

crisis without precedent in our history we required an honest, economical and wise Government which desired to bring about an equilibrium between the receipts and expenses, the receipts having been considerably diminished during these years of depression. I believe that I am expressing the sentiment of the House and of the country when I say that the Government of the day has perfectly understood the position of affairs, and that it has a strong claim upon our gratitude for its wise policy of retrenchment and economy. Commerce anxiously awaits the end of this crisis. Although an abundant crop has temporarily diminished the severity of the general depression, nevertheless, as long as the lumber business, our principal source of export, does not attain on foreign markets its former proportions, and so long as the equilibrium, broken by the surplus of importation and of production of which I have spoken a moment since, is not re-established, we cannot hope that our commercial affairs will resume their normal and regular course. The other measures announced in the Speech from the Throne are of an important though purely administrative character, and it would be at present premature to say anything about them before they have been submitted to the House. We now find ourselves at the last Session of a Parliament which was convoked under circumstances that are not as yet forgotten. While casting a glance upon the career of the present Government, I can say that those who, at the outset, gave to it their confidence, have certainly no reason to repent of having done so. One of the first cares of the present Administration on its succession to office was to bestow upon the country reforms for which its members had contended during many years. At the first Session of this Parliament a law was passed which for a long period had been demanded, but which had always been refused—I now refer to the Election Law. It was then decided that at the general elections the people should possess the full enjoyment of their electoral franchise, and that the poor workingman should be able to vote with the same degree of independence and liberty as

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the millionaire, depositing his ballot in the electoral urn, solely under the eye of God and of his conscience. Everybody to-day recognizes the benefits of this legislation; and if, since that period, the most lively contested elections—such as those which have taken place in various districts, and in particular in Quebec East and Quebec West—have occurred without the accompaniment of riots, seizure of the polls, and murders, which we could not but deplore, all this is due to the ballot law. We also owe to the Liberal Government important amendments made to the Bankruptcy Law, and the law concerning contested elections, which assure a prompt and efficacious solution of the cases brought before the Courts created for this especial purpose. Again, it is this Liberal Government which has settled the amnesty question, and it will be lauded in the history of our country for having had the courage to take up this question immediately after its accession to power, and for having so happily succeeded in settling it to the satisfaction of all—at least, of all those who are capable of being satisfied in this regard. I now beg to finish, Mr. Speaker, for I would engage the time of the House at too great length were I to attempt to enumerate and pass in review all the important laws that we owe to the present Government, and all the reforms that have been accomplished since its accession to power; but, previous to taking my seat, permit me, Sir, to repeat, that those who have accorded their support to the illustrious statesman at the head of the Government, and to his able colleagues, cannot but felicitate themselves on the patriotic line of conduct they have followed, and I am fully persuaded that, when, in the course of the present year, they seek anew the suffrages of their constituents, the latter will again repose their confidence in those whom they have charged with the defence of their interests, and who have so honourably acquitted themselves of this important duty.

MR. CHARLTON: Mr. Speaker, in rising to second the resolution of my hon. friend, in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I shall crave the indul-