

ruptey law, we must all admit, is a difficult one to deal with—a most difficult subject, indeed, to deal with. It has been found so in the United States; it has been found so in England; and I can only trust that any measure that may be brought forward in reference to that subject, will have a just and proper regard to the relations between debtor and creditor. The exhibitions at Antwerp and London are also matters of great importance to this country, and as they will be an excellent advertisement of the country's resources, it is our duty to encourage manufacturers and others to show the world what our country can do. In conclusion, Sir, I cannot forbear referring to the gratification we must all feel at finding still at the head of the Government of this country the distinguished leader of the Liberal-Conservative party, who, with undiminished vigor, is still able to sustain the responsibilities of his office. It was with feelings of gratification that the people of this country, from one end to the other, heard of the honors conferred upon him by Her Majesty; and I think I am safe in saying that throughout this Dominion the hope is indulged that he may long be spared to preside over, and guide, and guard the destinies of this great Dominion of ours.

Mr. BLAKE. I have to congratulate my hon. friends who have just addressed the House on the manner in which they have discharged their somewhat difficult and onerous task. It is true that we observed at some stages slight signs of hesitation, but upon the whole, if I were asked to say in what particular art of oratory they have most shown their abilities to-day, I should say it was in the euphemistic and hyperbolic style. We have heard an account of the country, we have heard an account of its progress and prosperity, we have heard an account of its condition, which we should be only too glad if we could adopt as correct, but which, unfortunately, from the point of view from which we look at that condition, from the facts which are visible to our eyes, from the accounts which reach our ears, we are utterly unable to assent to; and I must repeat my congratulations to my hon. friends, having undertaken the task of seconding and bettering the expressions in the Speech, that they have been able to go through their business with so much gallantry, and, upon the whole, with so little hesitation. I am sorry that we are met so late. I had hoped that after the promise made the Session before last, and which was very measurably kept last Session, we should have adhered to the notion of coming here as soon as our friends and colleagues from the most distant parts of the Dominion could reach Ottawa, after passing their Christmas week at home. I believe that that is the most convenient time for the discharge of the legislative business of the Dominion, and it is a very important thing for us that that business should be discharged at the period at which it can, with the least inconvenience to the country, and to the members who compose the Legislature, be discharged. I trust that we shall not on future occasions go further into the year than to-day, but rather that our future Sessions may commence at the time at which the hon. gentleman brought us together last year, if not a few days earlier. I join in the congratulations which have been addressed to the House in the gracious Speech, and referred to slightly by the hon. gentlemen who have moved and seconded the Answer, as to the abundant harvest which, no doubt, has been a very great blessing. I have not observed upon this occasion a repetition of those further eulogies with reference to harvests which have accompanied some former Ministerial utterances upon that subject. I recollect very well the occasion of a Ministerial demonstration in the western part of this province a few years ago—I think in honor of the Minister of Public Works—when a then member of Parliament representing an Ontario constituency, declared that he had voted for, and intended to support, the Government

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that had raised the price of wheat from 77 cents to \$1.40. He did, I admit, vote for and support that Government, whether upon those or other grounds I know not. He was faithful, and he has received his reward. He no longer adorns these benches, at least during the sitting of the House, but he receives a handsome salary for inspecting the Colonization Companies of the North-West. I dare say, under similar circumstances, some other hon. members, with similar expectations, may be induced to say that the price of wheat is to-day satisfactory; but that stretch of audacity has not yet prevailed in this House. And we are told besides, in effect, that we are enjoying commercial prosperity as well as a good harvest; and the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Taschereau), several times felicitated us upon the condition of the country. He opened his speech with felicitating us on our general prosperity, and he said he could not do better than close it with a repetition of the same felicitation. It is admitted, indeed, that we have a share, a slight share, a modest share hardly worth mentioning, to be mentioned only in a whisper at all events, in the depression which is said to prevail in the neighboring Republic and also in Great Britain. But we are told that we are ever so much better off than they are—the great exemplars of Free Trade on the one hand, and of Protection on the other. We have, I presume, reached the happy medium with respect to our fiscal policy. We are, I suppose, just right. They protect too much in the United States, and so their depressions are deeper; they protect too little in England, and so their depressions are deeper; but happy Canada, its financial destinies presided over by the hon. gentleman who smiles so blandly upon me, and who, no doubt, would smile in the same way on a platform in St. John, if he happened to be there to-day,—I say happy Canada has found the medium. She neither indulges in Free Trade nor does she indulge in Protection, and so, by consequence of that the depression is ever so much lighter. But there is a depression. It is now acknowledged. It was faintly denied last year. I remember, two or three years before, the hon. Minister of Finance prophesied—standing as he does on a great eminence, with means and sources of information not available to the general public, responsible as he is, at least to some extent for giving the tone and turn to public opinion, which is important in these respects—ten years of prosperity, and invited those who might trust in him to clap on all sail for that time and then to take it in. Last year he offered us a modified prosperity. Three years had elapsed so he did not offer us the ten years then; but he gave us seven years, to date from last Session. It was not absolute prosperity, it was not an all-sail kind of prosperity; you were to take in a reef or two, and if only you took in a reef or two, and were prudent, you would get seven years of prosperity. Well, we have had one year of the hon. gentleman's half-breed prosperity; we have had one year of going under reduced canvas, and I am afraid in too many instances with masts gone and running under jury masts, and in some other instances with wrecks on divers rocks and reefs, some of which were created by the hon. gentleman himself. I say we have had that little time, and now we are told that there is depression, but that it is only a modified depression. What a contrast that is to the ten years of full-sail prosperity, and even to the seven years of modified prosperity promised last year! What a contrast the condition of the country presents in the light of the promises made by the hon. gentleman just before the General Election of 1882! What do we hear to-day of the increasing industries which were to be established, provided he secured the verdict which the hon. gentleman solicited and which he obtained upon the faith of fallacious promises made in 1882? The hon. the First Minister speaking in Toronto, said: