

struction of the British Columbia sections of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It struck me at the time that it was showing a great want of respect for the feelings and wishes of Parliament. I presume that the hon. leader of the Government in this House is quite sincere in what he says; but I cannot feel the greatest confidence in the respect which the Government now assume to feel for the feelings of Parliament. This is a question of too much importance to be regulated by etiquette. This Pacific Railway, as every hon. gentleman who has spoken has said, is the most important subject with which this country has to deal. This undertaking has been a kind of millstone around our necks for the last eight years, and we are now proposing to finally dispose of it. It seems to me that it is a question on which, not Parliament alone, but the people, have a right to be fully informed, because, after all, Parliament is to be respected chiefly because it represents the people at large, and, separated from the people, Parliament has no particular title to any large share of respect. Now, it is perfectly clear that when a matter which is to affect the future of our people for a great many years has to be dealt with, the people ought to have an opportunity to exercise their intelligence and their reason in dealing with it; and, I think, that there is no excuse whatever for the Government's refusal to make known the terms of this agreement to the people as soon as the agreement was arrived at. If that had been done then the members of Parliament would have had time, before coming here, to think over the matter, and gather the opinions of their constituents and of the public at large on the subject, and be enabled to deal with the matter as it should be dealt with. We are now going to deal with this most important subject in a precipitate manner, and with the least possible time for reflection and discussion. There was one statement made by the hon. gentleman who moved the Address, and repeated by the leader of the Government, that there had been good harvests under the previous Administration, and prosperity did not follow; but I think that has been quite satisfactorily disposed of by the leader of

*Hon. Mr. Power.*

the Opposition, who said that there happened in this present instance to be a failure of the harvest in Europe, combined with a good harvest here. I should like to ask, if the National Policy has had so much to do with our prosperity, how it was that during a portion of the Conservative Administration which began in 1867 and ended in 1873, the country enjoyed almost unexampled prosperity without a National Policy, and how was it that the gentleman who is now Finance Minister of this country, and who then occupied the same position, was able in 1873, in his Budget speech of that session, to indulge in anticipations which were even more glowing than those which he indulges in to-day? There are one or two paragraphs which I shall pass over for the present. We should all agree in thinking that it is well to have the boundaries of Manitoba extended a little further than they extend at present. His Excellency has told us that he has thought it well to issue a Royal Commission to examine and inquire into the whole question of the Civil Service. I am very glad, indeed, that the Government have undertaken to deal with this matter, and I cannot agree with the hon. gentlemen who think that the Government themselves should have acted as Commissioners. I think there is a great deal of force in the views expressed by the leader of the Government. I regret this fact, though, and I think all the members of this House who are anxious to see Civil Service reform will also, that whereas last session His Excellency told Parliament that a Bill for the improvement of the Civil Service would be laid before them that year, this session the Government do not put any such promise in His Excellency's mouth. They simply make him say that he believes that the report of the Commissioners will be ready at an early day, and asks us to consider their report. The paragraph does not indicate that there is to be any action on the part of the Government at all. But I think it must have struck some hon. gentlemen as being a remarkable omission that, while two paragraphs are devoted to this Civil Service Commission, nothing whatever is said of another Commission which, I think, has excited a great deal more in-