

has not arrived when the people of Canada would be disposed to enter upon that new path. We are yet a young country. We have enough to do in developing our own natural wealth which is yet in a latent state, and it would not be prudent to throw ourselves into this new policy. Let our country grow a little. Let Canadians develop that which they possess and when circumstances present themselves later, as they have presented themselves in the past, I have no doubt that the mother country will find on the shores of the St. Lawrence, as in all other parts of Canada, men ready to defend her in case of need. I know that amongst our people there exists a sentiment of liberty and of independence. Canada will again be ready, should the occasion present itself in the future, to make sacrifices for the mother country and in reserving her liberty of action she will be not less courageous or less disposed to fight and to win victories for the empire.

There remains but one observation for me to make and it relates to the question of transportation. It is evident that the time is not distant—if it has not already arrived—when it will be necessary for Canada to burden herself anew, to suffer sacrifices to meet the needs of the commerce of the country, and above all the needs of our immense North-west. It is clear that if the west continues to develop in a prodigious fashion, Canada must devise means to open up new ways of communication. That question being of a nature to impose very considerable expense on the country, I consider the action of the government absolutely wise, before arriving at any conclusion, to appoint a commission the object of which will be to ascertain the best means to take to open outlets for the immense territories of the North-west. A minister, though he be endowed with great qualities and possess good judgment, is not a universal genius; he may not be born a civil engineer, he is a politician. A minister cannot judge of himself the advantages there may be between one way of communication and another, nor the difficulties which he may have to overcome to establish it. The press of the country and the politicians have not ceased to speak for several years of the opening of a great route for the export of the products of the west from Georgian Bay to the St. Lawrence

Hon. Mr. LEGRIS.

by canaling the French river and the Ottawa. That system may be the best, but for my part I would not venture an opinion on the question, because I am not competent to judge where the advantages or the disadvantages may be. Prudence, therefore, requires that the ministers shall take extraordinary precautions before we face an expenditure of several million dollars to open up necessary ways of communication for the transportation of our products. Now the creation of a committee of inquiry on this question is nothing less than a wise decision which merits the approbation of the country. When the necessary investigations have been made it is to be presumed that parliament will not hesitate to provide the amount requisite to open up the ways of communication of which we have the greatest need, if we wish to keep that which belongs to us, if we do not wish our powerful neighbours to seize our immense commerce of the west.

The speech from the Throne also makes mention of the arbitration tribunal which has been appointed to determine the boundary between Canada and Alaska. I have but one word to say on the subject. This question has been pending for a long enough time. Like all irritating questions it may be the means of bringing about a conflict between Canada and the United States. I am of the opinion that the greatest good for a country is to be at peace with its neighbours, and I believe that the determination taken by our government to appoint a commission of judges is wise. These gentlemen will act under oath; they are enlightened men and it is not reasonable to cast a doubt on them in advance or to prejudge their decision. It is therefore absolutely wise to approve the determination of the government to appoint a commission to settle that boundary question. Whatever the result may be, I believe that the country can only gain by seeing this question settled once for all with a view to removing all cause for conflict between the two countries.

We see further in the speech from the Throne that the government will be occupied during the present session with a Redistribution Bill. We see further that there will be measures concerning the creation of a railway commission, for the amendment of the militia laws and to regulate Chinese immigration. There is also a question of re-