

meagreness of the bill of fare which had been placed before the House. However, as they were approaching the season of Lent, they might expect to have Lenten fare, and they had got it. To be sure, the Address was of the usual length, perhaps it exceeded the usual longitude. It might be said by some arithmetical critics, that like a line, it was length without breadth. However, they must not look a gift horse in the mouth, but must be thankful for small mercies. The legislation to be proposed to them, unless there was something concealed in the "etcetera," which they did not know anything about, was not great in amount, though some of the measures, he would agree, would be of considerable importance if they were carefully drawn; and he had no doubt that they would receive the careful consideration of hon. gentlemen opposite. The bill for enlarging the scope of and amending the Joint Stock Companies' Act would have to be very carefully prepared, or it might be very mischievous in its influence. If it were made too liberal in its provisions, it might increase and perpetuate the evils from which we are now suffering in consequence of the "valuable charters" to which the mover of the Address had alluded, as having been embodied, in some, way in private Acts; and if it were too restricted, the Government would be continually troubled with applications for special Acts to get rid of obnoxious clauses in the general Act. They could not hope to be able by any general Act, however well and carefully prepared it might be, to get entirely rid of annual applications for special Acts with enlarged powers. However, the attempt was praiseworthy, and he hoped it would be successful. The matter was one of such great importance that he had no doubt every hon. member in this House, on both sides of it, would agree to direct his attention to the perfection of a measure of this kind. So also with respect to the Act to afford additional security to policy-holders of life insurance companies. That question was discussed here before, and he had no doubt it would engage the best attention of the House. He hoped that confidence would be restored in this country to

the minds of those who chose to avail themselves of this means of providing for their families and children. A measure for the purpose of extending to the navigation of the great inland waters, rights and remedies at present confined to waters within the jurisdiction of the Courts of Vice-Admiralty, would certainly be an important one, and he had no doubt his hon. friend the Minister of Justice had found a great many difficulties in its preparation. There were constitutional questions connected with that matter which he (Sir John A. Macdonald) had no doubt would be discussed by their friend the Minister of the Interior, unless his elevation to office had caused him to withdraw his attention from constitutional work in order that he might devote it to the more important work of looking after the affairs of his department. He (Sir John A. Macdonald) was not sure that a measure of this kind was required, or that one could be framed which would give that satisfaction which was anticipated. He was afraid it would be found that, guarded though the measure might be, the obstruction to trade in our inland waters that would be caused by the operation of such a measure, would more than counterbalance the security which might be given by it to persons having claims against vessels sailing on these waters. One could not say what was involved in the promise of a measure to amend and consolidate the laws relating to the customs. He presumed from the general way in which it was inserted in the Speech, that it was not at all a measure connected with the tariff arrangement, but that it was simply a consolidated Act, and one to amend those clauses which experience in the Department had shewn were in need of amendment. And so, he presumed, with regard to the Excise law. The measure promised for placing the geological survey on a permanent basis would be useful. The mover of the Address had spoken as if he was a little behind the scenes in regard to this measure, for he told them that it was to be very extended in its operations, that it was not to be confined to the geological survey, but that other branches of physical science were to be placed in the same Department, such

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