

from the Throne. I would think it of sufficient importance to have merited a mention in the speech. Would my right hon. friend, in addressing himself to the House, be good enough to give us any information which he may think proper to give at the present time in regard to that matter, so that we may know what we have to expect.

Reference is also made in the speech from the Throne to the question of transportation, and to the fact that there has been a great influx of population into our north-western territories. I visited portions of the North-west during the past autumn, and I was very glad indeed to know that we are receiving a great immigration from the United States of America. We are all delighted to see that immigration taking place. Those people who are coming into that country are good citizens. They are, as the hon. member for Haldimand (Mr. Thompson) has said, people accustomed to govern themselves, people to whom representative institutions are no new thing. I am not at all afraid of the influx of these men to the North-west. I am very glad indeed that they are coming in great numbers, and I hope that their numbers will be increased during the coming year. I hope also that the government will take into early consideration the question of granting provincial autonomy to those great territories in the North-west. Those territories are filling up rapidly, the people are all accustomed to representative institutions, and a great many of them, at least, feel very keenly now that they have not the complete rights of self-government which have been conferred on the people of the other provinces. I regret that no mention of this important question has been made in the speech from the Throne. I know that my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior entertains the view that it is not wise at the present time to deal with the question. I do not agree with him, I do not agree with the reasons which he has stated, I do not see any force in those reasons. I hope and trust that notwithstanding the absence of any mention of this subject in the speech from the Throne, the government will upon reconsideration bring in a Bill during the present session for the purpose of conferring complete rights of self-government upon the people of the North-west Territories.

But, in regard to the question of transportation, which is one of very great importance, I find that these words have been placed in the speech from the Throne, in the mouth of His Excellency:

The whole question of transportation and terminal facilities continues to occupy much attention and my government will immediately appoint a commission of experienced men to report on the subject.

We will be glad to know what is the real significance of these words. Those of us

who follow the trend of public affairs in the newspapers know that proposals will be made during the present session for charters to build transcontinental railways and it is also said that applications will be made to the government for subsidies, or other assistance, to aid in the building of these railways. I would like to ask my right hon. friend, what is the significance of these words. Do they mean that the question of these charters is to be referred to the commission; do they mean that the question of the subsidies or other assistance to these railways is to be referred to a commission? If that is not the significance of the language which has been used we would be very glad indeed to know what scope these words have and what is the purport of the measure that is to be brought before the House in that regard.

I suppose it could not be expected that we should have any reference to the tariff in the speech from the Throne, but I may say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we recall the fact that during the past session the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Fielding) practically announced to the House and to the country that there would be a revision of the tariff at an early day. I am not placing my own interpretation on his words because the hon. member for Alberta (Mr. Oliver), speaking afterwards in the same debate said that the speech of the hon. Minister of Finance was a clear warning to every free trader in the country that the tariff would be revised and that the tariff would be raised. Certain events have transpired since then to which I need not refer, but which are intimately connected with fiscal questions. If my right hon. friend would give us any idea as to whether or not the language of the hon. Minister of Finance in his budget speech last year is to be taken seriously, and is to be regarded as an announcement to the country that a revision will be made during the present session, we would be very glad to hear from the right hon. leader of the government on that point. A great deal of the prosperity—of the alleged prosperity—of this country is based upon the fact that our trade has increased. While our trade has very greatly increased since 1896, so has the trade of every portion of the world. I have the figures before me and could give them at the present time if I thought it wise. But, our trade may increase in Canada at the expense of our own industries. If a hundred of the leading factories in Canada were wiped out of existence at the present time, the imports of Canada would necessarily show an increase, but it would not at all follow that because the imports of the country were increasing the country was therefore more prosperous. We laid down our platform in regard to this question in 1901 and again in 1902, but that platform did not find acceptance with my hon. friends on the other side of the House. They disagreed with it very strongly and yet they do