

revenue producer, inasmuch as it has produced an enormous surplus this year and will continue to do so in the future. Until my hon. friend had spoken, we had supposed that the perfection of a revenue tariff was to so frame that tariff as to make the revenue equal, and no more than equal, to the needs of the public, but my hon. friend is perhaps a little too young in public life to remember that the hon. Minister of Finance and the right hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce declaimed against these surpluses in the most strident tones in days gone by. They said that they were simply sums plundered from the pockets of a long suffering people, and that if these surpluses should be piled up in the future in this way it simply meant so much money abstracted from the pockets of the people and the query of these hon. gentlemen was: How long will the country be able to stand a drain of that kind? My hon. friend from North Ontario referred to the great prosperity of the country and my hon. friend from Hochelaga spoke of the smile upon the face of the farmer. Let me say to my hon. friend that the smile upon the face of the farmer is never broader than when the members of the government and hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House claim that this prosperity is due absolutely to their policy. It is true, Mr. Speaker, that we have prosperity in this country, and no one is more thankful for it than the Conservatives throughout the country. No one is more thankful for it than the gentlemen who sit on the left of Mr. Speaker, but let me say to my hon. friend from North Ontario, that I think it is due to causes, for the most part, very much beyond the control of any government and to causes which have created prosperity not only in Canada, but throughout the world. As far as the Northwest Territories of Canada are concerned, let me also say that I would have supposed that the splendid crops which we have had in the Northwest during the three past years have had more to do with the prosperity of the country and with the splendid immigration which has gone into that country than has any administrative act of the party now in control of public affairs.

Now, having said so much, let me, before discussing the matters referred to in the speech from the Throne, call the attention of the government and the country to the fact that this session is once more called at an inexcusably late date. Last year the session of parliament opened on the 12th of March. In speaking in the debate upon the address, I made no reference to the lateness of that session, because we had all been sorry to learn at that time that the health of the right hon. Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) was not all that could be desired. That difficulty has been removed. My right hon. friend has

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).

been restored to health and yet this parliament has been summoned to meet His Excellency on the 10th of March this year. We all know that the sessions of parliament in this country cannot be concluded in a few weeks. We all know, as the right hon. Prime Minister said only two years ago, that an ordinary session of this parliament must extend to about five months. That was my right hon. friend's view when he introduced a measure into this House for the purpose of increasing the indemnity of members of this House from \$1,000 to \$1,500. He has called us here on the 10th of March with every expectation that we shall have a session of five months' duration, according to his own view, and I would like to know from my right hon. friend when he comes to address the House, why it is that this session has been so unduly postponed. Could I suggest the reason to my right hon. friend? If I am to believe the hon. Solicitor General (Hon. Mr. Lemieux) it was the intention of the government at the end of the past year to have gone to the country. My hon. friend, the Solicitor General, stated in so many words that the right hon. Prime Minister of this country proposed to give as a new year's gift to the people of Canada, a general election. Possibly that may be an excuse for the lateness of the session. I do not know whether my right hon. friend will be inclined to rely upon that as a reason. Possibly he will and possibly he will not, but, however, whether the Solicitor General was correct or not, the government, if they had any such intention, have shrunk from an appeal to the people of the country, and in view of what has taken place during the past few weeks we all conclude that the government shrank from that appeal with very good reason. We have had certain by-elections during the past few weeks and I did not observe in the speech of my hon. friend from North Ontario, or in the speech of my hon. friend from Hochelaga, any congratulation extended to the government upon the results of these elections. We have had these congratulations in very bountiful profusion on former occasions, but I observed that on this occasion these hon. gentlemen wisely kept silence as to the results of these by-elections. A change has come over some of the constituencies in this country. Three years ago the constituencies which have recently been called upon to elect members to this House returned a Liberal majority of 5,300 votes as against a total Conservative majority of 264 votes, while, in the elections which have recently taken place, there was a total Liberal majority of 1,717 votes and a total Conservative majority of 1,060 votes, indicating a reversal of opinion in regard to the policy of the government of very considerable moment in this country. I would have been inclined