

of him, affording signal proof of the deep interest he takes in our welfare, and giving promise of becoming the most popular representative of royalty we have ever had among us. His Excellency will find among the people of Canada a devotion and attachment to the Crown and person of his Royal Mistress exceeded in no other portion of Her Dominion, and that but one feeling exists, without distinction of creed or class, race or party, in regard to making his sojourn among us pleasant to himself and advantageous to the empire. It has been the good fortune of Canada, especially in latter times, to be blessed with impartial constitutional governors, but our people have come to consider that other functions belong to the vice-regal office than those of a strictly constitutional character. Her Majesty's representative in this Dominion possesses, in many ways, the means of endearing and strengthening the connection now so harmoniously existing between the Crown and its great dependency. Under the complete system of self-government bestowed upon us, his high office forms the only link visible to many in that connection, and therefore it is that it becomes so necessary, with our peculiar surroundings, that the individual holding that position, while commanding respect by the impartial discharge of his constitutional duties, should be able at the same time to win the affections and rivet the attachment of the people. We all believe that this will prove to be eminently the case with His Excellency. But I must not be understood to say that I consider the vice regal office the only link that binds us to the Empire. The secret of our attachment to the empire is not to be found in any mere connecting link or symbol of authority, but the persons representing such authority may intensify that attachment by the exercise of those graces and kindly offices that adorn exalted station. The loyalty and attachment of the people of Canada to the mother country are founded on their gratitude for past kindness and protection, and upon their veneration for those great principles of free constitutional government under which it is our happiness to live, and which exists nowhere in the same vigor and purity as in the powerful empire of which it is our boast to form a part. [Hear, hear.]

The most important subject referred to in His Excellency's speech is the gigantic scheme for the construction of the Pacific Railway. The language of the address seems a tacit approval to some extent of the policy of the Government in regard to the

charter granted for this purpose. For my own part, I wish it to be understood I shall not consider myself bound in any way to approve of the conduct of the Cabinet respecting this great work, in permitting the address to pass without a division. I have not yet the information necessary to enable me to form an opinion on the subject. After that information is submitted to the Senate, and all the papers and correspondence connected with the negotiations are in the possession of members, I shall be prepared when the question comes before the House, to give it an impartial, if not a favorable, consideration. But it is unfortunate that there should exist, as there certainly does exist at the present time throughout this Dominion, grave and widespread suspicions in connection with the charter granted to Sir Hugh Allan and his friends. If these suspicions have any foundation—in fact, if it turns out to be true, that this charter will denationalize the character of this great Canadian enterprise—if it will even jeopardize its national character in any degree, no greater calamity has ever befallen this country. I shall await the information that I hope and trust will dissipate all doubt on a point which I believe has created intense alarm in the public mind, and which, I think, the Government is bound, if it is in its power, to allay at the earliest possible moment. But there is one view of the case in which I consider the conduct of Ministers highly reprehensible. The charter has been issued but a few days before the meeting of the legislature, on the authority, of course, of an Act of Parliament, but an Act of an expiring Parliament. No more important Act was ever submitted to this legislature—its consequences for weal or woe will only be revealed by time. But was it not due to the people of this country—Was it not due to their representatives fresh from the polls, when only the delay of a few weeks was involved, that the manner of imposing this great burden should undergo their revision? I think it was. (Hear, hear.) The next topic referred to in the Address interesting to the Maritime Provinces is the Baie Verte Canal. In dealing with this subject I regret to be obliged to speak somewhat in a sectional spirit, but I think I can appeal to my record as a public man for the last ten years, in this Parliament and the Legislature of my own Province, against any charge of giving undue weight to "parish politics." If I have erred at all, I have erred on the other side.