

friends do not unreservedly assent. They see that a surplus of millions at the capital is just so much money withdrawn from the trade of the country. How long can the Dominion stand the drain? Certainly not many years longer.

I commend in the heartiest manner the words of Mr. Fielding, the editor of the Halifax 'Chronicle,' to the Hon. Mr. Fielding, Minister of Finance of Canada. The prophecy of the hon. gentleman has had its fulfilment in that financial stringency which he himself has been compelled to acknowledge in the speech from the Throne. No words more apt to describe the situation could be found than those words which he quoted to himself, and which I have taken the liberty to read to the House this afternoon.

Now just one or two words more. The speech from the Throne refers to telegraph and telephone companies, and declares that these are to be brought under government control. The meaning of that paragraph in the speech was not very clear to some hon. gentlemen in this House. It reads as follows:—

The time has arrived when the public interest requires that telegraph and telephone companies holding federal charters should be placed under government control. A Bill will be introduced for that purpose.

The hon. member who seconded the address (Mr. Lanctot) referred to that as a proposal to bring under the control of the Railway Commission of Canada telephone and telegraph companies. It may be that the paragraph in the speech has that meaning, but the paragraph does not say so. I will be glad indeed if the Prime Minister, when he comes to speak, will be good enough to inform the House exactly what is intended by that paragraph in the speech of His Excellency.

Then we are told that very great progress has been made upon the National Transcontinental Railway, that 250 miles of the western division are open to traffic. Might I inquire from the government how many miles of the eastern division constructed under the management of this government, are open to traffic if any? I understand no portion of the eastern division is open for traffic. I would like further to inquire from the Prime Minister when it is expected that any portion of the eastern division will be ready for traffic. I also wish to inquire when any portion of the western division was opened to traffic. I understood when recently in the west that it had not been formally opened for traffic, but that it was a matter of convenience to the people, the Grand Trunk Pacific was carrying grain and other commodities to Winnipeg for the benefit of the people, but that there had not been any formal opening. I would like especially to inquire as to the eastern division of the National Transcon-

tinental Railway, when that portion of it which extends from Winnipeg to the Port Arthur branch will be ready for traffic; because we have already heard of certain possible claims of the Grand Trunk Pacific interfered with by default of the government in not having its portion of the road ready in time. It is well that we should know what we have to expect in that regard.

There are other matters of legislation referred to in the speech from the Throne, which, however, I do not propose to refer to at the present moment. These, as well as the French treaty, will come before the House in due course. But I would say that so far as a Bill for the purpose of reforming the electoral laws of this country is concerned, I will be prepared to give it my most hearty support. I brought up this subject in 1906, upon motion for a committee, when the present Chief Justice of Canada was Minister of Justice. I did not introduce it in a partisan way, I informed my hon. friend, Mr. Fitzpatrick, at that time, that I did not propose to make any attack on the government in connection with what I was suggesting, because I desired that both parties should join together to perfect if possible the electoral laws of this country. A committee was formed, which took the matter into consideration, but owing to the elevation of Mr. Fitzpatrick to the bench, no Bill was brought down. Legislation was promised last session but it was not passed, presumably because it was not intended that parliament should be dissolved before holding another session. I am prepared to join most heartily in any action of the government looking to a reform in our electoral laws. I think the government should see that our electoral laws are placed upon at least as high a basis in Canada as that which prevails in the British Islands. Notwithstanding certain illegal acts which from time to time come to light in the British islands, we know that the standard of electoral purity there is very much higher than, unfortunately, it has been in Canada during recent years. I believe that we should follow the example of some of the American states, and either prohibit corporate contributions altogether, or at least make it a penal offence for any corporation or any member of a corporation on its behalf to contribute to any campaign fund, unless it is made public and unless the people thoroughly understand the amount of the contribution and the purpose for which it was devoted. I think that all contributions to campaign funds should be made public. At the present time those of the candidates themselves are made public in this country. In Great Britain a very much stricter rule prevails. There the campaign fund under control of any political club, any political association or organization, must be disclosed under oath, and no contribution can be made without a violation of the law unless it is made public in that way, and