

topics altogether, because I can neither flatter nor upbraid myself that if I now omit anything legitimate for discussion some other hon. gentleman will not observe the omission and supply the discussion much more acceptably, I am sure, than I might hope to do.

There is in the Speech from the Throne a reference to the intention of this government in regard to the battlefields of Europe. I know there will be profound and consecrated approval that something definite is to be done in connection with those historic fields to perpetuate the memory of our unreturning brave. The government of France graciously donates, and the government of Canada gratefully accepts, the gift and the trust of a site for a suitable memorial at Vimy Ridge. Mr. Speaker, your grateful countrymen have followed your personal visit to those spots, and the personal part which you have been good enough to take in that splendid project. We know that your part in this matter involves a drain upon your time and energy; but, Sir, we cannot forbear to hope that you will see that great duty through. None, by sympathy or by artistic temperament, are better qualified, and we know, Sir, that your patriotism is so deep that "giving doth not impoverish." We shall in our hearts be the better able to honour those who on our behalf have surrendered the dear prize of life, when we know that we have done what we could to observe all the outward symbols of honour and to have their last resting places set in proper order.

I am sure the House will join with me in congratulating upon their return in such good health the two distinguished ministers of this government, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and the Minister of Marine (Mr. Lapointe). They have visited Europe upon a mission that was many-sided, and Canada is to be congratulated that she was represented by gentlemen of such outstanding ability and prestige.

There is mention in the speech of better trade relations not only with France but with that friendly nation, Italy. We shall await their own report on this matter, Mr. Speaker; but we are in hopes that we shall have a real extension of our commerce. International trade is very apt to be like Shakespeare's definition of the quality of mercy, in that it is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives and him that takes. In that light, and so far as Canada sets herself to trade with the countries of Europe, she will do her part to relieve that distress which unfortunately now obtains there, because the sane statesmen of the world all agree that to get Europe back into the orbit of normal

[Mr. Putnam.]

trade is one of the main hopes for an issue out of her present troubles.

Nothing, Mr. Speaker, can exceed the patriotic patience of the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) in going thousands of leagues to try to discover avenues of trade when none know more accurately than himself that it violates every standard of logic that we are not trading in an unhampered way with our great neighbour immediately upon the south. The foolish virgins of the parable had themselves to blame when they found that the door was shut against them. But those people—and there are very many in this country, though I will not at present be partisan in this particular to say whether they are in the majority, but I certainly have my own opinion about that,—who desire still that we should have reciprocity with the United States are ready to do full justice to the Finance Minister, as current history is doing him ample justice in that respect while still his vigour is virtually unabated.

It may perhaps be asked sometimes by some: What has this government done during its twelve months of office?

Some Hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PUTNAM: "Hear, hear," say my hon. friends. I am glad to be able to report that, as far as my observation goes, the people are evidently much more judicial than my hon. friends themselves, for they realize to the full the manifold and unique difficulties—particularly the financial problem—which have faced this administration when it came into power. Another way to put the question, and I hesitate not to ask it of the hon. members who said "hear, hear," is: what has this government neglected to do that it might feasibly have done for the national welfare during the past twelve months? The people are disposed—and it is a good thing for democracy, which we on this side so uniformly trust,—to give the government an absolutely fair trial. For my own part I see ample evidence of the old adage that the new broom sweeps clean; and if we take the results of the recent by-elections we do not find any indication that the people regret the verdict they gave about twelve months ago.

One criticism has been levelled against the government from certain quarters—most unfairly I think—in connection with the attitude of the Prime Minister in regard to a message received last fall from Mr. Winston Churchill, then a member of Mr. Lloyd George's cabinet, asking the academic question, whether, in the event of England despatching soldiers to the Near East, Canada would immediately do