

HON. MR. GIRARD—It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to be called once a year by the supreme authority to enquire into the wants and needs of the country, and, judging from the past, to look into the future and see what is best to be done to consolidate the institutions of the country and promote the good of the people. This present session which is now opening, promises to be a very important one. Last year we were here for six long months, occupied in the great inquest of the Dominion. Accidentally a fire had originated in one of the extremities of our vast Dominion; a sufficient force was immediately dispatched to extinguish it; our sons, our brothers, and our friends were promptly on the spot; some of them fell, but others were there to take their place, not hesitating to sacrifice their lives for the maintenance of the British flag in this Dominion of ours. At the close of last session we thought that everything was over, and that the duty of members of Parliament on returning to their homes, was to restore and promote the peace and prosperity which had been interfered with. But other troubles came—troubles of such importance in some parts of the country that an agitation was created sufficient to threaten the harmony of our constitution and cause serious apprehensions of the disorganization of the Confederation. It is with great hesitation that I enter upon a question on which I think I am forced to meet my best friends on a ground where we may differ. When fifteen years ago I left them, it was for their sake that I did so. The mission that I entered upon at the time had no great charm for me. I was called upon to assist in the formation of a new country. It was a very important period for the French population. They had the best acquired rights, but they were not alone in the North-West land. It was in 1870, just at the end of the difficulty which had occurred there. At that time those troubles were justifiable, and they have since been justified; but they were naturally the cause of a feeling of animosity, which until then had not been known there. Those who endeavored to allay this feeling of animosity by mutual concessions, and doing justice to all were successful, and we were able to announce

to the world that we were prospering, and to invite the emigrating multitudes of the Old World to come and share that prosperity with us. Within a short time many thousands of people have settled amongst us; towns and cities have grown up, industrious families have settled in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, and enjoying such prosperity, we remain attached to the Government that have assisted and promoted this rapid development. From time to time we represent to our rulers the wrongs of which they have been guilty, and sometimes advise them to adopt another course. It is sufficient to look at the Speech from the Throne to be convinced that our importance is recognized. The best paragraph of it—the most important legislation that is there announced—affects either Manitoba or the North-West Territories. I may be permitted to ask my hon. friend from DeSalaberry if I am not justified, when I remember all that I have obtained from the Government for Manitoba and the North-West, in telling him, and through him, the people he represents, that the agitation which has taken place in the Province of Quebec has been prejudicial to the interests of Manitoba and the North-West. There is no doubt that it has. While the people of the North-West may consider the Government at fault in some respects, and while they have come before the Government at times to seek redress in the ordinary way, we never expected that such an agitation would arise as we have witnessed lately in the Province of Quebec. I feel sorry that it has arisen, because we in Manitoba, and especially the French element of the population there, have reason to be thankful to the Province of Quebec for the deep interest they have taken in our welfare. It is not my intention to declare war against my hon. friend from DeSalaberry. I act upon the maxim “I am not disposed to fight for fear I might be fought with.” At the same time, when the truth should be proclaimed I for one shall not remain silent. I have been accustomed in the past to find my hon. friend from DeSalaberry fighting the battles of the party to which I belong, and it was with a feeling of deep regret that I saw him assume a position which I cannot share with him. I think it is the only occasion in my life that I