

pardonably term our national advancement. For though we sustain no direct representative relation to defined constituencies, I cannot divest myself of the conviction that, as part of the machinery of the Government, this Chamber is bound to consult the aggregate of the people's will not slavishly, indeed, in the sense of delegates accountable to particular districts, but as distinguished from the idea which in other days attached to a crown nominated body. We are placed in a position which relieves us from the temptation to surrender our own judgment to the demands of momentary prejudice or passion, but which in my opinion in no degree entitles us to be indifferent to the sober, well-matured requirements of the people. On any other hypothesis I should consider our standing and duties anomalous in these days of representative rule. Thus viewed, however, it seems to me that our functions may be exercised most usefully—not as registrars of executive opinion on one hand, nor servile echoes of fleeting popular feeling on the other, but as the balance-wheel of this Government, guiding always, obstructing never, and in all things manifesting a superiority to the promptings of an angry partisanship. Unless I am mistaken, there will be ample opportunities for the cultivation of the varied qualities which are essential to statesmanship. The system of Government under which we now assemble is in many respects experimental. In the nature of things it is impossible that all obstacles can have been anticipated or that provision can have been made for all emergencies. Under the most favourable circumstances hindrances may be expected to develop themselves in the working of the complicated machinery of the Federal Government. But we cannot hope always to enjoy favourable circumstances or to avoid the collisions which are inseparable from the adjustment of imperfectly defined authority. The relations of the central to the local governments, though arranged in outline by the terms of the Imperial Act, necessarily remain to be perfected by the light of actual experience. I see no insuperable obstacle that is likely to arise, nor any question which can properly embarrass the practical working of the scheme. But I foresee many occasions for temperate and prudent counsel on both sides—many occurrences which can be satisfactorily disposed of only by forbearance and moderation on the part of both. Of these we shall be better able to speak by and by. Meanwhile I advert to this aspect of the general question for the purpose of indicating the necessity for more discrimination and care than they may

be inclined to cultivate, who, in their zeal for the glory of the Dominion, ignore the rights or disregard the pretensions of the Provinces of which it is composed. We must not forget that centralization has dangers not less formidable than those which grow out of an extreme application of the States rights—or, in our case, the Provincial rights, doctrine. For the present, however, our thoughts are to be occupied with subjects over which the legislature of the Dominion will exercise direct authority, and to the more important of which reference has been made in His Excellency's speech. Some of these are in the main strictly administrative, as for instance everything relating to the organization of departments and the management by the Dominion of enterprises and interests which have been heretofore under local control. Of the subjects which involve principles and policy, perhaps, the equalization of the tariff is that which most concerns the harmony and welfare of the Provinces. We have but to glance across a neighbouring line to discover the perils and difficulties incident to crude systems of finance, or to systems framed with a view to special interests rather than the general benefit. Our duty is to avoid the blunders which our neighbours have committed, and as far as possible to adopt the liberal fiscal policy which has conferred such solid advantages on Great Britain. We cannot be blind to the considerations which suggest the desirability of equalizing downward, not upward, and moreover of accompanying equalization with revision in the direction of reduction. Of course the requirements of the Exchequer must not be neglected, but experience elsewhere has proved the feasibility of combining productiveness with measures of taxation lightly affecting the trade and industry of a country. On no single circumstance is our growth in population and wealth more dependent than on the adoption of just and comparatively light taxation; and to attain this, we must discard the notion of protecting small and special interests, and keep in sight the wants of the people at large. In no other way shall we be able to meet the expectations of the Provinces whose tariffs have been lower than that of Canada, or to attract the immigrants to whom we must look for much needed help. Partly to promote the same end, it is expedient to proceed with the work of colonizing and organizing the north-west territory, that we may be enabled to offer to the struggling populations of the old world a region as fertile, as easily tilled, as desirable in all respects for purposes of settlement as