

Hon. Mr. DEVER.—I wish to express my gratitude for the friendly manner in which each speaker alluded to that paragraph in the Speech referring to the St. John fire. I am the only member present immediately from that city, so sadly afflicted by that terrible conflagration of the 20th of June last, by which our greatest edifices were totally destroyed within the short space of three hours. Our Custom House, our banks, our churches, our beautiful buildings—some of them worthy of being called commercial palaces—some twenty-seven or thirty millions of dollars worth of property were all consumed in this short period, while the insurance did not exceed seven millions of dollars, so that hon. gentlemen will see at once the loss which was sustained. I perceive that the Government claim credit for placing in the estimates a sum of money, \$20,000, which they contributed towards the relief fund, for which I feel grateful, as I should. But when I contrast that amount with the generous donations of mere hamlets in Canada, and from cities and towns of foreign countries I feel that our Government might have been somewhat more liberal, and I think in being so they would have been fully sustained by the people and legislature of this Dominion. I feel also in looking back at that great catastrophe that the Government would have been justified in showing greater liberality to our unfortunate city, from the fact that the fire had consumed goods on which duties amounting at least to \$500,000, had been paid which goods had again to be replaced, and on which duties had to be paid the second time. There is another paragraph in the Speech which refers to changes that may be advantageously made in the departmental arrangements existing at present. I had the honor on a former occasion, of pointing out that at least one department of the Government of this country might be done away with, by which at least \$220,000 per annum might be saved to the Dominion. I refer to the Excise Department. Hon. gentlemen who have taken the trouble to look into the matter, will see that there are only two articles of goods on which excise duties are levied to any extent.—These two items are Spirits and Tobacco, and the manufacture of them is no good to this country but a

Hon. Mr. Dever.

great loss. Better import them like other goods from natural markets and pay the duty at the Custom House, thereby saving an increasing expenditure of some \$220,000 per annum for a host of unnecessary officials. We have a right to expect this piece of economy with others from a Reform Government, especially in reply to the statement that "nothing can be done" for the alleviation of our commercial depression. But, gentlemen, as this commercial question will, no doubt, come up for your consideration again, I will not occupy your time any longer with a discussion which is unsuited to the present occasion. I will advert to the paragraph referring to His Excellency, the Governor-General. I think I may safely say, hon. gentlemen, that the expressions which dropped from the lips of the mover of the Address had an echo in the heart of every man, woman and child in this Dominion, wherever intercourse was had between that excellent man and them. Throughout the length and breadth of this Dominion, where His Excellency is known there is but one feeling, and that is a feeling of pain that we are so soon to lose our popular Governor-General. For as an administrator, as a gentleman of culture, and as an orator, he has won the highest admiration and esteem of our people, and all will regret the day when His Excellency and his amiable and beautiful Countess, will take their departure from these provinces which he has served so well.

The Address was then carried.

THE FISHERIES COMMISSION.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON enquired of the Secretary of State what time the Report of the Fisheries Commission would be laid on the table.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said he was not in a position to give the information asked for. He assumed that that report, though made in the interest of the Dominion, was a report to the British Government, and it had to go there first as a matter of courtesy. Our connection with it was, of course, by the intervention of the Imperial Parliament. He had no doubt, however, when it was completed they should have a copy of it, and that the Government would be able to place it in the hands of hon. members as soon as possible. It was being printed in Halifax under the supervision