

year 1903 the farmers of this country exported of their own produce \$114,000,000 worth, there being an increase of \$18,000,000 over the previous year's export and an increase of \$64,000,000 over the export of 1896. I need not go into the different articles. I need not quote the returns of the different products, but when we remember that in 1903 our farmers and cheese men sold of cheese \$24,000,000 worth, of butter \$7,000,000 worth, of hams and bacon \$16,000,000 worth, of wheat \$24,000,000 worth, and of cattle \$11,000,000 worth, it will convey to us some faint idea of the growing importance of the industry of agriculture and furthermore of the splendid strides it has been making during the past few years in Canada. Being myself a solicitor, practising in a small way in a country town, I have some practical knowledge of what the farmers, at least of my own province, are doing. I can say from my experience and knowledge of the state of affairs in the province of Ontario at least, and I doubt not but what it is true of the other provinces, that the farmers are paying off their mortgage indebtedness and paying it off very rapidly. Mr. Speaker, if a farmer comes into a solicitor's office to borrow money to-day it is not because he is going behind. It is because he wants to buy the fifty acres next to him or the 100 acres across the road, and the man who has sold the fifty or 100 acres to him is not going away to Dakota disgusted and disgruntled, but very likely he is retiring with a competence to live in comfort in the adjoining town, or if a young man, is going to our Northwest there to join in making a home amongst the many hundreds and thousands who are settled in that fertile country. Why do I quote these figures? It is not for the purpose, let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, of recording any party advantage, or of building an argument thereon—and I quite confess an indisputable argument might easily be built thereon for the retention of the present government and its policy—but for the purpose of strengthening and confirming, if it were necessary, the conviction of every one, that it is a good thing to be a citizen of Canada in this fair day of hope and progress.

Sir, let me refer to our great western country. The speech from the Throne would have been singularly lacking had it not spoken of the wonderful growth which Western Canada has experienced. I hesitate to quote figures; I hesitate to set an array of statistics before the House on such an occasion; but I cannot refrain from giving a few figures which bear on the development of the West. When I state, that the immigration to Canada last year (1903) comprised 128,000 souls, it will be apparent at a glance that there has been a great influx of settlement, and I may add that two-thirds of these newcomers were English speaking citizens. These figures show an increase over the figures of the previous year of 44,000,

or more than fifty per cent, and they represent eight times the number who came to Canada in the year 1896. Why, Sir, last year, from the United States alone, 47,000 immigrants came to settle in Canada, and so far as we know these belong to the most desirable class that we could possibly attract to our country. And how has this happened? Has the Canadian west not been there from time immemorial; have these fertile prairies not been there ever since there has been a Canada; ever since there has been a government of Canada! How is it that only of late years has that long dormant land awakened up to settlement! I trust, Sir, that I am not going beyond the reasonable bounds of courtesy and etiquette to be observed on such an occasion when I say that the credit of that splendid development and growth is due largely to the vigorous policy and generous treatment which the Department of the Interior has meted out to that western country. Why, for the fiscal year 1903, we find that there were 31,383 homestead entries taken out in that western land, being more than double the entries of the year previous and eighteen-fold greater than the entries for the year 1895-6. And, Sir, I have made inquiry and I find that for the first eight months of this year there have been over 16,000 entries, and the great rush which is confidently expected this spring, will no doubt insure that the figures for the current year will greatly outstrip those for the year I have just mentioned. Is it not reassuring to remember that during the year last past, there was made available and open for settlement, in fact disposed of for settlement in our great West, nine and a quarter millions of acres? In this is included of course the land sold by the colonization companies, the railway companies having land grants, the Hudson's Bay Company, and our own Department of the Interior. The Department of the Interior alone disposed of for settlement over 5,000,000 acres of land last year. This was an increase over the year 1896 of fifty-fold and more. Now, Sir, when we remember that the total yield of wheat in that western country was between 60,000,000 and 70,000,000 bushels last year, we perhaps can form some idea of what a fabulously rich asset we have in Manitoba and the Territories. I might multiply figures and quote statistics further, but I shall have mercy upon the House, and I shall content myself with saying, that the growth and the expansion recorded by our great west during the past three or four years, is unparalleled by any country in the history of the world. There is this to be said: that both Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are, as time goes on, getting more independent; I mean in a financial way, and nowadays, it would take more than one bad harvest to seriously hamper any of the western provinces. Such, Sir, is the story of our west, and I have but touch-