

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCEL-  
LENCY'S SPEECH.

The House proceeded to the consideration of His Excellency's speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. G. D. GRANT (North Ontario). Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to the speech from the Throne. In accepting this task, I do so with a proper sense of the honour done to the riding I represent in this House. But, before proceeding further, Sir, will you permit me, with all respect, to reiterate the congratulations already extended to yourself on your accession to the Chair. And allow me to assure you, Sir, if the assurance may come from so obscure a member as myself, that this House is confident that in your capable hands the historic office will not suffer in either dignity or authority.

It is with feelings of genuine pleasure, too, that we learn that your eminent predecessor is not withdrawing his services from the country, but, on the contrary, is to devote in another sphere of usefulness his very great abilities to the service of the Dominion.

Since we last assembled here—and by the way that is not so very long ago—no event of paramount importance to Canada has transpired. That expression of Thomas Carlyle's, (which I shall slightly misquote):

Happy that nation whose annals are dull

may with some degree of truth be applied to Canada. During the past year Canada has pursued the even tenor of her way; she has followed her wonted course of peace, prosperity and progress. A bountiful harvest has been safely garnered, as His Excellency so well says in the speech from the Throne. Our citizens have pursued their wonted vocations undisturbed, adding to their own wealth and to the wealth of the nation. While this has been the happy state of affairs with us it has not been so abroad. The dark cloud which for many months and even years had been threatening the peace of the far east has at last broken and devastating war holds sway. Perhaps it may not be amiss to express the hope that the time is not far distant when an honourable peace may be consummated, that war and carnage may soon cease and that those two great nations, at present arrayed against each other can without sacrifice of self-respect, adjust their differences and for the future vie only in the peaceful battles of commerce and the promotion of the happiness of the human lot in that eastern sphere. Whilst in that conflict we in Canada have neither part nor lot, it is perhaps well to remember that our oriental trade is by no means contemptible, and that for the past few years it has been on the

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increase. We may be assured that all necessary steps will be taken for the preservation of our interests, and I have no doubt also that on the cessation of hostilities efforts will be made for the expansion and enlargement of our trade in what must be for us the very valuable markets of the east. Though, as I have said, Canada has neither part nor lot in that conflict, one cannot premise when, sooner or later, the mother country, Great Britain, may be involved in difficulties in the far east. We hope that such an event will not occur at this juncture, and that Britain will not become involved in the conflict, but if unhappily Great Britain should become involved—which Heaven forbid—how important becomes Canada. It will be the ground over which armies and supplies must be transported to the scene of action. If at some future time a difficulty should arise in that same part of the globe, and Great Britain should become embroiled therein how important become our highways from the Atlantic to the Pacific and of what inestimable value would be a second or third highway across the continent, remote from the frontier, not easily liable to attack and all on Canadian territory. We hear much in these days about colonial contributions to imperial defence, and I should be the last to minimize its importance. But, Sir, what better contribution could we in Canada make to that end than the construction of another safe highway across our continent whereby we both build up our own country and provide a great utility for the empire in time of necessity. But more of this again.

When this House prorogued last autumn the international tribunal, which had for some months been sitting in London in regard to the Alaskan boundary question reached a decision and published their findings. I shall not say that the decision of that tribunal was not received with disappointment in Canada, but, Sir, I feel that I can say that after the first and very natural feeling of regret had passed over our country no petulant voices of exasperation were heard, and it is reassuring to know from those whose opinions in such matters are worth having, that the two islands in the Pacific awarded by the tribunal to the neighbouring republic are not of paramount strategic importance and do not dominate what may be, and probably will be, the terminus of the new transcontinental railroad. The final outcome of the Alaskan boundary award was received with regret but not without dignity by the people of this country. When the international boundary is finally delimited in terms of the decision of the tribunal, it is satisfactory to reflect that hereafter there can arise no other or further question involving a boundary dispute. We cannot afford either to contemplate or allow any encroachment upon our coast lines, be it on the Atlantic