

their chiefs. They are asking for wives and habitations."

They were given both. Honourable gentlemen, have I not reason to say that history repeats itself. More than two centuries afterwards Canadian soldiers are repeating the conduct of their predecessors. After having poured out their blood in the struggle against civilized barbarism, just as those of older time did against that of the savage, they also in the same manner, lay aside the rifle for the plough, and scarcely returned from the desolated fields where the engines of war scattered destruction and death, they apply themselves to those fertile fields from which their fertile labour will bring forth harvests of life. The important task of re-establishing our soldiers in civil occupations could not offer a more consoling aspect.

The economic and financial situation among the nations, torn and impoverished by the war, is less satisfactory. In that regard no one will be tempted to find too sombre the picture drawn for us in the speech from the Throne, when it describes the ruinous conditions of exchange, the lack of international credit, the excessive circulation of paper money, combined with the scarcity of raw materials, the insufficiency of transports and the labour difficulties. To remedy these evils one hears repeated on every side that we must increase labour and production, and that individuals, like states, must practice saving and economy. Also, is it not plain to you that this universal precept is universally violated? Since the termination of the war there seems to reign everywhere a frenzy of pleasure-seeking and a frenzy of idleness. From the highest to the lowest rung of the social ladder one witnesses the same spectacle. Those of the lower classes wish to work less and to have more pay, and more pleasure; while those of the higher classes wish to gain wealth easily and quickly in order that they may plunge headlong into a life of ease and display. And all the while grave voices are repeating and their words everywhere reverberate: "Production and economy! Production and economy!" But so far is this from their thoughts that men are actually wracking brains to invent new means of diminishing production and increasing extravagance. This tidal wave of folly, idleness and ostentatious spending has not altogether spared this Canada of ours; yet one may be permitted to find some satisfaction in the thought that our country is perhaps less submerged by it than others.

Hon. Mr. CHAPPAIS.

Our commercial situation, for instance, is such as to encourage us to hope that Canada will be able to support, without flinching, the terrible burden placed upon us by the war. In a statement made at the beginning of the present year, our Minister of Finance announced that for the eight months ending the 30th of November, 1919, our imports were \$636,389,157, while our exports were \$838,973,479, which gave us for that period a trade balance in our favour of \$202,000,000. I do not wish to be understood as finding in this favourable trade balance sufficient reason for indulging in a song of triumph. But it does seem to me that the figures are encouraging, and constitute a favourable symptom.

There is another matter which I would have discussed at some length if the limits which I have set for my discourse had permitted me to do so. It is that of the electoral franchise, with reference to which the Speech from the Throne has announced proposed legislation. I will confine myself simply to the statement that on that subject I hold views which have little conformity with current political orthodoxy. In my opinion, one of the electoral systems, the most rational and the most equitable, the surest and the most apt to safeguard the stability of political institutions, is that which Belgium enjoyed before the war, and of which the principal traits were proportional representation, age limit, and plurality of voting. I shall possibly have occasion again to address the House on this subject before the end of the present session.

And now it only remains to me to re-echo one of the words of the Speech from the Throne. Yes, Canada has good cause for thankfulness that of all countries affected by the war, she has maintained a record of social order and industrial and commercial prosperity which leaves nothing to excite her envy or any other. The efforts of all the members of this Parliament, without distinction of creed or race or shade of political opinion, the efforts, in short, of all good citizens, should be directed to maintaining this order. And for this work of common patriotism, if I might be permitted to speak in the name of the province to which I belong, I would say to my honourable colleagues from the sister provinces: "Have confidence in the province of Quebec; she is loyal, she is faithful to the traditions of the past, she is conservative—and when I say conservative, it is manifest that I am speaking not of the political complexion of the province, but of her social temperament; she is ardently and profound-