

*The Address*

gramme of legislation in the course of the present session.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to greet His Excellency the Governor General, official representative in Canada of our Sovereign. Lord Byng of Vimy is not unknown to us. Our soldiers knew him on the battle fields of Flanders; he was their general and led them through the raking fire of Vimy.

Together they participated in the same victories. On the return home, our warriors joined in praising his urbanity and eminent qualities of his heart and soul. Better than anyone, His Excellency, will understand how our Canada has grown by the warlike prowess of our triumphant armies and by the ashes of our illustrious dead, who peacefully rest over there, on the battle-fields of Flanders and on the plains of Champagne.

I moreover greet, and in this circumstance I firmly believe that I shall again have the entire approval of this House, the new Speaker, the hon. member for Gaspé, that loyal friend, grandson of a true patriot and father of a hero. His twenty-five years of exemplary parliamentary life, his uprightness, his judicial and profound knowledge of the rules and regulations of this House, had for a long time past truly designated him for this princely Chair.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I second the motion for the address because I realize that the Government has understood, under its true aspect, the economical situation and by its programme will live up to the requirements of the hour. Guizot, the French historian, said:

"In well administered States, the greatest concern of the government is for the improvement of economic conditions in their widest sense. Large amounts are voted favoring agriculture, industry and commerce."

These statements cannot be gainsaid. If the government of a country does not endeavour to advance agriculture, industry and commerce, it will proclaim itself to be a weak and unprogressive administration, the country will remain in a state of stagnation and poverty and failure will be the lot of its people.

These hard truths, Mr. Speaker, are worthy of reflection. These great misfortunes must be avoided and forestalled. I notice by the Speech from the Throne that the King Government recognize those duties and that agriculture, industry and commerce will receive their entire solicitude as well as the administration measures with which they are closely linked.

[Mr. Mercier.]

I agree entirely with our Government's views on this subject of general interest, and let me point out to you why we must encourage to-day more than ever, agriculture, industry, commerce and their attributes amongst which I mention immigration and the labour question.

Agriculture is bound with the future of our Dominion. Rightly is it said that our country is the granary of the empire.

The history of the world teaches us that the ancients held in honour agriculture, and put it to an intelligent use, except during the epoch of their downfall. Agriculture was the source of prosperity of the European countries. It has been the dawn of our progress and it is yet one of the factors which shall assure our prosperity. Liberal governments have always understood that the agricultural budget should include generous subsidies. Therefore, within the bounds of its revenue, the Government will favour a sound agricultural policy permitting agricultural science to develop continuously, and the farming industry to rest on a solid foundation. True, Mr. Speaker, America and Australia are new countries where as a matter of course, farming is pursued on a large scale, where returns from the land are prompt; but it is necessary all the same, to assist our agriculture more than is being done, by agricultural and scientific methods. Acting in touch with the provinces, the Dominion government will not fail to realize its cherished dream, that of upholding agriculture as the corner stone of our material and social progress.

The interest which the Prime Minister, following in the footsteps of Laurier, has shown to the agricultural class, will the better convince the latter of the nobleness of its calling, and that it is absolutely essential to our country. In thus preventing the emigration of our own people to foreign lands, the homestead should become an earthly paradise rather than the neighbouring towns where the sons and sometimes the fathers are unfortunately attracted.

We have reason to be proud of our Canada, Mr. Speaker, for it is one of the few countries of the world where there is yet hope for honest and civilized working souls, far from the war troubles of old Europe.

A great foreign immigration may begin to flow in on a large scale during the course of the next two years. It seems to me that the Government holds decided ideals on this score and it is to be con-