

consider the compliment given by my hon. friend as just and well deserved. My hon. friend has, in a very good-natured manner criticised the speech. He says it will not set the world on fire. Well, we do not want to set the world on fire; and I do not believe my hon. friend, although he raises that objection, is much of a fire-eater except, perhaps, in the far North-West, so that I do not think this objection will be taken to heart by the hon. gentlemen who sit behind me. My hon. friend, however, complains that there is a very meagre bill of fare, but I, as leader of the Government, considered myself in a delicate position, and in settling this meagre bill of fare, I considered the weak digestion of hon. gentlemen opposite. Milk for babes and strong meat for men, you know. My hon. friend opposite is still in the infancy of his political position, and consequently we have kept the diet down so as suit his digestion. My hon. friend is very much pleased to observe in the Speech that there is an announcement of the extension of trade to all parts of the world, even to the Antipodes. He says he is willing that we should extend our trade to Australasia, to South America, or to New Zealand, but he says, why do you not extend your trade to the near south? The hon. gentleman knows why we do not extend our trade to the south. He knows full well that the reason is that they will not allow us to do so. We would be willing to do so; we have been always anxious to do so. From 1854 to the present moment Canada has shown her readiness to enter into the most friendly relations—into the most friendly commercial and social relations—with the United States; but they will not have us, except, perhaps, at a price that we do not choose to give. The hon. gentleman himself, I think, would not offer to give that price if he stood where I do. It has been announced by leading men in the United States, by men who will in the future, perhaps in the near future, govern the political course of the United States, that we shall have no extension of intercourse with the United States unless we are content to sell our heritage for a mess of pottage, unless we choose we give up our allegiance to our Sovereign and to change our proud position as a member of the greatest Empire the world ever saw, and to become a mere outskirt of the neighboring Republic. I know that the hon. gentleman himself would not pay that price, and, unless we do pay that price, our hopes of the extension of trade to the south cannot be satisfied, and the project of commercial union, I think, must be dropped in silence. The hon. gentleman said that, although I have been hopelessly wrong in my political economy, he hopes to see that, by-and-bye, I may change my opinion. Well, I like power; I like place; I like my present position. All I can say is that I believe that moment I adopted the hon. gentleman's advice and changed my opinions and my course in regard to the commercial and fiscal policy of Canada, I would have to give up all I like, and assume the position of the hon. gentleman opposite. I am in no hurry to do that, and until he and his friends, with all their ability, can induce the electors of Canada to change their fixed opinions on that point, I am not likely to change mine, or to change my course. The hon. gentleman deplored that, among the many omissions in the Speech, there is not a single word about the protection of the rights of the workingman. Mr. Speaker, if we had introduced measures such as he would indicate, the course of the hon. gentlemen opposite would at once be to declare that we were treading on the jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislatures. We have heard that cry before in this House. We have heard, when measures relating to the position of the workingmen and the laws affecting them were introduced, that the different Provinces could deal with these subjects and had full power to deal with them. However, I believe that we have certain powers here in regard to that matter, and that the Provincial Legislatures have certain powers also; and, whenever the report is obtained from this Commission which the hon.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD,

gentleman spoke of in rather a disparaging tone—I really do not know why—I think this House will receive sufficient instruction as to the subjects dealt with by that Commission, in regard to the manner in which the position and status of the workingmen can be improved, to enable it to take up the subject with full knowledge of all the grievances, or alleged grievances, of the workingmen, and will be able with that information to do whatever is necessary by legislation to improve their position. The hon. gentleman also complains that there is no announcement that there is going to be an alteration in the Customs laws and he specially complains of the sufferings of the mercantile community. Well, I think the commercial community can take care of themselves, and if the law relating to the Customs or to the administration of the Customs presses unduly on the commercial body, they will let this House and the country know it. But where do we find any complaint from the commercial people in regard to this matter? Where do we find any petitions from Boards of Trade or Chambers of Commerce laying their grievances on this Table and calling the attention of Parliament to the wrongs which they suffer under the Customs law? Of course, that law is a stringent law. It would be no law at all fit for the purpose if it were not stringent. The wiles of the smuggler and the dishonest trader are dark, and those men have to be watched closely. When we adopted the system of protecting the manufactures of this country, we were obliged to make the law under which that protection was given efficient, and in order to do that we had to pass a stringent Customs law, or the whole policy would be nugatory. We know what false invoices are, we know what the devices of dishonest trader are. We know the Protean changes of action which the dishonest trader adopts for the purpose of evading the law, and, notwithstanding our protective system, of making this practically a free trade country. Sir, whenever the commercial men of this country feel that the law is doing them wrong, they will let us know it, but the law is for the protection of the honest trader, of the honest man who pays the full duty according to an honest invoice on the articles which he imports, and he is to be protected against the smuggler and the dishonest tradesman who make false statements, false affidavits, and undersell the honest trader, and so prevent his having the fair protection which is afforded by the strict enforcement of the law. Oh, yes, the honest men of the country, the honest commercial men, do not complain of this law. The smuggler does, the dishonest man does; the man into whose warehouse the Custom house officer walks and finds the smuggled article, finds out the fraud and finds out the double invoice on looking at the books of the dishonest trader—all such men complain; but the honest trader recognizes the necessity of a stringent law, and I believe among the commercial community of Canada, there is no man standing higher than my hon. friend the Minister of Customs, for the manner in which he has carried out the law and protected the honest man against the smuggler and the swindler. The hon. gentleman says that there is one other omission in the Speech, that we have not congratulated ourselves upon the happy state of the country, and that we have not inserted into His Excellency's Speech a clause which may be laudatory of ourselves and of our administration. There is no necessity, Mr. Speaker, to praise ourselves—the country does that for us. The hon. gentleman says of his following: "We are a small body." Why are they a small body? Because the country does not give them the same complimentary confidence that it does to us. The hon. gentleman knows that under the dome of St. Paul's in London, there is a celebrated epitaph to Sir Christopher Wren: *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*—"if you seek for a monument, look around you"—at this magnificent building. We say the same thing in a humble spirit: