

Hon. Mr. BUREAU: Is this the debate on the Address?

Hon. Mr. VIDAL: I will not touch upon that question again, but come at once to the Address. I am sure there will be only one sentiment in this House with respect to our willingness to express to His Excellency our gratification in receiving from him the announcement which he has been pleased to make, of his personal pleasure in meeting with us and sharing in our labours and aspirations for the welfare and prosperity of the Dominion, I am quite satisfied that these words are not unmeaning expressions on His Excellency's part, but have the ring of truth. The whole course which their Excellencies have pursued since they came to this country goes far to corroborate what I say, that these are the expressions of deep feeling. I am quite sure that this House will reciprocate the feeling of pleasure to which His Excellency confesses in meeting with us. It is a matter of gratitude to us that our Sovereign has chosen a nobleman of high social position and no ordinary intellectual attainments—one in every way so well calculated to represent her interests in this Dominion. When to all this is added the charm of high literary attainments, I think we have indeed reason to congratulate ourselves as well as His Excellency that we are privileged to meet and labour together for the welfare of Canada. It would not be a great stretch of fancy to imagine that His Excellency had received in addition to his formal instructions the personal acknowledgment from our Sovereign herself of the deep interest she takes in the future of these dependencies of the Empire. We can believe that it is his desire to represent the Queen by constant intercourse with all classes of the people and show us that she has no sympathy whatever with those views and sentiments which are sometimes expressed in favor of the separation of the colonies from the parent state. I think all His Excellency's remarks will bear me out in the statement that it is his desire to impress forcibly on the people of Canada that Her Majesty wishes to strengthen and perpetuate the ties which now bind the Dominion to the Empire. When we think of the opportunities which His Excellency has had of making himself acquainted with the resources of Canada and the character and genius of her people, when we think that he has used those opportunities so fully, it is no small gratification to us to hear him say that Canada is consolidating her political unity and developing her material capabilities

at so rapid a rate. We who are engaged in this work ought to be perfectly satisfied with what we are doing, but to me it is a source of great pleasure to find one looking down from his elevated position—a position so far removed from our party politics—able to refer to our progress in so eulogistic a strain.

His Excellency then proceeds to refer to a matter which was made the subject of discussion, somewhat prematurely I think, on Friday last—I mean the charter granted by the Government to a Company for the construction of a Pacific Railway. All I believe we were asked to do is to thank Excellency for the information which he has given us on this subject. We have not yet the data on which we can argue as to the propriety or impropriety of the action taken by the Government. I cannot conceive that anyone fetters himself in any way by consenting to the passage of this paragraph. As for myself, I shall feel at liberty to criticise fairly and fully any particular part of the Act that I may consider not consistent with the public interests. It has struck me, however, on reading the charter that the Government have taken the utmost care to secure a *bona fide* company—that they have obtained all necessary securities and guarantees; and, indeed, the names of the gentlemen at the head of the undertaking should give us every confidence. I would have been exceedingly glad to see the name of the hon. gentleman opposite (Hon. Mr. McPherson) also associated with the other gentlemen in carrying out this great national enterprise. Without this railway the unity of Canada must be a dead letter—it is most essential to the existence of the Dominion. When we consider the character and resources of that rich and fertile country, still a wilderness—and we have a large amount of valuable information from travellers and others—we ought to lose no time in opening it up to that large population which must naturally flow in at the earliest opportunity. It has a vast area of fertile territory, and a salubrious climate, and is capable of sustaining many millions of people. If Canada delays in opening up this valuable country we may be sure that the people of the United States will gradually flow in and occupy it. If I am spared to live the ordinary number of years allotted to man, I expect to see the rich products of the East finding their way by this route to the markets of Europe. I do not believe these are Utopian ideas, but I consider it a work in which we should engage without the least delay. I would like to