

the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the Dominion of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency:

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Senate of Canada, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Hon. J. D. TAYLOR: Honourable members, may I be permitted to congratulate the honourable member from St. Boniface (Hon. Mr. Bénard) on the eloquent address which he has just delivered. If our friend has been in appearance merely a consenting member of this Chamber, it is quite obvious to us now that the reason has been his native modesty rather than any lack of facility when he has an opportunity to make use of the beautiful language of his and of my native province.

May I join him in congratulating Mr. Speaker on the well deserved honour which has come to him. His Honour and I came to Parliament on the same day, twenty years ago, and from my knowledge of his course in connection with public affairs during that whole period—a trying period in many respects—I can frankly say that I know of no one more deserving of the honour that has been conferred upon him than is the honourable gentleman who presides over this House at the moment.

I desire also to congratulate this honourable House on the restoration to us of the dignity of the presence here of a member of the Cabinet in full charge of a Department and with full responsibility, and having the close connection with ministerial affairs that comes only to those who have full charge of a Department and sit regularly with their colleagues of the Government. This I say without any disrespect to the honourable gentleman across the way (Hon. Mr. Dandurand), who has represented the Government so ably and affably for so many years. For him I have the highest respect and unfeigned admiration; but I am sure that every member of this House recognized that we were severely handicapped when we were dealing with affairs as we have dealt with them during the past several years, in that the honourable gentleman who spoke for the Government had not the close connection with ministerial affairs that has been restored by the presence here of the Minister of Labour.

It is not many months since we had another Speech from the Throne in this Chamber. I

Hon. Mr. BENARD.

remember it very distinctly. It was in the early part of this year. In the maze of words shrouding the few thoughts that the Speech contained—in fact, the thought the Speech contained—we found but one bright spot of apparent congratulation on the part of the Government, namely, that there remained unsold in Canada 250,000,000 bushels of the wheat of the previous year. We were asked, in a sense, to give cheers for this unusual condition of affairs; a request to which I noticed no response throughout the country, no response on the part of the shipping interests, whose vessels were tied up for want of cargoes, or the railway interests, who were silent while the employees of the railroads worked two or three days a week instead of a full week. There was no response. And there is no response to-day from the owners and growers of the wheat, who instead of having any cause now to cheer or to repeat the phantom cheers of a few months ago, find that the standard of value of their wheat has been reduced from the dollar of last year to the sixty cents of this year. As I say, that was the one bright feature held up to us by the Government of the day responsible for the condition pictured in the rest of the Speech from the Throne—a picture of falling revenues, of the total disappearance of the balance of trade, favourable to Canada, of which we had heard year by year ever since the inception of the late Government. All those things had disappeared, and we were told that there were 250,000,000 bushels of unsold wheat.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Whose fault was it?

Hon. Mr. TAYLOR: Now we have by contrast a Government that takes another view of the situation. I think it is no exaggeration to say that the fortunes of the wheat crop are the prime factor in the fortunes of Canada, and that when the position of wheat is depressed the position of industry and labour from end to end of Canada must be affected, and it has been affected, as we know. Fortunately we now have a new Government, which comes to Parliament not congratulating us that we have added to the reserve of last year certain other millions of bushels, but recognizing that there is some duty under the circumstances, and which has promptly redeemed the promise made to the people of Canada that, given the opportunity, it would call this Parliament to enact legislation to put an end to the condition of poverty and apprehension which has been experienced in Canada.