

With His Excellency, we must, Sir, thank Providence for the abundant crop with which Canada has been favoured last season. Our agricultural population has been richly rewarded by its labours. Our generous soil has nothing to refuse to the industrious and intelligent husbandman. Our rural population is happy. They have abundant means as the result of their labours, and our public institutions protect their rights and liberties. Doubtless, as everywhere else, difficulties may arise from time to time. But with good will, public spirit and patriotism, peace must finally reign supreme where intolerance and nefarious ambition sought their ends.

His Excellency told us, Sir, that the financial, commercial and industrial conditions of Canada were of the best. Who could have thought, in fact, that in the very midst of the war, we could show a surplus of about \$80,000,000? This has never been seen before, in full time of peace and prosperity.

Our trade has expanded in an extraordinary way. Our industrial development has attained undreamt of proportions. All the statistics will doubtless be submitted to us in the course of the debate on the Address.

Have we not there, Sir, an evident proof of the progressive administration of the country's affairs by the present Government. I well know that the political tactics of the opponents of the Government lead them to spread all kinds of accusations among the public. But is there a single one of such charges which has been connected with a member of the Cabinet? Inquiries have been held both by committees appointed in this House or chosen from the judiciary. The Government came out unscathed. I ask you, Sir, and I ask every thinking man free from party bonds, can the political history of Canada show us that at any time, whether in peace or war, there has been an Administration more economical, more energetic, more prosperous and in better accord with the aspirations of the electors and of the people of Canada.

We shall, therefore, Sir, vote the various estimates for the next fiscal year, knowing well that they will be wisely applied by the Government to promote the welfare and prosperity of the country.

His Excellency has reminded us of the approaching date of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of our Canadian Confederation, and tells us that notwithstanding the continuance of the war, there should

[Mr. Descarries.]

be an appropriate commemoration of an event so notable in our history.

This cannot but be most agreeable to this House and to the people of Canada. Who could remain indifferent to the splendid showing of our country to-day? Fifty years ago, four provinces sparsely peopled and of meagre resources existed without any common bond in the vast territory of British North America. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Upper and Lower Canada joined together on the 1st of July, 1867 and formed the Canadian Confederation.

Our country to-day comprises nine provinces extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the forty-fifth degree of latitude to the North Pole. This immense territory is peopled by over 8,000,000 inhabitants, and could give life and happiness to a population of 100,000,000 souls.

With what great enthusiasm shall public gratitude proclaim the hallowed names of the fathers of confederation: of Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George Etienne Cartier, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Etienne Pascal Taché, Sir Leonard Tilley, Hon. Darcy McGee and of numerous others who are not so highly renowned, but whose deeds and works history will report.

I am then assured that this hon. House will welcome any measure proposed for the worthy celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Confederation. Our nation shall offer to the world the spectacle of a united people commemorating the glorious episodes of its history. No race rivalry will cloud the beautiful sky of our land. All Canadians, whether English or French blood flows in their veins, will then clasp hands in friendship, with the resolution to live in peace and harmony forever, in this country of Canada.

Our land is so vast and its soil so fruitful, its sun so warm and its resources so abundant that the sons of its first settlers, English and French, may live together without jealousy and antagonism, but with sentiments of sincere fraternity, each offering homage to the Almighty according to his creed and in the language of his ancestors.

The speech from the Throne, Sir, concludes by alluding to the fine courage and the inflexible purpose which have animated all His Majesty's Dominions in upholding the great cause for which we are fighting with the rest of the Empire.

This proves that the Government is ready to do its duty to the very end. The nation has supported the Administration and shall continue to support it without hesitation.