

There is nothing in the address referring to the great question of transportation. Whether that is to be met by the construction of the National Transcontinental Railway I do not know, but if the experience of the past is to be any indication of what we are to expect in the future, the construction of that road will do very little to solve the problem of transportation, for the simple reason that the distance is so great that the cost will, to a very great extent, absorb the profits which otherwise should go to the farmer.

I thought there was to be a tariff commission. There is nothing about that in the speech from the Throne. I have a distinct recollection of hearing, before the change of government, thundering condemnation in the House of Commons of myself and other members of the government because we used to go occasionally into the different manufacturing sections to ascertain for ourselves the requirements of the country and the effect which the tariff had upon the different interests. The present government, notwithstanding the condemnation of their predecessors who tried to acquire that knowledge themselves, indicated last session that they were to have a tariff commission to inquire into the different industries of the country, thereby relieving themselves of the trouble and responsibility of making an inquiry for themselves, and that they would accept the report of the commission. I think my hon. friend, who has had some experience, will come to the conclusion that that report will be just of the character of the minds that have guided them in making the investigation. The high protectionist will come with the statement that the industries are being ruined because the tariff is not high enough. The free trader will say you are bleeding the consumer because you are taxing him so much. If I were to give the hon. gentleman any advice, I would say to him: 'Go and inquire for yourself. As you take the responsibility, you should have the knowledge to enable you to defend whatever position you may assume.' Are we to have that tariff commission? Will the Secretary of State, when he rises to reply, tell us whether it is to be appointed or not; and if so, when and how many sessions are to pass before we are to have a revision of the tariff? Or are we to have any revision at all?

A large sum of money was placed in the estimates last year for a survey of the Georgian Bay canal. What has been done in that respect? I believe there are surveyors on the route. Have they made any report, and if they have, what is the character of that report? What is the probable cost of the construction of that work? Is it to be a ship canal twenty feet deep or only a canal fourteen feet deep? All this information we are entitled to. Then we have that most important of all canals, of which my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce heard a good deal some time ago—the Trent Valley canal. During the late elections we had a telegram sent by the premier to Port Hope, indicating to the minister who had been appointed without portfolio—I do not know whether he was ever sworn in—that Port Hope was likely to be the southern terminus of that canal. And then we had a similar declaration on the part of the officials in reference to Trenton being the terminus. The distance between the two places is about forty miles, and the question was whether the outlet of the canal should be the open lake or a Bay of Quinté. Probably my hon. friend will say that was done for election purposes—no, I would not expect him to admit that, but that is what I would say, and very properly so. The project of that canal has been on foot for the last hundred years, and the work has been partially constructed. It has been extended for some distance westward, and as far south as Rice lake, but has never been completed, although a large amount of money has been spent southward and eastward of that point. I do not want to be disrespectful in referring to the actions of the government, but this is one of the little dodges they adopted in order to carry constituencies. I am very glad to know that in this instance it had very little effect upon Port Hope and the county of Durham, as was indicated by the fact that the minister without portfolio was defeated by a respectable majority.

These are points we ought to know something about before we are asked to legislate upon these different questions. The most important, I admit, from a Dominion standpoint, is the question of the withdrawal of the British troops from the country and the substitution of Canadian troops. However, I shall leave that with the government.