

teen or twenty knots an hour, such as is maintained on the southern route. The hon. member for Queen's, P.E.I. (Mr. Welsh) gave the same opinion. I hold in my hands now a book entitled, "The St. Lawrence Pilot, comprising Sailing Directions for the Gulf and River; originally compiled by Rear-Admiral H. W. Bayfield." On the very first page of the book I read this :

In the charts resulting from extended Admiralty surveys will be found accurate soundings, taken with Massey's patent sounding machine, which gives the depth independent of the effect of currents or drift of the vessel. The use of this instrument cannot be too strongly recommended, for correct soundings may be obtained with it in 30 fathoms of water without heaving to, if the vessel be not sailing at a rate exceeding 6 knots; and no vessel ought to be permitted to run so fast, in a thick fog or dark night, when in the vicinity of land or other danger.

Now, this is conclusive, and if these proposals—which I do not discuss at length to-day, and which will have to be discussed at a future date—are at all to be realized with any degree of success, the conditions will have to be greatly modified before they can be accepted. There is another paragraph in the Speech with respect with Australia. Well, this is also a chapter which is an old story. We have sent delegation after delegation, I do not know how many times. We have sent a delegation to the West Indies, once, twice, and perhaps three times. We have sent a delegation to Brazil and to almost every part of the world, and now even to the Antipodes. To obtain, what? That which we have at our very doors—to obtain trade which we can secure without any difficulty whatever, not by subsidizing lines of steamers, but simply by removing obstacles to trade and commerce. Sir, the Speech shines with many subjects, but many matters have been omitted that should have appeared. An hon. member yesterday called attention to the Prohibition Commission. How many years have elapsed since the hon. Finance Minister told us in a very solemn moment—

An hon. MEMBER. In a moment of weakness.

Mr. LAURIER. It was at a solemn moment when the hon. gentleman made a confession that in a moment of weakness he had formed a hasty opinion of prohibition, that he wanted more information. That incident occurred, if I remember rightly, in July or August of 1891. One year, two years, have elapsed, and still the hon. gentleman is in the same state of ignorance. By this time his trouble must have become chronic, and if continued much longer it will prove incurable. Why has he not that report at this hour? Is it not a mockery? The resolution was adopted by the House in the summer of 1891; it was not until January, 1892, that the Commission was appointed, and the

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Commission has been sitting, and I do not know whether it is sitting yet, but two years have elapsed and still there is no report. It seems to me that the hon. Finance Minister is not desirous to get rid of his ignorance on that subject. Then there is another subject to which reference should have been made in the Speech from the Throne: I mean the treaty with France. It is now more than fifteen years ago that Sir Alexander Galt was instructed by the Canadian Government to open negotiations in order to obtain, if possible, a treaty between Canada and France. Those negotiations were opened and then abandoned, they were resumed, then interrupted, then renewed again, and finally they culminated in the completion of a treaty which was signed last winter, in February, I think, and placed at once on the Table of the House. Strange to say, the Government, which had been negotiating that treaty for about fifteen years, so soon as the treaty was completed, seemed to have repented that they had entered into such a treaty. They were bound to take some action and inform Parliament at once whether they proposed to have the treaty ratified or not ratified. They did nothing. During last session it might have been unfair to press for an answer. The Prime Minister was away on other important duties; but on this occasion, a year after the treaty had been signed, we had reason to expect that reference would have been made to that important subject in the Speech from the Throne, and the Government would have announced their decision to ask Parliament to ratify the treaty. But there is no reference to the subject in the Speech. Evidently the hon. gentlemen opposite have not formed an opinion. Why? Because there are conflicting interests in that regard, and firmness and courage are required to arrive at a conclusion in respect to it. But they are bound to come to a conclusion, they are bound to come to a decision and a decision at once. There are important interests waiting to know what is going to take place in reference to the treaty. The lumbermen of New Brunswick want to know under what tariff they will send their lumber to France. That is one interest affected. The wine producers of the west want to know whether they will have to meet the competition of French wines or not. The temperance people want to know whether French wines are to be admitted on more favourable terms; and there is a class of my fellow-countrymen who are in favour of more extended relations with France, if possible, and they are entitled to obtain the opinion of the Government on the subject. These are conflicting interests; and shall we be told that in the face of so many conflicting interests the Government are discharging their duty in not expressing to the House their opinions respecting them? We must have a decision. The prime duty of a Government is to form opinions and carry out resolutions