

view. that when I came out from England and learned that a conference was about to take place between representatives of Great Britain, composed for the most part of members of the Canadian Government, along with another very able member of this House, I felt at once that I must alter the lines I had proposed to take, of carrying on a somewhat active agitation in the province of Quebec. My hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte), I know, regards with great contempt any effort in opposition to this Government that anybody can make in that province, which he assumes to be entirely his own special charge and care. But I must say that I do not place so low an estimate upon the intelligence of the people of that great province as to doubt that if they were properly informed of the position that this Government occupies in regard to many questions vitally affecting that province, at all events, the relative proportions of hon. gentlemen sitting on the two sides of this House might be very materially changed. That is my opinion, and in that view of the case I had promised to carry on a somewhat active agitation in that province during the past summer. But when I learned that this conference was about to assemble, I felt that I must reconsider the position, and whether hon. gentlemen opposite may attach any importance to it or not, I acted under a sense of what I believed to be a public duty in deciding that while that commission was sitting I must refrain from dealing, at all events, with questions which were under its consideration, and which I felt were more likely to be prejudiced than otherwise by such a public discussion of the position of the Government as otherwise I would have been called upon to undertake. Well, Sir, I met with some little opposition. Some of my friends said: But suppose they accomplish something, they may go to the country, and they may carry the country without our having an opportunity of putting our views before it at all. Well, I answered, I want you to understand that so long as I am entrusted with the responsibility of the leadership of the Liberal-Conservative party, my policy will be the traditional policy that has always governed the actions of that great party, namely, to put the country before party. I said that if I were quite sure the conference would result in accomplishing some great good for Canada, I should be quite willing to continue to sit on the Opposition benches, if that was necessary, in order that Canada might enjoy that advantage. But we have now reached the point where we have to look at this matter from a different standpoint. I feel that everything that we could possibly do has been done by hon. gentlemen opposite, led by that great and distinguished nobleman whose death we all so sincerely deplore. I may say here that in my judgment Her Ma-

esty's Government could have made no happier appointment to the position of leader of the British delegation than that of the late lamented Lord Herschell. I have had the pleasure of a long and somewhat intimate acquaintance with that right hon. gentleman. We were both members of the Royal Commission appointed by the Queen for the purpose of organizing the Imperial Institute, and after the Imperial Institute was organized, Lord Herschell discharged the very important duties of chairman of the executive council, of which I was a member; so that during a number of years I had an opportunity of seeing a great deal of that distinguished man. I need not say to this House that he was not only one of the ablest lawyers, but one of the most able peers that sat in the House of Lords in England; and his appointment by a Government to which he was opposed was the best evidence of how far the British Government are disposed to go in considering the fitness of persons for the discharge of the particular duties which devolve upon them. I felt that it was a great advantage to Canada to have on the commission a gentleman so distinguished as Lord Herschell; and I may say that during my acquaintance with him, and in the opportunities I had of seeing him preside over large bodies of men, nothing struck me more forcibly than the wonderful tact that he always displayed in discharging those duties. I may add that on several occasions it became my duty to approach His Lordship in his position as Lord Chancellor, in regard to several matters, notably two important matters, one connected with the representation of Canada on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and another relating to the admission of colonial government securities for investment in trust funds; and on every occasion I found Lord Herschell not only extremely able and extremely courteous, but disposed to do everything he possibly could to promote the interests of the colonies. I feel it right that, under these circumstances, I should utter my humble tribute to the memory of that great man, and express my deep regret and appreciation of the loss which both the Empire and Canada have sustained by his untimely death.

Now, Sir, the mover of the Address has told us that for six months we have waited patiently for the result of the International Commission, but I am afraid I will have to qualify that word, for I believe that I am expressing the opinion of gentlemen on both sides of the House, as well as the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the people of Canada when I say, that we have waited the result of that conference with deep impatience. So far as we can judge, from the statement in the press, which is the only means of communication on the matter open to us, for six long months the people of Canada have been placed in the most unfortunate