

fruits of their labors, under the protection of just and equitable laws. The workmen of Montreal East, in choosing one of themselves, had but one object—that of representing themselves in the council of the nation when the question of their interests was being discussed. By their interests, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean their material interests, I do not refer to the question of wages, for Parliaments are powerless to regulate such matters, but I mean their much dearer interests—their self-respect, their future and the future of their families. It is to put an end to monstrous abuses, to iniquitous regulations, which have been complained of for a long time past, that the Labor Commission has been appointed, and that the electors of Montreal East have elected me as their member in the House of Commons. It is to explain in a public manner, in the face of the whole country, the harshness of the laws which affect them in the matters of debts or contracts. It is to publish to the representatives of the country the unknown sufferings, the injustice submitted to, the thousand and one difficulties which the workmen have to overcome, and which they cannot even oppose. It is to unmask all these things to the House that the electors of Montreal East have chosen me as their representative. I am aware that the task which has been imposed upon me, on me an inexperienced workman, is a difficult one; so difficult that, to come out well, I rely more than ever upon the powerful assistance, upon the generous support of a great number of the members of this House, who have already yielded me their confidence and have given me their support. But I reckon above all upon the assistance and co-operation of the hon. Ministers who form the Government. In fine, I reckon on the good-will of all; because, Mr. Speaker, I represent here not only the workmen; but, further, all the electors who during the last campaign have magnanimously abandoned their former notions respecting the labor question. I represent all the large-hearted men who think that the laboring classes should be represented in Parliament. Workingmen—and I can say it emphatically, Mr. Speaker—do not demand any exceptional laws in their favor; they do not ask for any special legislation which may be antagonistic to capital. Workingmen only ask for one thing: that is, justice; and from justice they expect but one thing,—sufficient protection to place them on a footing of equality with the capital which purchases their labor. At the present moment, Mr. Speaker, I shall refrain from speaking about the laws respecting the protection of the lives of workmen; or respecting the laws having reference to the regulation of employment of women and children; or about the doing away with assisted immigration, which flows naturally and strongly from the principles of the National Policy. I think it useless to take up the time of the House in setting forth my views at greater length on the labor question; especially as a discussion will soon take place on the presenting of the Report of the Labor Commission to the House. Let me be permitted to say, however, that the constitution of the country renders the solution of the problem raised in the labor question all the more difficult of solution, as unfortunately there exists in the minds of our legislators a doubt about the powers bestowed on the Provincial Legislatures by the British North America Act, in all matters respecting the relations between capital and labor. I hope that during the present Session this difficulty will be removed and each will obtain the privileges belonging to it. Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne acknowledges that it is absolutely necessary that certain questions in commercial matters should be regulated by a uniform law applicable to all the Provinces. I would wish that the same thing could be done as respects all questions bearing on the labor question. If a practical solution can be arrived at for the first named cases, I see no reason preventing us from proceeding to obtain the same advan-

tages in all things respecting work and labor. I should, however, add, Mr. Speaker, that uniformity which I desire, I do not wish to secure at the expense of the rights recognised as belonging to the Provinces by virtue of the Act of Confederation. I will fight against any measure which might injuriously affect the autonomy of the Provinces; whereas, on the contrary, I will support any scheme which might bring the Provinces to an understanding, either by means of an interprovincial conference, or by any other means which the House might adopt, for the establishment of a system of legislation common to all the Provinces and acceptable to all the Legislatures. The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, announces that the Government will present Bills relating to the inspection of timber and lumber, and also for the improvement of the postal system, and for increasing the efficiency of the North-West Mounted Police force. The increase in the efficiency of the Mounted Police will doubtless prevent the Americans from committing on our borders depredations, which have been long a subject of complaint. Besides, we cannot pay too much attention to such a territory as that known as the North-West, which is almost as large as Europe, and which is destined to give a renewed prosperity to all the other Provinces of the Dominion, which, thanks to the National Policy, are already very prosperous and very contented. I conclude, Mr. Speaker, in thanking you, as well as the other hon. members of this House, for the attention which they have given to my few remarks, and I repeat that it is with pleasure that I second the resolution which has been moved by the hon. member for Cardwell (Mr. White).

Mr. LAURIER. Mr. Speaker, it is, I am sure, with more than ordinary pleasure that the House has listened to the speech of the hon. mover of the Address, and to that of the seconder. Those hon. gentlemen had charged themselves with a task ever difficult, under any circumstances, and perhaps especially so under present circumstances, in a manner most creditable to themselves; and I am sure it will be a pleasure to their colleagues to extend to them their hearty congratulations. The mover of the Address has furnished additional evidence that the aptitude and inclination for public life which are so common among young men in the mother country, are not deficient with us. The name which the hon. gentleman so worthily bears, and to which he so feelingly alluded, is, I can tell him, a name still fresh and green in the memory of all the members of the House, on account of the great ability and genial qualities of him whom a premature death has removed from the service of his country. I am sure that it was with special gratification on this occasion that the House cheered the hon. member when he rose, and cheered him again as he proceeded and gave unmistakable evidence that he was a chip of the old block. As to myself, if I may be pardoned a personal reference, I was not at all surprised at the manner in which the hon. gentleman acquitted himself. He alluded to me a moment ago in his speech, and his allusion reminded me that this was not the first time I had met his steel. It was my advantage, or, perhaps, my disadvantage—at all events, my pleasure—a few years ago, to meet the hon. gentleman on the stump, in the good old Province of Quebec; and I have ever since carried a recollection of the value of his steel, and this recollection adds to my individual pleasure in congratulating him on his entry to this House. Well, Sir, although I have listened to the hon. gentleman with intense pleasure, as I have also listened to the speech of the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Lepine), there is but very little indeed in what they said in which I can agree; but I can most cordially agree, and on this side we all most cordially agree, in the genial compliment which the hon.