

## HOUSE OF COMMONS,

OTTAWA, 10th December, 1880.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

## PRAYERS.

## ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

The House proceeded to the consideration of His Excellency's Speech at the opening of the Session.

Mr. BEATY. Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence and the indulgence of the House, in the novel situation in which I am placed, with regard to the observations which I propose to make in moving the Address in answer to His Excellency's Speech from the Throne. The calling of Parliament at this unusually early day will, no doubt, find its justification in the important subjects which are committed, in the Speech from the Throne, to the House and country, and especially that overwhelmingly important subject—the question of the Pacific Railway. Whatever differences of opinion may exist regarding a question of such magnitude to the country, there is one point on which we can all agree, and concerning which we can rejoice together, and that is in reference to the abundant harvest which a bountiful Providence has bestowed on this country. And the improved condition of affairs which has been manifested over the whole Dominion warrants us in being grateful for the abundant harvest which has blessed this Dominion during the past year. The prosperity of the country, it is quite true, is sometimes attributed to various causes. It is sometimes, notably by extremists, claimed to be attributable to the harvest; at other times largely if, not chiefly, to the National Policy. I think that the prosperity of the country may reasonably be attributed to both causes, as well as to others. Without discrediting the National Policy in any respect whatever, it may reasonably be claimed that the harvest has had a great deal to do with the promotion of the present prosperity of the country, and, without detracting from the great advantages which such a splendid harvest has brought to the country, we may reasonably claim, and it may be readily conceded, that the National Policy has been productive of much good. We would, I think, be very badly off without this policy, and it may be truly said that we would be worse off without the harvest; with regard to both causes, I think that we can very properly rejoice with one another, and congratulate the whole country, upon the fair share of commercial and general prosperity which at the present time is spreading over the land. It indicates that we can attribute to this Policy, as well as to the products of the soil, these benefits. It indicates also to us that a people can help themselves to some extent, and that a Government may do something for the benefit of the country. A policy of inaction, or of doing nothing, is not commendable in a Government any more than it is in the case of the individual or family. Every individual and every family may improve its condition by intelligent industry, and I am of opinion that a Government, by adopting a proper policy, may also benefit the country which it governs. The increase in the exports and imports, which is manifested in the trade returns of this country, shows that there is a vast activity, and a greater activity in all branches of trade and commerce than has hitherto existed; and one important feature in connection with this matter, is the fact that the exports of Canada this year, I believe, exceed the imports by at least a million and one-half of dollars. The imports also exceed somewhat the imports of last year, and this fact shows to us, that, notwithstanding what we may reasonably claim, that a large amount of home industry has been promoted by the National Policy, nevertheless, owing to the increased wealth of the country, the imports of the country have not been decreased. I do

not suppose that the maddest Tory—if ever Tories do become mad—would claim taxation to be an unmixed blessing; but if, in connection with the degree of taxation necessary to meet the needs of the country, and the demands of the expenditure, a policy can be adopted and so adjusted as to continue these conditions and promote the welfare of the country as well, I think that this is a policy which should receive, and which in fact has received the sanction of the whole country. We must have money to meet the wants of the Government and the needs of expenditure in connection with the administration of public affairs. To obtain this, taxation necessarily follows, and if, at the same time, we can so arrange the system of taxation as to produce good results to the community in encouraging industries and manufactures, and in promoting trade and commerce, then I maintain that a policy, so simple, so reasonable and so just, is one, regarding the adoption of which the country can be congratulated. If, while there must be taxation, there obtains a proportionate increase in the capacity of the taxpayer, so that the burden of taxation can be borne by him as easily when increased as when the smaller rate existed, then I say that a policy which has produced results of this description is a policy that can be approved of. There is evidence on all sides, I take it, that there is increased activity in trade, in commerce, in manufactures, and in all the elements which go to make up the wealth and prosperity of the country. There is no doubt whatever that this is evidenced by the increased exports and increased imports, and by the contented disposition of the people in all parts of this Dominion. There are not, to-day, that I know of or have observed, any disturbing elements in the whole community. There is no provincial disturbance, no sectional disturbance of any kind whatever, and when we find the people contented and happy, we may readily assume that they are prosperous and gaining in wealth. The large increase in trade, evidenced in connection with the lumber interest, itself shows that a great advantage has been produced in the country through the introduction of such large sums of money as the export of lumber induces, and a very large increase in the exports of agricultural products is also a matter of congratulation. It is sometimes claimed that the National Policy crushes out the farmer; but when one observes the condition of things all over the country, and the large quantity of cheese and butter and the great number of fine cattle exported, it is readily understood that a large amount of capital and labor is invested in the farming interests of the country. Prices have also increased. Cereals, especially the coarse grains, and products of that description, have increased in price. In consequence of these facts, we may, with reason, claim that the tariff does not injure the farmer, while, at the same time, it certainly benefits the residents of our cities and towns. The large amount of revenue which has been produced under the National Policy is, to my mind, one of the strongest indications of the success of that measure. The revenue, this fiscal year, if it comes in at the same rate that it has during the first six months, will produce a surplus of possibly a million and a-half of dollars: in view of which we can well say that the Policy, so far as the question of taxation is concerned, has been all its promoters expected it to be—a measure for the advancement of the financial and general interests of the country. But, in addition to this, what have we? We have cheap money. Our factories are running. Stocks are booming. The business of the country is prospering. I think, therefore, Parliament, and the whole country, may be congratulated upon the success of the Policy. The National Policy, I may say, can now be regarded as the country's policy. The whole country endorsed it in September, 1878; and since that time, at elections east and west, in city and county—even, as I am just informed, in North Oxford, it has been sustained. At almost every opportunity since last Session of Parliament the