

purpose of protecting the thirty-eight millions of people in the British Islands, and not in any shape or form to protect the people of Canada. I would hold out a warning voice and say that it is a great deal better for us to proceed on the commercial laws of Great Britain rather than try to induce the people of Great Britain to adopt the commercial idea of the people of Canada; otherwise, I fear the doors of Great Britain will be closed to the people of Canada as well as to the people of the United States and the rest of the world should Great Britain be induced to change her policy and adopt protection, and to the extent that she does so her purchasing power as a consuming market will be weakened and will react upon ourselves.

I wish, therefore, to dwell again upon that particular phase of the address where it is congratulating us on the legislation of the Imperial Parliament in regard to the Australian colonies. I wish to remind this House that that legislation is sought for to enable the various provinces of the Australian continent to unite themselves into a confederacy, as the people of Canada have united themselves in this Dominion. It is not desired, I think, in the interests of Canada, that that confederacy, when formed, should unite on the principles of protection such as we at the present moment have adopted, but rather on the principles of free trade, in unison with the commercial policy of Great Britain.

The next clause in the address is a most important one at the present moment, because it is a question of the adoption of domestic economy, I might say, by the people of Canada themselves. I congratulate the hon. leader of the government upon the wisdom displayed by the government in bringing on this session of parliament instead of having a dissolution as was at one time spoken of. The statesmanlike way of ascertaining public opinion on new questions when they arise, is either to appeal to the country for the confidence of the people, or to appeal to certain constituencies in order to find out the drift of public opinion to guide the government of the country. We have just had four by-elections in various parts of the country, and it is from these by-elections that the government to a certain extent draw their inspiration in guiding them. The government is merely the exponent of public opinion through the repre-

sentatives of the people in Parliament, and it is from the representatives of the people as elected, that they have to gauge what public opinion is, in certain directions. The result of the by-elections has been a guide to the government themselves, and to those who are opposed to the government in criticizing their policy. We in this honourable House of course, act in an independent manner in so far as we are not responsible to the people. We are not influenced in our action by feelings of passion which may be aroused in the heat of a political contest when religious questions are the forefront of that discussion, but I say we are fairly representative of the people in so far as we live among them and we are drawn from every portion of Canada, and we are able to a certain extent to tell what their feelings, their ideas and motives and anxieties are in any given direction. This is an important question that is contained in this clause:

We thank Your Excellency for informing us that, in conformity with a recent judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, to the effect that the dissentient minority of the people of Manitoba have a constitutional right of appeal to the Governor General in Council against certain Acts passed by the legislature of the province of Manitoba in relation to the subject of education, Your Excellency heard in Council the appeal, that your decision thereon has been communicated to the legislature of the said province, and that the papers on the subject will be laid before us.

I come from the province of Manitoba, which is affected by the legislation that it is proposed to put on the statute-book in regard to this question before us, and I would say this, that in so far as the government have gone—I may even go so far as to say that in the expressions that fell from the hon. leader of the government yesterday have gone—I have no fault to find. The hon. leader of the government and the government itself, in passing the remedial order which has been transmitted to the province of Manitoba, have merely given effect to the decisions resulting from the various judicial steps that the Roman Catholic minority of the province had taken in order to ascertain what their rights were, I do not see that the government had any other course to pursue than the one they did follow in hearing the appeal and transmitting the decision to the province of Manitoba. To that extent, I think, that the government acted in accordance with the decision ren-