

be, there was back of all a warm and sympathetic nature.

I am sure that both sides of the House will join with me in expressing to the families and relatives of our four late colleagues our very sincere sympathy and condolence.

My right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition has not been very critical in his remarks to-day. He has chided us a little for one or two matters to which I may be pardoned for devoting a moment's attention. He spoke of the large estimates of last session. The estimates were not greatly cut down last session, but they were left there with the distinct understanding, if I recollect correctly, that no new works should be undertaken during the pendency of this war, unless they were of the most urgent and imperative character. That policy has absolutely been carried out from the commencement of the war until the present time. We have undertaken no new works whatever, so far as I remember. All members of this House are as much impressed as is my right hon. friend with the necessity for strictest economy during this war. They can fully realize that in addition to beginning no new works we have had to consider from time to time whether it might not be in the public interest even to discontinue the construction of works already under contract. Fortunately the financial strength of this country has proven so great that up to the present time it has not been necessary to resort to such a course. But I desire to say that if, in the urgency of conditions as they may be pressed upon this country in the future it should be necessary for us to take that course, the Government would not shrink from taking it. I believe that in doing so, if it became necessary, we should have the support not only of members on both sides of this House, but of the people as well.

My right hon. friend also seems to have some remarkable suspicions in his mind regarding proceedings taken by the Government to secure a very considerable quantity of wheat in the latter part of November last. He was good enough to say that he had not any charge to make. Well, if he had not any charge to make it might perhaps have been in better taste if he had not referred to a charge at all. If he ever should have a charge to make, we shall be glad indeed to have him put it forward. It has been the aim of the Government from the first, and especially during the past autumn, in view of the abundant harvest with which Canada has been blessed, to seek an outlet

for our products in every part of the world where a market could be found. When communications were made to us on behalf of the Allied governments with regard to a needed supply of wheat we took a course which, I think, should commend itself to every hon. member of this House. We sought and obtained the best disinterested advice we could procure in the country as to the proper proceeding on the part of the Government in the matter. To that end we consulted gentlemen whose opinion, I think, my right hon. friend would not be inclined to depreciate.

With regard to the dislocation of business of which my right hon. friend speaks, I do not think that such dislocation, if there was any, was at all of a serious character. As a matter of fact, I understand from my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) that the greater part of the wheat, thus secured by the Government in the full belief that the course they took was in the public interest, has been moved out; and I venture to say that our efforts, in that regard and otherwise, to secure for the producers of this country an outlet for the splendid product of Canada during the past year merits the congratulations rather than the condemnation of my right hon. friend. However, as to that, the Minister of Trade and Commerce will be fully prepared to give a complete account of his stewardship. As to the absurd rumours which were spread through some portions of the press, it is almost unnecessary for me to reiterate what the Minister of Trade and Commerce has already made public, that there is not the slightest foundation in fact for any such suggestion as that which has been made.

Leaving these points, I wish to allude to certain matters dealt with by the mover and seconder of the Address as well as by my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, and also, in a later portion of my remarks, to give some account of the mission which I undertook to Britain in the past summer and of its results so far as they affect the public interests of this country and of the Empire.

In the first place, with regard to the war, my right hon. friend has spoken of the condition as it is today. Looking only at the surface of things and comparing the condition to day with what it was when this Parliament prorogued on the fifteenth day of April last, one would say that the outlook does not seem highly encouraging. All the events have happened to which my right hon. friend has referred. In the