

like at this moment to speak with his experience and attainments, but I believe that hon. gentlemen in this House who have sat here before me, have already been made familiar with the resources of this great enterprise as well as the means to accomplish this undertaking, and I will not afford them any new information in telling them that in the year just ended the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has made wonderful progress. In reality it has constructed not less than 693 miles of railway, of which 553 miles are on the main line and 140 miles of branch lines. On the Western Division they have laid rails on 377 miles, bringing the line to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 960 miles from Winnipeg. The company now proposes, at the commencement of the coming summer, to construct and put in operation a line of steamboats from Lake Huron to Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior. This will enable them to distribute the tide of emigration for a distance of nearly 1,400 miles from Port Arthur. These results could not be more satisfactory for the country; and if the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has not succeeded as well as it expected in floating its bonds in foreign markets, the energy which it has displayed, the devotion which it has manifested in the execution of this enterprise which has been entrusted to it by the country deserves from this House, that its efforts should be aided and seconded, and as my learned colleague from Glengarry (Mr. Macmaster), remarked that we make it apparent that we can assure the success of our national enterprises even against the hostile forces arraigned against them. We are also happy to learn, Mr. Speaker, that the Intercolonial Railway has been a source of revenue this year to the country. Constructed at first in a military and political point of view, the Intercolonial Railway becomes to-day a success as a commercial enterprise, and this is a subject for congratulation. Nevertheless I might remark, and I believe the Government will perfectly understand its duty in the matter, that this road, whilst a commercial success, must not cease to be a public enterprise, an enterprise for the benefit of the provinces which it traverses as for the whole Confederation. We must not forget that each Province has contributed alike to its construction, that each contributes to its maintenance, and that each Province ought to have the benefit of its natural advantages in the arrangement of its tariff. I will not further extend my remarks on what refers to the legislation relative to the material interests of the country, and I will briefly review the other subjects which are submitted for our consideration. The Speech from the Throne informs us that the Government has the intention of submitting to this House a measure, which has, for its object, the assimilation of the electoral laws in all the Provinces. It always seemed to me that it was an anomaly to leave the electoral franchise of the Dominion in the hands of the Local Legislatures, and if, so far, this state of affairs has not produced serious inconveniences, I think, nevertheless, that a measure of this kind is most opportune; if up to to-day this state of things has not caused serious embarrassments, one thing is certain, it is that our electoral franchise is in the hands of Provincial Legislatures which can change or modify them entirely, and determine that we the members of Federal representation in going forth from these precincts may find ourselves face to face with an election law altogether different from the one under which we were elected. I think it is the duty of this Legislature to take up the question of our electoral franchise, and all that I can say is that for my part whilst the legislation seems to me timely, I have only to express a hope that the Government in conceding to popular liberty, will at the same time bear in mind and make due allowance for the conservative character of our population. The development of manufactures in this country necessitates legislation for the protection of persons therein employed, we ought to profit by the experience of other countries; that experience

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teaches us that the development of manufactures in a great number of States, especially in the great manufacturing centres, has had the effect of injuring the moral and intellectual progress of the people; this Legislature will act wisely in taking, at the earliest possible moment, the means to protect women and children, who are generally the persons employed in the factories. The consolidation of the Statutes is an important service which the Legislature is rendering to the country, and we learn with a great deal of pleasure that this work is so far advanced, the report which will be submitted to the House will be received with a great deal of pleasure and we hope that it will be soon accomplished. Mr. Speaker, we also learn with a great deal of pleasure that certain administrative difficulties which might have arisen between the Central Government and one of the Provinces are on the way to an advantageous settlement. There is one feature of English statesmen which I have always admired: it is to find a solution for all difficulties, and settlement of all political differences by the means of diplomacy. There is an old adage "that for every evil there is a remedy." I think that this adage applies to politics as well as to other things; and I see with pleasure that our Canadian statesmen follow the noble example of English diplomatists. It is of the first importance that our rulers adopt, from the start, this manner of overcoming difficulties which may arise between the Provinces or between the Central and Provincial Governments. These, Mr. Speaker, in a few words, are the important subjects which are submitted for our consideration, and to which His Excellency the Governor General invites our attention. The appeal which is made is addressed to all hon. members of this House, no matter to what party they belong. We come from different parts of this great Confederation. We represent different interests, counties in Provinces whose resources and whose wants are different; but there is a common ground on which we can all meet. This ground is the general interest of this Confederation. We, Mr. Speaker, the members of the Province of Quebec, occupy a special position, a somewhat unique position, in this House and in the country. We are the minority; we have interests different from yours; we have our own language; we profess a different religion from you; our institutions, our usages, our customs, differ from yours; but I think you will bear us testimony that so far we have resolutely, loyally and generously embraced the idea which predominates in the organization of the new political constitution under which we live. Indeed, from our youth, from our infancy, we have learned from our public men to imbibe this idea; we have learned to defend and protect our own rights; but we have also learned to respect those of others. I need not mention any names, but there is one man whose memory is still fresh in this House; it is that of Sir George Etienne Cartier. That man would not for the whole world have abandoned one iota of the inheritance which his predecessors left him; but, Mr. Speaker, you can, at the same time, pay this testimony to him, that never, no never, was he backward when it was a question of defending, of protecting, of respecting the rights of those who were not his fellow-citizens. This House and the country has just rendered him a worthy tribute in decreeing that a statue shall be erected to him in front of these precincts. Well, Mr. Speaker, we, the members from Quebec, we have no other ambition than to follow this model—to follow the example set us by this man—example which is so well followed by those who represent him at the head of the political institutions of the country. We embrace these ideas, and we are here, within these precincts, with the sincere desire of loyally co-operating, of faithfully working for the material, moral and intellectual development of this beautiful country. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the indulgence which you have extended to me. I thank, also, this honorable House for the attention