharge this duty feeling more sensibly the embarrassing surroundings of my position; for I cannot forget that I am addressing many who have spent long years and won high honors in the public service—that I am for the first time surrounded by and associated with the men who in my earliest recollections were entrusted with the management of the public affairs of these Provinces, then divided and comparatively unimportant; who have since united them and formed this great Confederation; who helped to frame the very Constitution under which we now are sitting; and who since the Union have so successfully administered the affairs of this Dominion. I cannot divest myself of the consciousness that for the first time in my life I form one of this body and take though it be a very humble part in the deliberations of this Assembly, upon which rests the responsibility of legislating for the future of a country whose rapid growth and development is at the present time exciting universal surprise and wonder; that exhibits to-day a wealth and diversity of resources that is marvellous to ourselves and to the world; a country that has just outgrown the dependence of her childhood, and exults in the freedom and growing strength of youth; and, conscious that the full vigor and power of her maturer years are yet unimpaired and but partially developed, rejoices as she contemplates the grand possibility of her future destiny; a country which perhaps more than any other country in the world at the present time is demanding wise and prudent and progressive legislation in order that, to the fullest possible extent, her material resources and the happiness of her people may be insured. Mr. Speaker, I most sincerely thank you, Sir, and the hon. gentlemen around me for the very patient manner in which you have listened to my remarks, and I beg to second the resolution now before us.

Mr. BLAKE. I must congratulate the hon. gentlemen to whom we have just listened for the manner in which they have discharged the tasks assigned to them. I can assure the hon. member for Westmoreland (Mr. Wood) that he was the only person in this House who was sensible of that

embarrassment and difficulty which he informed us he labored under in the delivery of the eloquent speech and measured periods to which we have just listened with such interest. And the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Tupper) will allow me to say that I rejoiced to welcome in his advent to this House a man young in years, but who gives promise of making his mark in the House and in the country at some future day. We may not agree, we do not agree, in his politics; we may not agree with the distinguished person whose name he bears, but it must, notwithstanding, be a matter of unfeigned interest to observe the conjunction of the two persons at one time in the same chamber. The hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, as he proceeded, reminded me a little of the climate that we hear of in some charming countries. It is a beautiful climate, and we are all recommended to go there; but after a while we on this side of the Atlantic, and we who belong to the old country on the other side of the Atlantic, weary of the perpetual sunshine and the perennial blueness of the skies. There was no shadow in the picture, there was no relief to the glare of brightness, of beauty, of glory, and of magnificence with which for the past few hours we have been enchanted. It is my duty to present some portions of the other side of the picture, to complete the sky in which the hon. gentleman seems to have left out the clouds, and to say something which may render the climate, if not quite so bright, a little more tolerable to frail humanity like ours. I join with the view which the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Tupper) said was his view, as to the expediency of addressing ourselves more particularly to the topics which are brought under our attention in the Speech from the Throne; and amongst them I place, as the hon. gentlemen who have addressed us have placed, in the very front rank the consideration of the paragraph which tells us it is important that the laws relating to the representation of the people in Parliament should be amended. It is my good fortune cordially to agree in that paragraph so far; I believe that those laws are exceedingly defective, and that they require very serious amendment. I believe that, in this regard, the Government has done that which it should not have done, and left undone that which it should have done. I believe that amendments have been made in some of those laws, and at a recent date, which were amendments for the worse—if you will excuse that from an Irishman—that were deteriorations rather than improvements; and that amongst the subjects in this connection to which this Parliament should assuredly address itself is the question how far under the laws as they were brought down and altered for the purpose of the late election, there is in truth a proper representation of the people in Parliament. I was glad to hear you, Mr. Speaker, when you occupied a place on the floor of this House, during the last Session of Parliament, express your opinion, in language not novel but none the less true, that the Parliament of a country ought to be the mirror of the opinions of the people of the country. It ought in truth to be a reflection of their sentiments. Those sentiments in all free communities are divided, sometimes with the tolerable approximation to equality, sometimes, indeed, very unequally; but, so far as my experience goes, they are always divided in some proportions, and as it is the theory, so it ought to be the object of practical dealing with the question of the representation of the people, to accomplish as near as may be that which cannot be accomplished with absolute perfection, but to accomplish approximately the representation and reflection in this House of the various opinions which prevail in the country with some degree or proportion to the strength in which those opinions are held in the constituencies which are represented here. Now, Sir, this view we held always; this view we daily endeavored to enforce upon the late Parliament, when the proposal to amend the laws with respect to the representation of the