

the present moment. No doubt the topics adverted to in the Speech from the Throne will be up for discussion at other periods of the session when, with the reports and other information before us, they can be discussed to greater advantage.

HON. MR. ALEXANDER—It is a considerable time since I have had the privilege of addressing this honorable House, and therefore I hope that I may claim your kind indulgence for a very short period.

I desire first to express the feeling, which I am sure is shared by every member both in this branch of the Legislature and in the House of Commons, and not only by both branches of the Legislature but by the country, a feeling of deep sorrow and regret that Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise has not recovered entirely from the effects of that untoward accident. It would have been most gratifying to the people of this Dominion to have seen one of the Queen's daughters again in our midst, distinguished always as she was for doing good; a noble example to society, devoting much of her time to visiting the charitable and educational institutions of the country; a noble example in regard to her simplicity of dress, tending in every way to cultivate in the country a love of the true, the good and the beautiful—one calculated in every way to elevate the tone of society.

I now desire to proceed to the consideration of the Address, and to express how deeply gratified I was, and I am sure the whole House has been, at the manner in which the mover and seconder of the Address have discharged their duties. They have displayed an ability which assures us that we have in them very valuable additions to our numbers. With regard to the Speech from the Throne, there can be no doubt that Canada has enjoyed a year of very great prosperity. I am not going to enter into the arguments of my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition. The causes of the great prosperity which the country is enjoying are very well understood, not only by the commercial men of the Dominion, but by every intelligent man. It is particularly gratifying to know that we have such a large surplus, and I am sure the people of the country will be pleased to know, as our Minister of Finance is, that the Government have ap-

plied a large portion of the surplus to the reduction of the national debt; because our people feel that with the example set by the United States government, which ought to be followed by the whole world, in reducing their debt, it is very desirable that we should not increase our indebtedness; and it is gratifying to learn that the remaining portion of the surplus will be devoted to expenditure for our public works.

I think that there is but one feeling in the country, that our Pacific Railway is in very able hands. There can be no doubt that since these gentlemen have undertaken that work nothing has been wanting on their part. They have prosecuted the work with vigor and there is no reason why we should doubt, while there is every reason to believe, that they will go on faithfully and carry out their part of the agreement. But it remains to be seen whether we are not pursuing that stupendous work too rapidly. The future will show that to the inhabitants of this country.

The Speech from the Throne mentions certain measures which are to be brought up for our consideration, including one for the winding up of insolvent banks, but I have to state at this particular moment that we want legislation of another character, namely to check fraud on the part of bank directors who have brought about such insolvencies. I may observe here that our criminal law is framed with very great care to prevent all ordinary cases of fraud and crime. The poor who are guilty of ordinary cases of crime are disposed of, no doubt, entirely in the interests of property, but there is a feeling amongst the business men of the country, and amongst a large portion of our industrial classes, who have invested their money in bank stocks, that there is urgent necessity for Parliament to consider this important matter, and to devise such stringent laws with regard to bank directors as will prevent disasters which may befall a large part of our people. What have we seen in the past? We have seen men of high position who happened to be in financial difficulties finding their way into certain bank boards. There has been, in one or two cases, an amount of fraud committed from time to time which we cannot well understand the Government of the country overlooking, which we cannot well understand the