

like ours is both complicated and difficult. Shall I discharge it worthily? I venture to hope so, by following in the footsteps of the distinguished men who preceded me in this House, and taking inspiration from the lessons in patriotism, honour and loyalty, which they are giving to their fellow-citizens in the exercise of their functions. Under those circumstances, I shall deem myself happy for having accepted the mandate confided to me, especially if, in the carrying out of that mandate, I can contribute in some measure to the enlargement of the social, intellectual and economic estate of our beautiful country.

I have stated in my own tongue, that in undertaking the most important and delicate task of seconding the address in reply to the speech from the Throne, I was prompted by my desire to fulfil a duty to my province and to my country. In the first place, Mr. Speaker, allow me to renew the expression of my deep satisfaction at the prosperity of this country, which satisfaction has been voiced by the speech from the Throne. I am proud to think that owing to the condition of our national trade, which since 1896 has expanded by leaps and bounds—to the springing up of new industries all over the land—to the state of comfort and prosperity which characterizes the farming community—to the increased wages, and steady employment of the labouring classes, and to the marvellous development of all the great sources of public wealth, Canada has taken the front rank amongst the most prosperous nations of the world. But, if it is a source of gratification and pride to see the magnificent progress of this country, it is also a duty to investigate the causes which have promoted such a progress and development. In common with our friends of the opposition, I admit that to Providence who protects nations as well as individuals is primarily due the abounding prosperity of our country. But, Sir, Providence helps those who help themselves; and it must be confessed that, with the assistance of Providence, two other great causes have chiefly contributed to the upbuilding of Canada in the past seven years. These are the sterling qualities of the great races which compose our population, and the honest and progressive administration of the present government. I have already referred at some length, in my own tongue, to the record of the Liberal administration, and time prevents me from again detailing what the Laurier government has achieved for Canada during its seven years of power. I need only say that such a record is written in the comfortable home of the artisan, on the smiling countenance of the farmer, and the swollen bank account of the trader and manufacturer. I have said that the presence of two great races is an element of strength. I am not unmindful

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that our enemies say that it is a source of weakness. But who can say, Sir, that it has been a source of weakness to the motherland whose people spring from the fusion of many races? We French Canadians admire the spirit of enterprise of our English speaking brethren, who invest and risk their fortunes in great undertakings which develop the country, as, on the other hand, we are inclined to believe that our English friends may have, in some respects, something to learn from us. Each race has its own peculiar virtues, and peculiar defects, and the more these races intermingle, the more they learn to respect and esteem each other. Sir, it is the duty of the statesman, nay, more, it is the duty of every citizen, to promote the harmony and unity between the various elements of our population, without which it is impossible to build up a great and united Canada. The founders of the Dominion, peering into the future, saw this clearly, and framed confederation on the broad lines of mutual forbearance, respect and trust between all the races. Their faith has been amply justified, for even the slowness of our earlier growth has not been without material advantage, since it has unquestionably given steadiness and maturity to political thought. We have now developed the inspiration of a large national life. Vast undertakings—I have already referred in my own tongue to one of the greatest of them, the Grand Trunk Pacific—are now entered upon, with the keenest confidence that they will be executed with success.

We have established a system of waterways which penetrate from the Atlantic into the very heart of the continent, to prairies which are the greatest undeveloped wheat area in the world.

We are supremely fortunate in our national resources. In the present state of affairs in the east it is opportune to remember that both on the Atlantic and Pacific we possess some of the finest naval bases in the world. On the Atlantic coast, in immediate proximity to harbours open the year round, we have inexhaustible supplies of coal, and in British Columbia and Vancouver Island we have, practically speaking, the only coal to be had on the Pacific coast.

On political lines Canada has been the first to prove, by actual experience on a large scale, the adaptability of the federal system to British methods of representative and responsible government.

Founded, as I have said, on the broad lines of mutual forbearance and trust amongst the great races, each with a glorious heritage of undying achievements, the faith of the fathers of confederation in the great destinies of the Dominion, is now being amply realized, for in material development, in constitutional organization,