Board of Works Jan 1 92

THE HERALD.

VOL. V., NO. 16. FREDERICTON, N. B., SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1894. $1.00 PER YEAR

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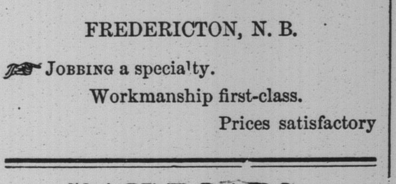

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3.20 P. M.—Accommodation for Fredericton Junction and St. John, also with Night Express for Bangor, Portland and Boston.

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Fredericton, May 6th 1893.

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MR. LAURIER'S SPEECH

In the Debate on the Address—An Eloquent Deliverance.

In speaking on the address in the debate in the house of commons at Ottawa, the 16th, Hon. Mr. Laurier, leader of the opposition, said:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure I am voicing the the sentiments of this side, and perhaps it may be once for the other side, when I express to the honorable member of the city of Ottawa and the honorable member of Hochelaga the high sense of appreciation which we all entertain for the creditable efforts with which they have gratified the house. The duty which has been assumed by the mover and seconder of the address is, under all circumstances, as I know, a difficult one, and on this occasion having to create something out of nothing, having to evolve ideas out of few words, the task was more particularly trying. And I am bound to say in all conscience that, with the exception of the few flights of fancy with which I could not agree, they have come out of the ordeal very well. Sir James Grant, particularly, charmed me with that passage of his his speech in which he referred to the maritime provinces as a nest of great men, and when he said that the maritime provinces

ALWAYS APPRECIATED THEIR GREAT MEN.

This sentiment, coming as it did after an event that only took place yesterday, is evidence that he spoke truly, and that Nova Scotia appreciates the great man who now conducts her provincial affairs. (Applause.) Sir James Grant, also in touching terms, in the latter part of his speech, recalled the memories of events and names which must forever be dear to Canadian hearts. He lifted the clouds from the horizon of their lives, which he once saw in the full splendor of their glow, and which are forever shrouded in the silent shadow of death. Sir James Grant had the privilege of a seat in this house at a time when perhaps there were congregated on its floor a galaxy of men which has never been equalled since. He was painfully impressed with the fact that the ranks had been sadly thinned by the hand of time which had fallen upon those who guided the destinies of this country twenty years ago. Well, time flies, and we are carried in its flight. It is nothing new; yet, old as it may be, it is always new in its painfulness and always carries a new bitterness with it. When one like Sir James comes into this house after the lapse of several years, perhaps this sight is still more painful to him than to those of us who have sat in this house and have seen the disappearance of all those great men whose memory is revered. Well, this is the one supreme law, and, since it is the one supreme law, it is the part of wisdom to apply ourselves to fulfil to the best of our ability the task left to us by those who no longer sit amongst us but whose example is still left amongst us.

Sir James has also been felicitous in the remarks which he made in regard to cordial welcome which has been extended by all classes of the Canadian people to the distinguished nobleman who now represents the queen in Canada. All classes of people of Canada have been particularly satisfied with the selection which has been made by imperial authorities, of the person of the Earl of Aberdeen, to fill the position which has become perhaps one of the

MOST IMPORTANT IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

In this democratic country we would deem it beneath our dignity to offer to any one our high appreciation in language which would resemble fulsome flattery, yet it is the solid truth to say that Canada has been exceptionally fortunate in the character and abilities of all those who up to the present time have occupied the distinguished position of governor-general. And it is no flattery to say that of all these men not one came to the discharge of his important duties with a greater name or personal record than those present incumbent of that position. In one sense the name of Aberdeen comes most fittingly after that of Derby. The name of Aberdeen, like that of Derby, is a name which, while it has been made famous by a long line of predecessors has never been more illustrious than during the present reign, and I re-echo every word that was spoken by Sir James in that regard. With regard to the last incumbent of the office, when Lord Derby left our shores, he and his distinguished consort carried with them the entire sympathy and respect of the whole Canadian people who learned to appreciate their unobtrusive and genuine qualities. The reputation which preceded the successor of Lord Derby was a reputation won by eminent service to the state, crowned by the most marvellous success which characterized the administration of the Earl of Aberdeen as vice-roy of Ireland, a success which I say was nothing short of marvellous, when we remember that the Earl of Aberdeen going as vice-roy of Ireland, Dublin castle, in the midst of great political agitation, in the midst of sullen distress, left the castle six months afterwards amidst sobs and tears of a people ever quick to respond to kindness and generosity, a people whose tender and quick intellect had discovered in that scion of a proud aristocracy one who understood all the aspirations of the modern democracy. (Applause.)

Mr. Lachapelle referred at some length to the success of Canada at the World's Fair. In that respect I also re-echo every word that was said. The success of Canada was gratifying to all Canadians, especially to those who, like myself, believe that agriculture is the art of all arts, the science of all sciences. (Applause.) For had it not been for the agricultural exhibits, Canada would have no cause of enthusiasm in regard to the success at the World's fair.

THE FARMERS TOOK THE LION'S SHARE

of the awards at the world's fair, which shows that though the farmers are not a pampered class, though they have received nothing from the government, it is to the farmers we must look for the development of Canada. (Applause.) Mr. Lachappelle said that he was sure this government would do something for the protection of the farmers of Canada. I was under the impression that the government had always pretended that they had done a good deal for the farmers. Mr. Lachappelle hopes and believes that the government will do something. Well, he has more hope and faith in the government than I have myself. (Hear, hear.) But having said that much, I am sorry to say that I can go no further. I am sorry that I can't take my share of all the flowers of rhetoric with which Sir James Grant strewed the ground that he trod. Sir James has endowed with enthusiasm the subject of his remarks—an enthusiasm on which it could not have been expected that he would have been able to grow such a profusion of blooms as those he has exhibited to us out of the rocky sandy barren ground to be found in the corners of the speech from the throne. He has developed a great deal of enthusiasm. He has not seen anything in the government of Canada, but what is worthy of admiration and commendation.

Neither of my honorable friends has said a word as to the tardy and inconvenient date at which parliament has been called to meet, and surely that is a thing which my honorable friends cannot approve. It has been one of the unwritten laws of Canada for a great many years past that parliament should be summoned at an early date in the year, at the latest perhaps in January. And the reason is this. In this country we have no privileged class. All the members of this house, with scarcely an exception, are engaged in the ordinary avocations of life, and it is therefore an object of paramount necessity that after having discharged their duty to their country, they should be able to go back to their business about the opening of the business season. This has been done in years past. It is one of the unwritten laws of Canada. Still the government

HAS DEPARTED FROM THIS RULE.

They waited and waited until the opening of the business season was in sight before they summoned parliament, and as to this, there is never a word of explanation. We might have expected, at all events, that the gods who rule over our destinies would have come down from the spheres which they occupy and give us a word as to this. At all events, if they would not take us into their confidence they should have, at all events, taken into their confidence Sir James, who might have repeated to us the explanation. I submit that the government have been sadly remiss in their duty in not summoning parliament earlier unless they can bring forth some cogent reason to excuse their negligence (hear, hear.) Some reason there must have been, and what was it? I am told the government expect to rush the session. No one expects to remain here for a long time, but the session must last for the time that it is necessary to discuss the business of the nation.

There has been another reason which has been hinted. It has been stated in the press that the government were waiting to see what developments would be taken in the revision of the tariff on the other side. It has been hinted that they were looking to Washington. What, sir, is it possible? Looking to Washington! How are the mighty fallen! I want to know. How are the pure fallen from grace! How are the super-loyal columns fallen down!

I believe, sir, there is some truth in that. I believe that parliament was not summoned because they wanted to know what was to be done at Washington for it was outlined by the premier speaking at the meeting at the board of trade in Toronto in 1892. Mr. Laurier then read from the speech of the premier on that occasion showing that Sir John has said when referring to the question of tariff reform that Canada was bound to

TAKE LESSONS FROM ITS NEIGHBORS

in making a revision of the tariff. (Hear, hear.) Then, Mr. Laurier went on to say, that was the reason why the session has been called so late. That being so, why was not the statement generous and generally made. Last year there was a different reason than that given by the prime minister and the minister of finance, as to the delay in revising the tariff. The minister of finance stated that the tariff would not be proceeded with, not because they were waiting for example from Washington, but because there was not sufficient information had on the subject, and he and his colleagues were going from place to place during the recess so as to find out the necessity for it, or if it were necessary at all. (Hear, hear.) Well, that was the reason given by the minister of finance last session. There was great curiosity in the minds of the people as to the transactions of those connected with the tariff enquiry. One of these tariff meetings was held in the city of Montreal. It was found that this meeting came off camera obscura. (Hear, hear.) There was to be no bublicity, and consequently there was much indignation over the meeting, because in this democratic country naturally the people have a suspicion against that which cannot be carried out and conducted in the broad light of day. (Cheers.) The protests laid against the secret meetings of the tariff commission were such that the minister of finance could not ignore them. The minister had to take some notice of them, and therefore he explained his position in regard to them. He did so in the city of St. John, N. B., and the reason he gave why these meetings were held in secret was that if they were made public then he would be compelled to listen to set speeches on free trade and protection, and that by meeting in secret there was more information obtained. (Hear, hear.) These excuses satisfied nobody but himself. (Hear, hear.)

I do not question the reasons Mr. Foster gave when he said that he had an aversion to speeches upon free trade and protection, but I will say, that he did not know his own mind as well as his own followers. He did not know his own mind so well as did the reporter of the Montreal Gazette, who gave some account of, that is so far as he could give any, what had taken place at these meetings. After the first of these meetings had taken place in the city of Montreal on the 24th of April, last year, the reporter of The Gazette, who could not get in, but who was at the door, tells us that there were present the boot and shoe men, wall-paper manufacturers, the leather manufacturers, and the wine and liquor men. (Hear, hear). The reporter did not know what was doing at the meeting, but he could see those who were attending it. The reporter also gives a pretty good idea of what was done at the meeting in the heading which was placed over the article. The heading reads: "Feeling their pulse." (Laughter.) The minister was there feeling their pulse, (hear, hear), and to ascertain whether they would or would not submit to a reduction of the tariff, but we know that took place. These manufacturers were willing to make sacrifices as long as their own pet industries were not interfered with. As long as the minister of finance kept feeding their babies, they did not care what become of others. Like Artemus Ward, who, at the time of the war of the Union was willing to make some sacrifices, he was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relations. (Laughter.) So there may be some truth in this as regards these meetings. Shakespeare has told us of a similar comedy which took place in secret in a tavern at East Cheap in the reign of Henry IV. Those engaged in it, were Prince Henry, Sir John Falstaff, Bardolph Peto and Poins. Meeting one night at the tavern, they determined to have a little play, the subject of which was the rebuke that the Prince would be sure to have in the morning from his royal father the king, for the bad company he was keeping. Falstaff took the part of the king and rebuked the prince, and afterwards they exchanged their parts, the prince becoming the king, and Falstaff taking the part of the prince. Falstaff, as the prince, says: "I would your grace would take me with you. Whom means your grace?" Prince Henry—"That villainous, abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan." Falstaff—"My lord, the man I know." Prince Henry—"I know thou dost." Falstaff—"But to say I know more harm in him than in myself were to say more than I know. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being as he is old Jack Falstaff, banish not him, thy Harry's companion; banish plump Jack and banish all the world."

Well, sir, suppose we had gone into this camera obscura at the time the representatives of some of these interests were there to interview my honorable friend. Let us suppose that the reporter had entered just at that moment when the liquid and wine men were present. There would be the king in the person of my honorable friend the minister of finance. Stern, with a hard look in his face, telling the wine and liquor men that the complaints of the people are so loud that he is obliged to

MAKE A REDUCTION OF THE TARIFF,

and that he has to repeat the observations of Falstaff and banish both, banish leather, but do not banish wine and liquor, and why not the people admitted to the meeting. I have told you a moment ago the reason why, not on the grounds as to the minister's aversion to hearing lectures on free trade and protection. The minister came to meet the farmers at last. The policy was then changed. When the meeting with the manufacturers took place secrecy was the motto of the day. Now publicity was made the motto of the day. Some inquisitive parties were anxious to find out what was going on at the meetings with the manufacturers, but they might as soon go to Egypt and interview the Sphynx buried in the sands there, but the farmers' meetings were now as open and as free as the air. The members of the press were not only admitted but they were invited (hear, hear). The farmers came there to expose their grievances, but instead of being allowed to do so they were met by the ministers of agriculture and finance and the two controllers, who, with the aid of the blue books, explained to their satisfaction, I don't mean the farmers' but the ministers' and the controllers', that they had no grievances. The two comptrollers took Ontario and the minister of agriculture took the Northwest territories. I am bound to say that the minister of finance took the dominion as his portion. Well, the controller of inland revenue and the controller of customs were pleased with the prosperity they met. As to the minister of agriculture when in the Northwest he was bound to admit that the farmers' were not in prosperity (hear, hear.) But, he said, it was the farmers' own fault if they were taxed upon agricultural implements and binder twine. They should go into mixed farming. That would relieve them from the slough in which they were. I must say that I was proud of my profession when I saw a lawyer who happened to be minister of agriculture point out to the farmers of the northwest that the remedy

WAS WITHIN THEIR OWN HANDS.

The farmers would never have thought of this had it not been for the lawyer, who was at the moment minister of agriculture, pointing it out to them. I am surprised that the minister should not have followed up the idea of his predecessor, the gentleman who now sits for the city of London, and told the farmers, not only to go into mixed farming, but also to the growing of the two-rowed barley as well. (Cheers.) As for the minister of finance, well, he went from the east to the centre and from the centre to the west, and wherever he went he proved to the farmers that they had no grievances. The minister lectured them on the duty and advantages of supporting protection, and he also preached them a sermon on the necessity of paying their own taxes. He said that it was the necessity of all good Christians, especially farmers, to pay taxes. (Cheers.) Mr. Laurier here related a dialogue which took place between a French chef and a chicken. The chief asked the chicken what kind of sauce did it want to be eaten with, and the chicken replied that it did not want to be eaten at all. Mr. Foster, went on Mr. Laurier, asks the farmer what kind of sauce he wants to be eaten with, and the farmer replies that he does not want to be eaten at all. But Mr. Foster tells him that he must be eaten, and that the sauce will be nothing else but protection.

When they came back to Ottawa they apparently did not know any more as to what they should do than when they set forth upon their errand, because since they came back they were followed by long processions coming from the very places that they had visited and composed of the very men that they had interviewed. The ministers had gone to feel their pulse, and now they came to feel the pulse of the ministers, and above all things to exact their pound of flesh. Judging from the words which the ministers have placed in the mouth of his excellency, they have obtained their pound of flesh. We are to have the same system.

THERE IS TO BE NO REFORM WHATEVER.

The system is to be continued that has been prevalent for some years in this country of levying taxes, not to go into the public exchequer but into the private purse of those imposing the duties, not with a view of levying revenue, but with the view of taxing one portion of the community for the benefit of another portion of the community. Sir James Grant said that he expected that the wisdom of the government would provide protection for all classes. I am sure it will. I have read a speech of the prime minister delivered a few days ago at Ottawa, and I see that the prime minister has undertaken to protect all kinds of labor, even professional labor. You don't believe it? I tell you it is so; the labor of lawyers and doctors. Here are his words: "Now our position is that what promotes the welfare of the industrial class is good for all. The prime object is to protect the labor of the country and to see that all kinds of work that is to be done, is done by Canadians. It is the goal we are all endeavoring to reach. Whether it is the labor of the farmer, the mechanic, the professional man or manufacturer, the grand aim that we are keeping in view is that labor is the basis of the welfare of the country." If we are to have protected labor among the professionals I denounce the prime minister, the mover and seconder of the address, who are both physicians, and who are not protected, but lawyers are well protected. From the report of the auditor general it appears that the lawyers are protected to a fabulous amount. What is the need of reforming the tariff, the speech from the throne tells us. Sir James Grant tells us, Mr. Lachapelle tells us, and every man, perhaps on the other side of the house will tell us that this is a prosperous country. Well, sir, I agree that perhaps Canada is blessed, as perhaps few countries are blessed with cold bracing climate, with fertile and broad acres, with hills and valleys, forests and lakes, the like of which the sun in its course never shines upon. We are blessed in what nature has done for us, but what have we done to help nature? We are told that we are a prosperous country, while the honorable gentlemen profess to believe that Canada is a prosperous country, the million who have fled from that prosperity tell a different story. Today undoubtedly when we compare our fate with the fate of some nations, we may be deemed prosperous, but when we measure our prosperity by the standard which should rule in Canada, or America, I say that it is a mockery of common sense.

IT IS AN INSULT TO THE INTELLIGENCE

of this people. (Applause.) Prosperity! Why, sir, we are told that our trade has increased, but if our trade has increased I do not understand the speech from the throne in that respect. We are told that our trade has increased with Great Britain. As I understand the trade and navigation returns, our trade has increased much more with the United States than with Great Britain; but we are told no in the address of Sir James Grant. No; trade has not increased, because most of the increase in exports has been an increase in coin and bullion. But suppose that our export trade has increased, what is it that we sell most of today? The great bulk of our exports are agricultural products. That is the basis of our prosperity, and I admit that of late years our exports in agricultural products have increased. Under such circumstances there should be great prosperity among the farmers. Well, there is not—and why? Because the farmers sow and reap, and still they won't toil for themselves, but for the monopolists. It is the old story: "Sic vos non vobis;" like the busy bees they toil, but some robber comes and takes away their profits from them. That is not prosperity. If you talk of prosperity under such conditions I take issue completely with that.

Sir James Grant compared our status with the status of the American nation. It is true that at the present time the American people are not as prosperous as they have been in the past. They have been through a crisis; and what is the cause? Protection! Protection is the cause. It is the primary factor in the present crisis. What has been the determining cause? Is it not a fact that the determining cause has been the silver legislation, which is based on the protective principle, for what was it but a law that compelled the American people to buy and put in circulation that which they had to buy at higher price than the market price?

Our legislation is better than theirs in matters of finance, but in our fiscal policy we follow closely upon the lines of American legislation. We must take warning from what has taken place in the United States, and if we wish to avoid the crisis which they are now passing through our duty at the earliest possible moment is to reverse our system and to go back to a

MORE SANE FISCAL LEGISLATION.

Now Mr. Speaker, there is in the speech from the throne, apart from the legislation we are promised a paragraph which has been commented upon at some length by Sir James Grant and by Dr. Lachapelle, the award by the Behring sea court of arbitration. Both these gentlemen have spoken in very glowing terms of that award. In this they have reflected, I am sure, the ideas which were set forth by the prime minister, when he came back from Europe after the court of arbitration had finished its labors. The prime minister when he returned from Europe spoke in terms, I will not say of extravagance, but I will say of exuberent praise; in fact he was so exuberent in his language that I say it without meaning any offence to the minister, I can't but think that he spoke much more than he really meant. I do not think that in his heart of hearts he quite considered our success so complete, as he would have us believe. With regard to the honorable gentleman, I am somewhat in the position of my honorable friend to my left (Mr. Davies). I am not overburdened with confidence in the prime minister in political matters, still I respect his opinion. But when he tells us that we have reason to be proud, and to be satisfied with our success before the court of arbitration, I oppose his opinion, the opinion of a gentleman who in matters judicial always commands respect. I oppose the opinion of the prime minister, the opinion of the minister of justice of Canada, who was a member of the court, and who dissented from that award in its most important particular and forming part in the matter. I prefer to follow the opinion of the minister of justice rather than the opinion of the first minister. (Hear, hear.) What was the origin of the trouble between Canada and the United States with regard to the Behring sea fisheries? It was the danger of the extinction of seal life in the Northern sea. Up to the year 1886 the Canadian sealers and the American sealers had prosecuted their labors without injuring one another, but in 1886 the American authorities took violent, took arbitrary,

TOOK UNWARRANTED PROCEEDINGS

against the Canadian sealers to oust them from the nothern seas. The ground for this alleged authority by the American authorities was that they had jurisdiction over Behring Sea, because, as they said, in the language of international law it was mare clausam, that it was a sort of American lake, over which the Americans had just as much authority as they have over the waters of Salt Lake, in Utah. This contention was so preposterous that the negotiations between the foreign office and the department at Washington were not carried far before it was practically disavowed. They fell back upon the contention that they owned the seals whether found in the open sea or near the shore, because the seals were born in American territory, and, then, failing in this they fell back upon the claim that they had a right to protect the seal life and to take measures to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of the seals. This latter proposition was really the whole bone of contention. It was known and admitted that the seals had become scarce in comparison with what they had been in former times, both those that teemed in the seas and those that rooked on the islands. The Americans carry on their operations on land while the Canadians carry on theirs in the open sea. All nations have established domestic laws to protect certain kinds of game and fish. It was well known that when they came before the court all their legal pretensions were brushed aside by the court, in fact, so far as I have been able to read the proceedings, the whole contention between the American commissioners and the British commissioners was as to the making of these regulations for the protection of the seals, and in this affirm the pretensions set up by the Canadian commissioners were altogether set aside by the award of the court. In the first place it is a well known fact, and this will not be denied, that the first contention of the British commissioners was that the regulations should apply not only to pelagic sealing but to the

SLAUGHTER OF THE SEALS ON LAND AS WELL.

There was much reason in this and the point was put forth with great ability and great force in the British case. The argument was prepared by the minister of marine, but our contentions were set aside. I cannot, therefore, see why the prime minister asks us to rejoice. (Hear, hear.

But, sir, I want to know whether we should rejoice, as Sir James Grant has said a moment ago we should, over that award. Let us look at what took place on the other side of the continent or the British Columbia coast. The effect of that award in so far as sealing was a Canadian industry, has been to kill the industry completely. Canadian sealing is a thing of the past. Why, sir, if I am not misled, I see that my honorable friend, the minister of marine and fisheries, takes some exception to that. But, has he not seen that all the schooners and tackle employed in the sealing industry have been offered for sale by auction? Whether they were sold or not, I don't know what they were offered for sale for, and unless I am greatly mistaken we shall know by and by. I understand there is in the hands of the government a petition from the owners of the schooners and tackle employed in the fisheries, asking the government to compensate them for the great loss they have sustained from the award. I agree that if there is nothing to be satisfied with in the award, we should be satisfied with the reference of the case to arbitration. The dispute was referred to the court instead of being left to the supreme arbitrament of war. This is the second time within thirty years that the two great Anglo-Saxon nations have given this great example to the world of settling their disputes, not in the barbarous manner of the past by war, but by judical arbitration, and however unsatisfactory the award may be, still there is reason to be satisfied that the dispute has been settled as it has been settled.

THE ATLANTIC SERVICE.

There is another paragraph in the speech from the throne which is not new and of which we have heard a good deal, the fast Atlantic service. How long ago was it since the prime minister told us with a flourish of trumpets that Canada was to have a service on the Northern Atlantic route, equal to the fastest Atlantic service? It must be six years ago at least, and the next session of parliament was induced to vote $500,000 to whoever would establish such a service. Now $500,000 (half a million) is a big pile of money, and yet the offer has been on the statute book for one, two, three and four years, and nobody has come forward to take possession of that sum of money. Neither the Allans nor the Torrances, who are the pioneers of steam navigation, have come forward, enterprising as they are, to take that money, because it is well known that the conditions set forth by the government are impossible of fulfilment. It is impossible on the northern route to have a service equal to the fastest, or as fast as the service now plying between New York and Europe. It is a well known fact that the difficulties of navigation are so great in the gulf of St. Lawrence that it would be madness to expect any company to keep a rate of speed as fast as that maintained between New York and European ports. I heard this point discussed some few years ago when two gentlemen of authority in this house gave their opinions. My honorable friend from Halifax, Mr. Jones, who is an authority on this subject, stated that it would be madness to expect that we could maintain such rate of speed as twenty knots an hour or as that maintained on the southern Atlantic. A member from Prince Edward Island gave a similar opinion. If this proposal is to be followed with any success the conditions will have to be greatly modified before they can be settled.

There is another paragraph also in the speech from the throne, in regard to trade with Australia. This is an old story. We have sent delegations and delegations, I don't know how many, to the West Indies, and once, twice and perhaps three times to Brazil and to almost every part of the world, and now we are sending delegations to the Antipodes to obtain what we could have at our very doors without any difficulty at all.

The speech, which shines by many things which are in it, shines still more by the omission of many things that should be in it. How many years ago is it since the minister of finance told us in a very solemn voice—

A voice—A moment of weakness.

(No, no, it was a solemn moment when he made the confession) that in a moment of weakness he had formed a hasty opinion as to prohibition. That was in the summer of 1891. Two years have elapsed, and still my hon. friend is in the same condition of ignorance; and why have we not had the report up to the present time? Is it not a mockery? The resolution for the prohibition commission was passed in 1891, and it was January, 1892, before a commission was appointed. Two years have elapsed and still we have no reports. It seems to me that the minister of finance is not anxious to get rid of his ignorance in regard to that subject. There is another subject to which we ought to have a reference to in the speech from the throne, I mean the treaty with France. It is now more than fifteen years ago that Sir A. T. Galt was instructed by the government to open negotiations with France in order to negotiate a treaty, if possible, between Canada and France. These negotiations were opened, then abandoned, then resumed, then interrupted, then renewed again, and finally culminated with the completion of a treaty, which was signed last winter, in February, and placed at once upon the table of this house. Strange to say, the government which had been negotiating that treaty for fifteen years, as soon as the treaty had been completed, seem to have repented that they should ever have entered into such a treaty at all. They were bound to tell the house at once whether they were to have that treaty ratified or not. They did nothing at all during last session. It would have been unfair to have pressed them as the prime minister was aware of the important duties; but now on this occasion, a year after it had been signed, we had reason to expect that a reference would be made to that important subject and that the government would tell us whether they were or were not to ask parliament to ratify that treaty. Still there is

NOTHING IN THE SPEECH

from the throne. Evidently the honorable gentlemen have not yet formed an opinion. Why? Because there are conflicting interests and it requires some firmness and courage to come to a conclusion. But they are bound to come to a decision and at once. There are important interests that are waiting to know what is going to take place in regard to the treaty. The lumbermen of New Brunswick want to know what tariff they will have to meet when they send their lumber to France. The wine-growers of the West want to know whether they shall have competion from French wines. The temperance people want to know whether the treaty is to be ratified or not, and then there are my fellow countrymen who are informed of having more extended trade with France, and who are anxious to have a decision upon that. Are the government discharging their duty to the country when they dare not tell the house what is their opinion on this subject? This country has already suffered too much from the long dilly-dallying with important matters. The honorable gentleman, (Sir John Thompson), is very guilty in that respect. He has dilly dallied with important subjects, and so long that religious passions have been aroused in the country. The opinion is prevailing today that they are not composed of business men because the first requisite of business men is to be able to form a decision, and form it promptly. I arraign them before the people of the country on that charge. I arraign them upon their fiscal policy; arraign them upon this new charge that they have not dared to do their duty because it may involve some difficulty to do their duty, and I charge them upon their own showing to be sadly deficient with qualities of government, courage, decision, and some capacity to discharge business. (Loud applause.)