

on all the acts of the government. He has admitted that Canada is enjoying great prosperity and has even made the admission, which is not often made in this House, that the depression which existed under the Mackenzie administration was not wholly due to the Mackenzie tariff or the alleged mismanagement or misgovernment of those days. That is an admission which is not often made by our Conservative friends, and it is worth while to call attention to it now. I presume that what the hon. gentleman wanted to point out was that the present prosperity is not wholly due to the government of the day. No member of this House has ever claimed that it was. We know that without Providence nothing can be done, but Providence has blessed Canada with great prosperity and we know that the government composed as it is of capable men, have taken advantage of the opportunities offered to us, and the country has benefited as a result of that fact.

I shall not refer to any other part of the speech delivered by my hon. friend except to his closing remarks, in which he admits beforehand that the Militia Bill which it is proposed to introduce is a good measure. After admitting that the programme of our party is a good one in that respect, he tells us in the next breath that the electors of St. John condemned the entire Liberal programme, and the Liberal administration. He admits that the Militia Bill is a sound measure and one worthy of support, and he wonders why we have not now before us a Bill providing for the establishment of a naval force. I hope that will come in proper season, and in that respect, as in all others, the Liberal party will be able to disprove the fiction which has been industriously circulated during the last twenty years by our opponents, that the Liberal party was a party of critics and not a party of government. The Liberal party have shown through all the various branches of the administration that they have in their ranks men who can govern the country, develop its resources, restore the prosperity of the manufacturer, bring back prosperity to the farmer and place Canada in the proud position which she occupies to-day. My hon. friend does not wish Canada to ask for the power of making her own treaties. He is not in favour of progressing so rapidly as that. He would like us to wait until there are a few more million people in this country. Probably that would mean going back to the old time of the national policy, when people came in at the rate of 8,000 or 9,000 a year and left the country at the rate of 25,000, 30,000 or 40,000 a year. It certainly would take some time if, under those circumstances, we were to wait for a large increase in population before asking for the treaty-making power. If 5,000,000 of people have the power to ask England to give us a voice in the making of every treaty which

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can affect Canada, either directly or indirectly, these 5,000,000 of people have as much right to insist upon that power being given to us now as if the population amounted to 50,000,000. Numbers have nothing to do with the case. The principle is one which is important. It is being studied now. Our leader has submitted it to the country, it has been discussed in England, and it will be discussed still further. It is in line with the general policy of progress and advancement that the Liberal party have inaugurated and carried into effect. I am sorry that I was called upon rather unexpectedly to speak. Not knowing that we would have the opportunity of listening to the hon. member for St. John, I have not wholly prepared myself to discuss all the questions brought up by him.

I intended saying a few words somewhat in the nature of a personal explanation in reply to certain remarks made last evening by the hon. member for East Simcoe (Mr. Bennett), who, I am sorry to say, I do not see in his seat now. After the charge which had been made against us, that we of the Liberal party have brought about racial and religious discussions in this country, we observe that this subject was introduced into the House yesterday by the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Casgrain), whom the papers of to-day designate as the new Conservative leader of the province of Quebec. Therefore, we cannot be charged on this occasion with having brought up this question of race and religion. It was unfortunate for the hon. member for Montmorency that the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) happened to be on hand with all the documents and the necessary information, because the hon. member for Montmorency probably did not expect to get the reply which he got yesterday, to the great amusement of this side of the House. The hon. member for East Simcoe, following up this debate inaugurated by the hon. member for Montmorency and continued by the hon. member for Labelle, used the following language :

I have the honour to have in the riding of Simcoe which I represent, a large French vote, and I regret to say that very little of that vote comes my way. And the reason is this. Whenever there is an election in that district, men like the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil) and the hon. Mr. Evanturel, Speaker of the local legislature of Ontario, come down there and excite the people, not by discussing political questions, but by appealing to their racial and religious prejudices. The sole issue which these men raise is the nationality and religion of the right hon. the First Minister. There was a time in the township of Tiny when the elections turned on political questions, but that day is past and gone. These hon. gentlemen should remember, however, that, if they gain a trifling success in the French vote, they run the risk of incurring a great loss in the English vote.

I have always been on good terms with the hon. member for East Simcoe. I have