

Mr. J. DEMERS (St. John and Iberville). (Translation.) I rise with some degree of diffidence and no ordinary degree of emotion to perform the task which now devolves on me in seconding the resolution of my hon. friend in reply to the speech from the Throne. I must confess at the outset, that when asked by the leader of the government to accept that very honourable task, I did somewhat hesitate to assume the onerous responsibility of the duty devolving upon me. But I realized after further consideration that in being asked to perform that duty, a compliment was being paid to the constituency I have the honour to represent here, and under those circumstances I could not do otherwise than showing my appreciation by accepting—even though that acceptance brought with it an obligation which, deeply conscious as I am of my inability and inexperience, I could hardly hope to satisfactorily fulfil. I am encouraged, however, by the thought that a new member, speaking for the first time in this House, under such circumstances, is always assured of the indulgence and kind attention of all members on both sides of the House. I may add that the novelty of the situation is the more embarrassing to me as yesterday for the first time in my life I had the privilege of attending the proceedings of this House. I wish I had the splendid gift of facile expression shown by the hon. member whom we have just heard and applauded. Let him allow me to congratulate him on the remarkable way in which he has discharged his duty and I can do no better than walking in his footsteps. The speech from the Throne deals with many important matters which all tend to show the remarkable prosperity with which the country is blessed. His Excellency tells us that the newly created provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan are now entitled to an increase in their representation in the House of Commons. The British North America Act provides that the province of Quebec shall have the fixed number of 65 members, and that each of the other provinces shall be assigned such a number of members as will bear the same proportion to the number of its population, ascertained at each decennial census, as the number 65 bears to the number of the population of Quebec. But in the case of the newly created provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the matter is governed by special provisions, until the termination of the present parliament. Thanks to the era of progress and prosperity which the country is now enjoying, Canada's population has increased considerably, to such a point that the quinquennial census recently taken in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan shows that those provinces have no longer the representation to which they are entitled in the House of Commons, and we are invited by His Excellency to give effect to the provisions of the

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constitution of those provinces concerning their representation.

Reference is also made in the speech from the Throne to the amending of the Election Acts. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, we are all anxious to have our elections conducted with all the desirable purity; we are all anxious to bring about in our country a cleaner and fairer trial of public opinion by means of elections, but in my humble opinion, the evil complained of is to be found not so much in the insufficiency of the existing election law as in the infringement of its provisions. As a matter of fact, the present law is very drastic. Need I adduce any other proof, in support of my contention, than the clause which provides for the invalidation of an election for a few solitary acts of bribery or a few corrupt practices unknown to the candidate and perpetrated without his consent, and which could in no way affect the result of the election? I am free to say, Sir, that the present election law is far from being perfect and that it should be made more efficacious by the amendments which the government is going to introduce. It may even be necessary for the government to consider the question of compulsory voting. In my humble opinion, although I do not wish to go into any details on that matter, such a measure would undoubtedly tend to remedy, in a large measure at least, the evils complained of, and would largely make up for the drawbacks likely to result from its adoption. This House, I am sure, was glad to find a reference in the speech from the Throne to our bursting granaries and the bountiful harvest with which the country has been blessed by a kind Providence. With the remunerative prices secured for our farm products, I make bold to say that this is another record year and that the country is still upon the high road to prosperity, and that there is a conspiracy of events to make Canada a happy people. The farming community being the cornerstone of our national structure, the prosperity and the happiness of the other classes depend, to a large degree, on the prosperity of the agricultural class.

Reference is made in the speech to tariff revision. That is one of the most important measures which we are invited to discuss during this session. The readjustment of the tariff is one of the most arduous problems to solve in a country like Canada, where so many different interests being at stake, it is of the highest importance that no measures be adopted for the relief of certain industries that may injure and cripple other industries. The interests of the west must be taken into consideration, together with those of the east, and when you give manufacturers adequate protection, care must be taken that the price of commodities be not increased by the action of the tariff, and that protection do not result