

made in the speech from the Throne to the prosperity of this country, as well as an expression of belief that that prosperity would continue at all times in the future. My right hon. friend, possessed with an hallucination which has overcome him on many occasions in the past, considered this a compliment to himself. He takes the credit of this prosperity. Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that after the 21st day of September last he would have awakened from that dream, and would have realized that the prosperity of Canada is not due to him or to any measure, whether administrative or legislative, that he has given to this country, but is due to the wonderful resources of this Dominion and to the splendid capacity of the people of Canada in developing those resources. It is only an illustration on his part of that singular self-appreciation which has characterized him on many occasions. We have in opposition over and over again recognized that this country was prosperous; we recognized it in the debate on this very question during the last session of parliament; we recognize it now; but we believe that that prosperity is due to the great resources of this country and to the industry and capacity of its people, and not to him or his government or to any measure that they ever passed.

The right hon. gentleman said that he would desire no better epitaph than that contained in this speech. May I be permitted to note in passing that the right hon. gentleman recognizes the verdict of the people on the 21st of September last as an epitaph. Let us deal for a moment with this question which the right hon. gentleman desires to thresh out again, after it has been pronounced on by the people—the question of the agreement which he proposed to parliament during the last session with respect to trade relations with the United States of America. So far as that agreement is concerned, my right hon. friend took a somewhat curious position in the concluding portion of his observations with regard to it. He did not feel inclined to say that it was not within the rights of the Canadian people to pronounce upon that question when it was submitted to them; but, by a certain curious insinuation which was to be found in his speech, he more than suggested that they could not properly have done so. I take issue with the right hon. gentleman in that regard. I say we had on the statute-book of this country for eighteen years, until the right hon. gentleman himself removed it, a standing offer of reciprocity to the United States of America. My right hon. friend removed that, and I say that no man in Canada, during the period in which that offer was on the statute-book of this country, ever

Mr. BORDEN.

denied the absolute and perfect right of the people of the United States to decline to entertain it; and it would be a curious condition of affairs in this country if, after parliament had been dissolved for the purpose of submitting that question to the electorate of Canada, that electorate ought to have been influenced by any consideration that they could not deal with that question in what they deemed to be the best interests of this Dominion as a portion of the British Empire.

My right hon. friend dissolved parliament in a great hurry, and dissolved parliament without taking the ordinary and constitutional step of asking parliament to vote the necessary supplies. I want to tell him, in connection with the motion he has proposed, that under all the constitutional authorities that can be cited, no graver violation of the duties of a government was ever witnessed in any country. If you examine the authorities, you will find that when a dissolution of parliament is in preparation or under consideration, the very first duty of a government is to make provision for the supplies in order that the public business may be carried on, and it is the duty of the opposition under such circumstances to grant those supplies for such reasonable period as may elapse before a new parliament can vote them. That plain duty of a government under constitutional usage was violated by the right hon. gentleman, the result of which brought the public service of this country for a time into very great difficulty and very great confusion.

Well, my right hon. friend went to the country with his boast. He told us in parliament—told us amidst the cheers of his supporters—and published in the press that he was going to the country and going to sweep it from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He made many boasts of the same character after parliament was dissolved. He told the people of this country to follow his white plume and he advised all his friends far and near to bet their money on the old cock. I would like to say to you, Mr. Speaker, in passing, that there are many men in Canada, if I am not mistaken, who followed that advice and who are sadder and wiser men to-day.

Now, let us come for a moment to the observations of the right hon. gentleman with regard to this question. He has told us that we opposed reciprocity on national and not on economic grounds. I take absolute issue with the right hon. gentleman. His statement in that regard indicates either one thing or the other—that his memory is not as good as it ought to be, or that he did not read very much of what was said by hon. gentlemen on this side in discussing this question in parliament, and on the hustings after the dissolution of parlia-