

get that wheat to market in reasonable time and at a reasonable expense to them? And the very same remark applies to the mixed farmers of older Canada. These men must get their varied products to the seaboard quickly and inexpensively, or forfeit the markets of Britain and Europe. Therefore it is with very great pleasure indeed that we heard the announcement in the Speech from the Throne, that the government of His Excellency will immediately appoint a transportation commission to deal with this very intricate question, for the purpose of its betterment.

I am very glad also that a reference has been made to the Militia Act. Framed in times long gone by, and under conditions totally dissimilar to those of the present day, the Militia Act was very unsatisfactory to the main body of the force to-day, and once more we are made to feel that the old dark days for the militiamen in this country are now gone by, and that at last parliament feels that it can deal without loss of dignity with matters pertaining to the active militia of Canada. For that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speech from the Throne.

As to the Railway Commission, that of course will be a permanent tribunal. The Railway Committee of the Privy Council has in times past given tolerable satisfaction; but so great is the increase in our commerce that the work thrown upon that committee is altogether too much, even for their broad shoulders to carry. And so this commission should be appointed, following in this respect the example of other countries, of older countries, which have gone through similar commercial conditions.

Next, I come to a subject which I fear is a very debatable one, the subject of the Redistribution Bill. I hardly expect hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House to hail with joy the announcement of the advent of this measure. I feel that it would be impossible—

Mr. MACLEAN. Is it going to be fair?

Mr. THOMPSON. I was going to say that no matter how fair that measure may be, we can hardly hope to meet all the aspirations and longings of hon. gentlemen opposite, including the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean). Therefore I will say this much, at least, that I think the government surgeon will make the necessary amputations and ingraftments as painlessly as possible, and that, true to our Liberal conceptions, we will, as is our wont, try to remove the existing abuses without creating new ones. Further than that I cannot go.

The first reference in His Excellency's speech I had designedly left to the last, and that is the question of the general prosperity of Canada. I have done so be-

Mr. THOMPSON (Haldimand).

cause this subject is an extremely pleasant one to all good Canadians, to those both on the right and on the left of Mr. Speaker. First, I think I may say that for the bountiful harvests, for the peace within our borders, for the absence of disease and disaster already referred to, we desire with all reverence to thank the Giver of all good. But in honouring Divinity, let us not forget humanity. Let us remember that, prodigal as nature may be in its good gifts, these gifts may be wasted by a government inactive or slothful, or they may be taken the best advantage of by such a government as Canada is fortunately ruled by to-day. Take the question of mineral lands in the first place. How rich are the mineral resources of this country? It is Providence that has hidden these riches in the bowels of the earth, but it is the government that has supplied the facilities for using these deposits to the very best advantage. Why, Sir, away up in the frozen Yukon—which, by the way, is now for the first time sending a representative to these legislative halls, a gentleman both able and affable—away up in the frozen Yukon, law and order are maintained as they have never been maintained before in a similar territory under similar conditions; and for that we thank the government. The miner and his hard-earned gold are as safe in the streets of Dawson City as in any other part of the world. The same remark applies to the outlying camps in British Columbia and in New Ontario. More than this, not only has the government afforded protection to the miners in their industry, but it has helped them in another essential respect by reducing the prices of what they consume, and of the raw material that they use in their industry, by the improved tariff now prevailing. So we say that nature and the government are working hand in hand, the one supplying the ores and the other supplying the facilities.

Next we come to our forest resources. Who, a few years ago, was doing anything for the development of the pulp wood industry of Canada, an industry now running up into the hundreds of millions? Our spruce forests are not necessarily a disappearing quantity, for the reason that this wood reproduces itself so rapidly that only thirty years have to elapse from seed time to harvest. With regard to lumbering proper, the magnificent prices recently received here in Ottawa for limits in this neighbourhood, are the very best gauge of the prosperity of this great Canadian industry.

The fisheries, Sir, have increased with everything else in Canada, but we cannot look forward to their increasing to the same extent as some other industries because they are very long established and they have been very successfully worked, but even if that is the case I am told that