

things are not quite all right in insurance, that it is possible that money may have been diverted as it was diverted by the insurance companies in New York. It is of importance, and of the greatest importance, that these things should be cleared up, that the investigation should go to the bottom of the whole question, that every man who has a grievance should be able to bring it up and that there should be an absolutely thorough inquiry into this subject. That is what we have in mind. What did the hon. gentleman mean by saying that we should have consulted parliament? What should we have done? It was suggested the other day, and may be suggested again, that we should have had an inquiry by a committee of this House. Let me suggest to my hon. friend that a commission such as we have appointed can probe the whole system of insurance with greater efficiency than could a committee of this House. If you have a parliamentary inquiry, it must take place here in Ottawa, whereas a commission can go to Montreal, Toronto or any place else. It can inspect the offices of the company. The commissioners can walk into the office of a company and ask that everything be placed before them. In this way they can make an investigation far more thorough in its nature than any investigation that could be made here in Ottawa. My hon. friend is not easy to satisfy. It is very difficult indeed to satisfy him. He is not satisfied with our choice of Judge MacTavish or Mr. Langmuir. By his position as a judge of the land, Judge MacTavish is prevented from being a director of any company, or having anything to do with the administration of any company. Mr. Langmuir is a business man and is connected with several companies. What I would like to ask my hon. friend who attacked the choice of Mr. Langmuir—though he admits him to be, as everybody knows he is, a most honourable man, a man of unimpeachable character—is, whether he believes, that if we are to have an inquiry taken part in by a business man, we could find a man who is not connected with some company? The thing is preposterous. In this age every business man of prominence is connected as director with one, perhaps with several companies. When you have chosen men of unimpeachable character, such as Judge MacTavish and Mr. Langmuir, it seems to me that you have provided for the very best inquiry that could be had. Such is, at all events, our object, and I have every reason to feel confident that the result will be commensurate with our intentions. But if this inquiry turns out to be unsatisfactory, if it does not search every hole and corner, if it does not probe every part, if it leaves anything undone which should have been done, then, Sir, it will be time enough to look for another inquiry. But, I have every reason to believe that, with the strong character of the commission which we have appointed,

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

ed, the inquiry will be thorough and the light of a complete investigation will be thrown upon the operations of the insurance companies. And that is what we want. We want to have the light thrown upon these matters. If there are offenders who should be exposed, or if on the other hand, as I believe, the administration of the companies is thorough and honest, the truth, whatever it may be, should be known.

I have only one word to say, because I would like to close the debate if possible—and that is to thank my hon. friend for the kind words he has spoken of the late Mr. Préfontaine. The hon. gentleman has spoken truly. Mr. Préfontaine, was a strong minister, a strong character. At the same time, he was peculiar in this, that, while he ruled with a strong hand, he was of the gentlest possible disposition. No man approached him but was satisfied that in him he found the gentlest of men. Yet, once he had made up his mind, he went steadily. And he did good work for the country. His death was attended with dramatic incidents second only to those which attended the death of Sir John Thompson in Windsor Castle. Mr. Préfontaine died in the land of his ancestors. But even this unfortunate incident, this loss to a people composed of the descendants of French and English ancestors, may result in good in leading to a still greater rapprochement between England and France.

I welcome my hon. friend's disposition to help us in carrying to completion the work of the session. He will find us ready with our work, and with little legislation to lay before the House. And with the assistance of the opposition, there is no reason why the session should not be concluded in less than three months.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

Hon. GEO. E. FOSTER (North-Toronto). Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to take up the address in consecutive order. Some parts of it have been very exhaustively and thoroughly dealt with, and it is not worth while spending time in multiplying words upon those particular parts. There are, however, two or three points in connection with the address which I think might be mentioned. The first is with reference to the treaty with Japan. A person who was not acquainted with the history of this matter might very well have supposed from the speech, and from the remarks that were made, that this was a brand new treaty made with the young and rising empire of Japan, and for which the government should and might very well take to themselves special credit. Well, when one looks into it, it all simmers down to this, that it is but the late confession of a blunder, it is but the tardy attempt to retrieve a mistake, to say the