

these South African soldiers is to put it in a very mild way. Day after day, this whole country watched their career with critical eye; and day after day we became prouder and more proud of these soldiers. When they embarked for South Africa, they took with them the honour of the country. It was pure and unspotted when committed to their charge. Through all their difficulties, through all their trials and privations, they have maintained it unsullied and inviolate; and on their return to this country, they have brought it back with them if possible more pure—certainly more beloved, more highly prized than ever it was before.

Mr. Speaker, this is the opening year of the new century. The census will be taken this year. It will not only be a numbering of the people, but it will likewise be a measure of our national wealth and progress. Canadians look forward with the utmost confidence to the story the census will have to tell. We know that this country has grown in the last few years. We know that it has grown to the north and to the east and to the west; and we are proud and thankful to know that the growth to the south of our international boundary line, which found so much favour a few years ago, has been stopped—we trust once and for ever. As between Canada and the United States, the movement of population is entirely satisfactory to this country. Surely, Sir, in this first year of the twentieth century, with all present conditions so satisfactory, without a cloud on the horizon of the future, Canadians may feel that they are within measurable distance of the realization of their dearest hope in seeing this country among the most splendid, most prosperous, most enlightened nations of the world.

Mr. CHARLES MARCIL (Bonaventure). (Translation.) Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to second the motion, moved in such felicitous language by my hon. colleague and friend, the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie). Sensible as I am of the honour that has been conferred upon me, still I regret that some other member, more qualified than I am to perform this duty properly, was not selected. No doubt, the choice thus made was prompted by friendship, and I here offer the right hon. gentleman my heartfelt thanks. Had I consulted but my own wishes, I would have declined the great honour thus conferred upon me. But the electors of the constituency to whom I am indebted for the honour of sitting in this House have a right to expect from me the sacrifice of my own preferences to their interests. And it is in the name of the constituency which sent me here to represent them; it is as the mouthpiece of my constituents, that I wish to address the House.

I am happy, Sir, to avail myself of this opportunity to tender you my warmest con-

Mr. GUTHRIE.

gratulations on the exalted position which you occupy as Speaker of this House, as also for the honour which has been conferred upon you when called to preside over our proceedings. That honour, which you fully deserved, reflects on the constituency of Rouville, which you so creditably represent here; it reflects also on the province of Quebec, and on the whole French Canadian race.

It is not my intention to go at any length into all the matters dwelt upon with such marked ability and in such choice language by my hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie). But I shall content myself with playing a more modest part, by merely referring to the salient features of the speech from the Throne.

We have met, Sir, under exceptional circumstances. We have met here in the first days of a new century, at the beginning of a new reign and at the opening of a new parliament. We stand on the threshold of the reign of Edward VII., who succeeds the most illustrious woman the world ever produced. We, the members from the province of Quebec, cannot forget that it was under the rule of the illustrious Queen upon whom the grave has just closed that Great Britain put into execution the treaty which had been sealed by the blood of heroes upon the Plains of Abraham. We cannot forget that it was under her reign that constitutional government and the full exercise of our political rights were secured to us. We are grateful and proud that one of our fellow-countrymen should now occupy the position filled by the French governors of old. We are also grateful for being allowed the use of our mother-tongue, on the floor of this House and in the administration of justice in this country, under the ægis of the British Crown. We are equally proud to see a man of our race and nationality occupying in the old Quebec basilica the pew occupied by the French governors under the old regime. And in return for those liberties, our fellow-countrymen have invariably showed their devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and they feel that they owe her a debt of eternal gratitude for the rank which Canada now occupies among the nations of the world. My hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie) has referred to the second paragraph of the speech from the Throne, in which allusion is made to the return of our soldiers from South Africa. A remarkable coincidence which deserves to be mentioned in this connection is that one of the last public acts of Her Majesty the Queen was an audience granted to a group of our fellow-countrymen, who were returning from South Africa with the laurels of victory. That matter of the contingents sent to South Africa has been exhaustively debated, and I think it is now a settled question. But I thank heaven that we, French Canadians, should have had at Paardeberg and upon other battlefields, representatives of our