

us. The statement is not that the difficulty was adjusted, but that during the present Session it would be in course of adjustment. It appears, therefore, that, so far, it has not been in the course of adjustment at all, and that it is only from this moment it will be in course of adjustment; and even this statement is made with caution. His Excellency does not say that he can even "assure" us, but he "hopes" to be enabled during the present Session to assure us that all differences are in course of adjustment. To the Canadian fishermen who were ousted from Behring Sea three years ago this is not a very satisfactory prospect. What can the cause be? Here is what we conceive to be an unwarrantable assumption of authority by the American people over Canadian fishermen, and yet, after three years, all the satisfaction we obtain is that, perhaps, during the present Session His Excellency will be able to assure us that the difficulty is in course of settlement. In regard to what has taken place during these three years there is a blank, the Government has not informed us; but, although the Government has not informed us, I think I know pretty well what has taken place, if we may judge the past by the present, and what has taken place on this question by what occurred on former occasions. It was simply this: His Excellency, on receiving the complaint of the Canadian fishermen, sent his statement of complaint to the Colonial Office in England. The Colonial Office sent the statement to the Foreign Office; the Foreign Office wrote a letter to the American Minister; the Minister probably called upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to the British Minister at Washington, and probably wrote also to the Secretary of State at Washington. Probably the British Minister and the Secretary of State at Washington had a conference, and more despatches were sent from Washington to London, and from London to Ottawa, and then the matter was probably laid before the hon. the Minister of Justice here, who no doubt wrote a very able paper upon it, which some day will see the light of day, and then the matter was again referred to London, and from London to Washington. This was what took place some two or three years ago, and no doubt is what is taking place again upon this occasion. Now, British diplomacy can be very active or very slow, just as it suits the purpose of British diplomacy. In 1861, when Slidell and Mason were taken on board a British ship, the British Government at once sent to Washington a note temperate in language, respectful and courteous in tone, and the result was within a month the difficulty was settled to the satisfaction of both parties. If the same diligence had been used on this occasion, probably we would have had an answer before this; for the issue is a simple one between two contending parties. The Americans claim jurisdiction over the disputed waters. This is not the place to discuss whether or not this contention is well or ill-founded, but I have no hesitation to say that, in my judgment, the American contention is not well founded. However, this subject will come up for discussion at the proper time and on the proper occasion. We do not admit that contention, we reject it. Well, was it not possible within three years to have reached some solution of the difficulty. What is the reason we have not? Sir, if I am to credit

a paragraph published some time ago in the American newspapers, the cause of the delay lies with the Canadian Government themselves, because the American papers some time ago represented that the American and British Authorities had come to some arrangement which was about to be completed when the Canadian Government asked to be consulted and to be allowed to give its views, and though several months have elapsed no representation had been received from the Canadian Government. If that be true, then all the blame falls upon the Canadian Government, and for their want of action they will have to render, some time or other, a very severe account. This is no trifling question, but one of great importance; and although it has to be approached in a friendly spirit, still it has to be approached in a firm and temperate manner consistent with our own dignity and rights. I cannot conceive, however, that if the Government had been as diligent as they should have been in this matter, our fishermen would not have received redress long ago. But we shall hear more upon this question during the Session. I do not intend on this occasion to exercise any more criticism than can be avoided. I have in former years followed the practice of not indulging in more criticism than is fairly invited by the Speech from the Throne, and propose to follow the same practice to-day, and, therefore, shall conclude my remarks by expressing my intention to do my best in furthering the business of the Session, and I call on the Government to lose no time in bringing down business.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I am very glad indeed to find from my hon. friend's speech that we may have some prospect of getting at once to work. He is not going to move an amendment, and his speech shows that he means business. I am very glad that such is his intention, and we shall be delighted to have his assistance in entering on the work of the Session. In his speech, delivered in the hon. gentleman's usual agreeable and pleasant style, which always gives pleasure to those who listen to it, he entered into a little prologue before the play, a little preliminary chaff. He must blow off the froth before he gets down to the porter, and though his speech was nearly all froth it was very pleasant froth, indeed. My hon. friend commenced by submitting that he and his friends are the only persons who know what the situation of the country is. He said that on this side we labor under an agreeable delusion. We fancy that the country is prosperous, we fancy that Canada is in a state of prosperity, but it is a fatal delusion, and he says that it must be the enchantment of the wizard which induced my hon. friends the mover and seconder to make the glowing statements they did. Well, my hon. friend is the leader of a party and also a distinguished member of the legal profession. My hon. friend who moved this Address, and who did it so ably, and who was so well and properly congratulated by my hon. friend, is a practical farmer. He should know whether the farmers are prosperous or not in his part of the country, rather better than my hon. friend, though he comes from the same Province. Now, he tells us, as a practical farmer, and not only a practical but a wealthy farmer, that the Province of