

his duties, to the earnestness with which he addressed himself to every subject of public interest, and more than all, to the great ability with which that earnestness was directed. I am greatly relieved from the necessity of answering my hon. friend opposite by the speeches of the mover and second to-day. They have discussed all these subjects and pressed them upon the consideration of the House in a manner which must meet with the general approbation of the majority of this House, and, I believe, with the approbation of the people of this country. They have shown, in contrast with the despondent wail of my hon. friend, despondent for very many causes—a very natural despondency—they have stated their opinion that this is a happy, that this is a prosperous, country, and that this is a satisfied and contented people. Mr. Speaker, at first, when the hon. gentleman began to speak, I thought the millennium had come, since the measures that were to be submitted so completely met his views, that as he had to make a speech, he addressed himself to the Speech from the Throne of last year. He told us that we were full of good intentions but that we did not carry those good intentions into execution. Well, among the good intentions which he desired to be carried into effect, is, in the first place, the establishment of the Department of Trade and Commerce. I thought for a few moments that he approved of that, because we were to cut off the heads of the Minister of Inland Revenue and the Minister of Customs. We ought to have done that, and yet the hon. gentleman said he did not want to have it done. Therefore, instead of making it a matter of charge against us, he ought to have said—I did not observe that he did—that we had learned wisdom from the Opposition, that although numerically small, they were intellectually great, their judgments were great; and that, although armed with a greater numerical strength in this House, we had yielded to the arguments of the intellectual Opposition on the other side, and had reviewed our legislation. Well, now, Mr. Speaker, that is not exactly the case. The hon. gentleman will not dispute that, for many years, the different Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade have asked for a Department of Trade and Commerce; he will not dispute, I think, that the Government had a right, and were fully justified, in asking Parliament, in obedience to this general desire, to establish such bureau, to establish such department; and, therefore, the only charges he can bring against us is that we have not carried it out this year. Well, if the hon. gentleman will look at the Act he will see that the Government took, with the consent of Parliament, the power of judging when that department should be established. There is a little clause at the end of that Act which provides that it shall be brought into effect whenever His Excellency the Governor General shall proclaim that it ought to be brought into effect. One reason, perhaps—I merely suggest it to the hon. gentleman because I am not going to let him into the inner circle—I will suggest that one reason why the Department of Trade and Commerce has not yet been established, is that, though we have not a Minister of Trade and Commerce, yet the administration of the affairs was so good, the devotion to the matters of trade and commerce was so complete, that we have ceased to see the necessity of filling the new Department, and there has not been from one single Chamber of Commerce, from one single Mechanics' Institute, from one single body of workingmen, a request that that bureau should be brought into force at once. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have got liberty from the Boards of Trade and Commerce, the permission of the whole of the commercial and manufacturing bodies of Canada, to select our own time, to select our own opportunity for bringing that Act into force. The hon. gentleman would seem to be anxious—although he rather objected to the use of that phrase as applied to my hon. friends the Minister of Customs and the Minister of Inland Revenue—to have their heads cut off. Well, if he will look

at the Act he will find a little clause declaring that the Act shall not be brought into force until the necessity for it is proclaimed by the Governor General. Now, we believe ourselves to be a Government with considerable foresight, we like to look ahead, we do not go on from day to day, but we desire to forward the better organisation of the various departments of the Government when the necessity exists. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that we could well dispense with my hon. friend the Minister of Customs. Although I say it in his presence, I believe that his administration of that Department has been so able, so earnest, and so zealous, that the whole body of the honest traders of this country would regret if that hon. gentleman gave up that position.

Mr. MITCHELL. Not much.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. He has protected the honest trader, he has put down the dishonest trader, he has not allowed the smuggler or the dishonest merchant—if he can be dignified by the name of merchant—to continue his practices; he has not allowed false invoices, he has not allowed false statements, he has followed with just punishment every effort to defraud the revenue; and the National Policy which the hon. gentleman now decries, although at one time he was a strong advocate of it, and the tariff regulations would have been of no value if it had not been protected by the action of my hon. friend the Minister of Customs. He has met, I say, with general acceptance from the whole of the commercial classes of Canada, and until my hon. friend is disposed to apply otherwise his great abilities, there is no hurry for bringing that Act I speak of into operation. And so I say with respect to the Department of Inland Revenue, the revenue has been protected to the utmost extent, and the department most efficiently administered. The hon. gentleman speaks of the Solicitor Generalship that it was not brought into play. I dare say my hon. friend and colleague, the Minister of Justice, when the time comes, will be able to defend his course in refraining from filling that office. But the hon. gentleman is mistaken in his statement that the legislation is identical or equivalent to the proposition made years ago when Mr. Mackenzie was at the head of the Government. If the hon. gentleman will compare the two propositions he will find that they are not identical, and the objections taken then against that Bill do not apply to the Bill introduced by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice. On the whole, I cannot complain of the remarks of the hon. gentleman with respect to the Speech from the Throne. He says he thinks the election law requires amendment. We agree, therefore, as to the necessity of the action of the Government in that regard, and when the Bill comes down I hope we may get the assistance of the hon. gentleman in amending the Act, and that he may forget for a moment that he is the leader of the Opposition and play the role of a patriot.

Mr. LAURIER. If you will follow my suggestions.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Then the hon. gentleman objects to the manner of appointing revising officers and wants them to be officers holding fixed positions.

Mr. LAURIER. Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes, and the revising officers be selected from among those appointed by the provincial authorities, men often bitterly hostile to the majority of this House, bitterly hostile to the Conservative party,—and the hon. gentleman is anxious for the appointment of men who will at all events give but a scanty measure of justice to Conservative candidates at the polls. The hon. gentleman would have those officials appointed; but the party to which he belongs in his own great Province of Quebec sometimes takes a different course. Look across