

ber on his eighty-fifth birthday. Speaking on behalf of hon. members on this side of the house I join with hon. members opposite in extending to the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Black) our best wishes for many happy returns of the day. I am sure it is gratifying to all of us to know that we have in the house at the beginning of this session the member who is oldest in years, though not in length of membership. That honour, I think, belongs to the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcell). To be hale and hearty at the age of eighty-five and to be serving one's country as a member of parliament at so great an age is indeed a rare distinction. I hope my hon. friend may be spared many years of health and strength in which to continue his service to his country.

It is a pleasing coincidence that having the oldest member with us, we have just had the pleasure of listening to the youngest member. The hon. member who addressed us this afternoon is not youngest in point of membership in the house—I think that distinction belongs to the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Jean) who was introduced only a day or two ago—but youngest in years. I extend to the hon. member for Athabaska (Mr. Davies) my very warm congratulations upon his speech of this afternoon in moving the address to His Excellency the Governor General. I think hon. members will agree his speech was moderate in tone and well reasoned. The hon. member will not expect me to agree with all the sentiments and views he expressed, but I am sure hon. members on his side of the house had reason to feel that his remarks adequately expressed the points of view hon. gentlemen opposite are most anxious to have put forward at this time. I am not surprised that both he and the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Laurin), who seconded the address, should have made presentations, so commendable in many particulars, and especially in manner of delivery. Both hon. members are of the legal profession and have taken a wide interest in educational affairs. I cannot express my own feelings better than to say I believe they have done credit to themselves, to their profession and to the positions they hold as members of this House of Commons.

We are reminded by what appears on the title page of the speech of His Excellency that this is the opening of the fourth session of the seventeenth parliament of Canada. That fact in itself is of great significance when we consider the legislation to be introduced at this session. The times in which we live and the conditions prevailing throughout the world, and

particularly in our own country, make doubly significant the measures the government may present to parliament at this time. Glancing at the speech from the throne with a view to seeing what measures the government intends to bring forward, to deal particularly with the commercial and industrial depression which has continued now for so many years, and to help relieve the distress that exists in rural and urban centres alike, one would naturally expect to find a program of exceptional importance and the mention of measures which will deal in no uncertain way with the social problems which are uppermost in the minds of the people at this time. In this particular unfortunately there is the greatest disappointment. Analyzing the speech from the throne in what it contains and in the light of what the right hon. Prime Minister said a day or two ago with reference to the business of this session, which we have been assembled here to consider, it appears to fall into two parts. The first part of the speech makes mention of two important subjects, the agreements which have been reached at the recent Imperial economic conference, and the report of the transportation commission which is to be brought down shortly, and on which certain legislation is to be based. From what the right hon. Prime Minister has said these are the two measures to the consideration of which the house will be called upon to give pretty much its whole time between now and the time adjournment is made until after the beginning of the new year. The other measures I shall refer to in a moment. May I say to my right hon. friend that it comes somewhat as a surprise to me, and I think it will to the house generally and to the country, that having been brought together for the purpose of considering these two subjects almost to the exclusion of everything else, there should as a matter of fact be nothing before us of a concrete character on which we can base the discussion that we would wish to have on these matters at this time. With respect to the Imperial Economic conference we have nothing before us on which it is possible to take action of any kind. My right hon. friend laid on the table of the house on Friday last the report of the conference, which contains the following:

This includes reports of the proceedings of the conference together with annexes, I, II, III and IV. Annex V, including the text of the trade agreements concluded during the conference, will be published later as a supplementary volume.

May I ask my right hon. friend, why should this parliament not be favoured in advance, with the text of the agreements it