

in the hands of some person more capable of discharging the duty devolving upon me than I find myself to be. I am encouraged, however, by the thought that while there are, in the speech to which I propose to refer, some subjects which may be open to honest and fair criticism, on the whole I believe that there is not much that is calculated to meet with strong opposition. So far as the political importance of Canada is concerned, I think I am safe in saying to-night that Canada stands upon a higher plane than she ever stood before. To say that Canada is better known in the out-side world than she was heretofore is saying very little. I might go further and say that Canada is exerting an influence outside and among the nations of the world greater than she ever exerted before, I might even say as great as some of the independent powers. Then, again, with regard to her material prosperity. We have evidence on every hand that Canada to-day is prosperous. No man in this country willing to work need go idle. If we refer to the trade returns and to the reports of our banking institutions, we shall be forced to conclude that the business of Canada to-day is in a sound and healthy condition. That the credit of Canada is steadily improving, I am sure will be admitted on all hands. As a fact, the last loan effected in the English market was placed on better terms than any loan heretofore offered. Although identified with the minority in this House, I am not disposed to claim all the credit for the improved conditions of this country for the party to which I belong, but, hon. gentlemen, I may be permitted to go this far and remind this hon. House that the predictions which were made and sent broadcast through this country previous to the change of administration, that a change of government meant desolation and ruin to Canada, have not been fulfilled. When I last had the honour of addressing this House on an occasion similar to the present, Canada had been invited to send representatives to what is known as the Diamond Jubilee, and I took occasion then to express my belief that in the person of the hon. Premier of this Dominion, Canada would find a representative who would do her credit and would ably represent all classes and all creeds within our borders. I may claim to-night that in that respect our expectations have not been disappointed,

because not only in this chamber, but outside of it, throughout the length and breadth of Canada, even the political opponents of the Hon. Sir Wilfred Laurier are generous enough to admit that his conduct and his course at that great gathering in London was such as to reflect credit upon himself and honour upon Great Britain's greatest colony. I am not to-night going to discuss the subjects referred to in the speech with reference to the denouncement of the German and Belgian treaties, but without considering the effect of that step on the part of the mother land I have this to say—and we have great reason, I think, to be proud of being able to congratulate ourselves upon the fact—that the government of Great Britain so appreciated our effort here in Canada in the matter of the preferential tariff as to at once remove the only obstacle that stood in the way of giving effect to that tariff. Last year, when Parliament was in session, we were congratulating ourselves upon the fact that we possessed in British Columbia great wealth in mines, as well as in the other provinces of the Dominion. At that time the words "Klondike" and "Yukon" were scarcely known. To-day they are household words, not in Canada alone, but throughout the civilized world, and capital by millions is seeking investment to-day in British Columbia, in Klondike and elsewhere. The government who are called upon to administer the affairs of this Dominion at the present time are face to face with a condition of things which is, so far as I know without parallel in the history of mining elsewhere in the world. Before it was possible to get reliable information with regard to that Klondike country, miners began to flock there by thousands, and it is said to-day that there are at the present time in the vicinity of Dawson City, or in the Klondike country, from five to ten thousand people, and if we are to take the opinion of gentlemen who ought to know, strong doubts are entertained at this moment as to whether their diminishing food supply will be sufficient to see them through until their stores can be replenished on the opening of navigation. That is not all. In the face of insurmountable difficulties at this inclement season of the year—shall I say hundreds—I think I am safe in saying thousands are wending their way to that country. It is estimated that this very year not less than one hundred thousand people will obtain a