

rising to address the House under so solemn a circumstance, still I may say that I experience a particular pleasure in discharging this duty, on account of the honour which reflects on the constituency which I represent in this House, and because also of the opportunity it affords me of voicing the feelings of confidence placed by a large majority of the people of this country in the hon. gentlemen whom they have put at the head of affairs, on the 23rd June last, and in the wise and patriotic policy which they have pursued, since their accession to power. Mr. Speaker, after listening to the eloquent words fallen from the hon. member for Halifax, I feel that I could safely content myself with cheering the generous and patriotic words fallen from the hon. member who has so eloquently spoken of and so firmly adhered to the policy enunciated in the Speech from the Throne, and the legitimate hopes which it has evoked in our breasts for the future of our country. That policy, an outline of which we have just heard, shall be defined during the present session; meanwhile, let us, for a moment, divest ourselves of unfair prejudice begotten by party spirit, and examine, from a national standpoint, the official statements embodied in the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne mentions a fact unparalleled either in the records of the House of Commons of Canada, or in the annals of the legislative bodies of any other country. I mean the sixtieth anniversary of the reign of our august Sovereign, Queen Victoria. I think I am but voicing the feelings of the hon. gentlemen on this side of the House as well as those sitting opposite, when I say that, as loyal subjects of Her Majesty, we are proud of our Sovereign; that we all pray to Heaven that long may she continue to occupy the Throne of Great Britain, the noble woman who is the adornment of the nineteenth century and who, for the last sixty years has worn and still wears with such lustre the British Crown, of which Canada is, unquestionably, the brightest jewel. Complying with the invitation extended to him by the home government, the distinguished leader of this House will, no doubt, cross the Atlantic and go and testify to the devotion of the Canadian people, to their Queen and to their motherland. He will bear witness to the fact that on the banks of the St. Lawrence is found a young nation in which are blended British energy and the chivalrous spirit of France, Irish impetuosity and Scottish tenacity; a nation which, through the union of the English rose, the French fleur-de-lis, the Irish shamrock and the Scotch thistle, has grown and reached manhood, while loving and revering Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of England and Ireland.

Allow me now, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words concerning that burning and vexed Manitoba school question, which has been set at rest since last session. As a French-

Mr. ETHIER.

Canadian, and as one of the representatives of the province of Quebec, I deem it my duty to offer a few words on the matter. If I am asked on what ground I shall place myself to deal with this question, I may say, without any hesitation, that I will deal with it from a national standpoint, from the standpoint of a Canadian and of a member of Parliament who has given his oath to follow only the dictates of his own conscience, free alike from fear, violence or undue influence from whatsoever quarter or authority it may come. Political capital has been made out of this unhappy Manitoba school question. And what was the outcome of that agitation? For over six years the country has been disturbed by racial and creed wrangles, and by dissensions which have troubled the harmony which ought to prevail among the various elements of our population. For six years the public affairs have been paralyzed and the regular development of the country brought to a standstill. Now, through the settlement effected by the present Government and by the Manitoba government upon the basis of conciliation, peace and harmony have been restored within six months; a result which could not be attained by six long years of procrastination, provocation, nay more, of broken promises. And thus, to use the very words of the Speech from the Throne, begins a new era. Yes, let us hope that this is the beginning of a new era; let us hope that moderate men, irrespective of party ties, will join hands to promote harmony, peace and good-will among the several races and elements of our population. Ideas of conciliation shall prevail, I doubt not, and from the cliffs of Gaspé to the shores of the Pacific, there will no longer be found any Englishmen, Irishmen, Frenchmen and Scotchmen at war against each other, but only Canadians walking hand in hand, turning to the future with the brightest hope of grandeur and prosperity. It is high time that the country should be placed above political parties; let us render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to Canada what is her due. At all events, the result of the by-elections in Cornwall and Stormont, in Bonaventure and Wright—

Mr. LaRIVIERE. (Translation.) The hon. member should not forget the result in St. Boniface.

Mr. ETHIER. (Translation.) Those elections bear witness that the policy of conciliation pursued by the present Government is emphatically approved of and endorsed by the voters of the province of Quebec, and Champlain. I venture to say, will likewise express its approbation of the policy enunciated in the Speech from the Throne. Before dismissing this subject, let the hon. Prime Minister allow me to congratulate him on the part he has played in that policy of conciliation which, as I said, will usher