

I would especially like to refer in this connection to the welcome which the Canadian contingents received upon their arrival in my native city of Halifax. It was a day which will long be remembered by those who were in Halifax on that occasion, and I listened with great pleasure to Lt.-Col Pelletier, a compatriot to the hon. seconder of the Address (Mr. Marcil), who as chief in command of the first contingent returned thanks for the reception which was tendered to his regiment. Let me say, further, Sir, that Canada is bound to see that those who fought for her and for the empire, and who because of wounds or disease are unable to earn a livelihood, are not left forgotten and unprotected. I regret that some mention was not made of this matter in the Speech from the Throne, and I trust that this omission was rather by inadvertence than by intent. I do not believe that the government of Canada intend to neglect to deal with this matter, especially in view of the fact that the hon. the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) used these words in the House last session :

I beg to tell that hon. gentleman that when Canada sends her sons to the front, Canada becomes responsible, and will know how to redeem that responsibility to the widows and the orphans of the brave men who may fall in that struggle.

We do not propose to shift that duty on to the shoulders of any insurance company, and I may remind the House that with the full concurrence of his Council, my right hon. friend ward and care of every honest-minded Canadian.

Further on the hon. gentleman (Sir Richard Cartwright) said :

Sir, I have no fear that the Canadian people will shrink from that duty. I say that the government have chosen the right way, and I say again that the brave men in the front may have no fear if it should please Providence that they should remain on the soil of South Africa, that their widows and little ones will not be the wards and the care of the state, and the ward and care of every honest-minded Canadian.

I have quoted this language because it expresses in more suitable terms than I could do, the views I entertain in regard to this subject, and I trust that the right hon. gentleman may be able to assure the House that the government will deal with this question before the session is over. As to the volunteers who have returned and who are able in some measure to perform the duties of life but who are handicapped in the struggle of life by reason of wounds or disease, provision should be made for them also. Again, the families of those who have fallen have in many cases been deprived of their bread winners, and while it is true that in some cases a provision has been made through the insurance which Sir Charles Tupper announced to the House last year,

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yet that does not cover all the necessity and it is most desirable that the government should make some further provision.

I regret also that no mention was made in the Speech from the Throne of the present position of negotiations—if any negotiations are pending—with respect to the fast Atlantic service. Upon that question both parties in parliament are united. The government undertook to deal with it in 1897 and we had reports from the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce, from the hon. member for Quebec (Mr. Dobell, and from the right hon. gentleman during the session of 1897 and 1898, but since 1898 we have heard very little about the fast Atlantic service. The government have practically confessed that up to the present time their efforts have been an utter failure, but that is no reason why negotiations should terminate altogether, and so I trust that the Prime Minister will be able to assure us that the matter is still engaging the attention of the government.

Another subject which is not referred to in the Speech from the Throne is the present position of the negotiations which were entered into with the great republic to the south. About two years ago the Joint High Commission met and after several adjournments it finally, some eighteen months ago, ceased further negotiations and the House and the country are entirely in the dark now as to whether that commission proposes to resume, or whether it has absolutely abandoned its functions. It is the right of the House and the country to know from the right hon. gentleman to-day whether or not these negotiations are likely to be resumed at an early date. If they are not to be resumed we should like to know in what position is the Alaskan boundary question. It was intimated that that question stood in the way of adjustment, and if the question is to be dealt with (as was suggested on one occasion) apart from the Joint High Commission altogether, we would like to know what the policy of the government is with regard to that question so far as they are able to control it.

As to the proposed visit of the Duke of Cornwall and York to Canada, I may say, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side of the House shall hail it with loyalty and devotion. The Duke of Cornwall and York is no stranger in my own province, for when he was serving as midshipman in the Royal Navy he spent several months in the city of Halifax and many pleasant recollections of him remain in that city. There is no part of Canada where he will be hailed more warmly and loyally than in that city by the sea. I shall not, Mr. Speaker, trespass on the time of the House further than to express the hope that the right hon. the Prime Minister will give us such information on the matters which I have referred