

factory. So far as the Galicians are concerned, my own personal observation, on the last occasion when I visited the west, confirms what the hon. gentleman has so appropriately stated. I have no personal knowledge with regard to the Doukhobors to whom he has also alluded. I might be permitted to say that if it is necessary to have an automobile in order to enable one to properly appreciate the good qualities of these settlers I regret that I am not in a position to class myself among those who have that privilege.

The hon. gentleman who seconded the address is from my own province and my congratulations to him are also hearty. He has given us some statistics which are very gratifying indeed in so far as they show the growth of the country. He referred to the broad, happy smile which overspreads the honest countenance of the farmers of this country. I do not think it is so broad or happy as the smile which overspread, I believe, the countenance of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright), when some of these same farmers were urging on his colleagues, the Minister of Customs and the Minister of Finance, the importance of adherence by the Liberal party to the fiscal principles laid down in the Ottawa platform of 1893.

I desire before making certain observations on the matters referred to in the speech from the Throne, to express my very deep regret and the regret of gentlemen on this side of the House, at the loss we have sustained in the lamented death of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, the Hon. Raymond Préfontaine. Those of us who differed from Mr. Préfontaine on public questions recognized his great ability, the sincerity of his devotion to public interests, and especially the strong personal character and force which was behind the administration of his department, and which I believe would have done very much to bring about a better condition of things along the great St. Lawrence waterway. Mr. Préfontaine was a man of strong character; he was a man of strong opinions, he was fearless in the expression of his opinions, and I am sure that not one member of those who sit to the left of Mr. Speaker ever at any time felt the slightest personal feeling against him. We all liked him, we all recognized his ability, and we join with gentlemen on the other side in expressing our very great regret indeed that he should have been cut off in the vigour of his manhood, in the prime of his life and in the midst of the very great work in which he was then engaged. The occasion of his death led to the government of the French Republic recognizing this country and the public men of this country in a manner for which we all feel grateful. That recognition, not only by the French government, but by the British government as well, is deeply appreciated by every citizen of Canada regard

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

less of his political opinions. It afforded a happy opportunity for the manifestation of that friendly spirit, that entente cordiale which exists now and which I hope always will exist between the republic of France and the British empire to which we own allegiance.

I will not refer at great length to the cabinet changes which have taken place during the recess. We have lost the presence in this House and in the government of Sir William Mulock; a man of very great experience in public life, a man of very great ability, a man between whom and myself—although we had some occasionally vigorous passages in parliament—there was never anything but the most friendly feeling. We have in his place the new Postmaster General; and I may be permitted, I suppose, to take the opportunity of congratulating my hon. friends opposite from the province of Ontario upon the touching proof of esteem and appreciation which they have thus received from the Prime Minister. This is strikingly evidenced by the fact that not one of them was regarded by the right hon. gentleman as competent to take charge of the Post Office Department. There are among these hon. gentlemen on the other side a great many men of experience in public life; men whom we on this side of the House at least have regarded as competent and capable to preside over almost any department of government. I regret that our opinion in that respect must be modified by the attitude of the Prime Minister towards these gentlemen. We all recognize the very great ability of the present Postmaster General (Hon. Mr. Aylesworth); a very eminent lawyer indeed, second, I am led to believe, to no man in Canada in his position at the bar. But, I have yet to learn that the duties of the Postmaster General require especially the services of a very eminent counsel, and I would have supposed that some of the able business men opposite would have perhaps been quite as competent to fill that very high position as my hon. friend, who I am sure will give every satisfaction to the public interest in discharging the duties of that office. The duties of the Post Office Department are undoubtedly important, but is there any reason to believe that any one of the fifteen or twenty gentlemen whom I see opposite—or whom I might see if they were in their places—would not have been just as competent to discharge the duties of Postmaster General as the hon. gentleman who has been selected for that office.

We deplore a little the late hour at which this session has been called. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister has alluded to the unfortunate accident which has happened to the Minister of Finance. I desire to express my very great sympathy, and also the hope that we may soon see that hon. gentleman in his place, in his usual