

I am sure that all of us in this House, whether we sit to your right or to your left, Mr. Speaker, join most sincerely in the hope here expressed, and that no man in the Conservative ranks will follow the course which was pursued by many hon. gentlemen on the other side in bygone days when depression to a greater or less extent affected the industries of this Dominion. The hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Hall) did not say much with regard to the financial stringency. He painted in glowing colours the virtues of this government. My attention was called, while he was speaking, to a forcible editorial contained in one of the great journals of this country, the Montreal 'Gazette,' a few sentences of which I will read. After dealing with the Quebec bridge, the management of the Intercolonial, the Moncton and Halifax land deals and other details of that character, this editorial proceeds as follows:—

And what is the rule with big things is also the rule with small where the government is concerned. Its buildings fall down. Its dredges sink. Its steamers run aground. Its calculations fail. It is effective only in taxing and spending, and it is breaking all the records in taxing and spending at a time when individuals, seeing the commercial conditions, are practising and enforcing economy as the readiest means of saving the situation.

The matter could not be put in fewer or more trenchant words. Let us look for a moment at some of the conditions which have prevailed in this country during recent years as to which the government seem absolutely oblivious. The Minister of Finance, over and over again, even as far back as 1898 and 1899, gave warning to the people of this country, but he has gone on deaf to his own warnings, and the result in Canada to-day, although the present stringency is world-wide, must be attributed, to some extent at any rate, to the lack of foresight and ordinary business prudence displayed by this government. Take, for instance, the taxation of this country by five year periods:

	Average total taxation.	Average taxation per capita.
For 5 years ending 1896..	\$27,750,000	\$ 5.66
For 5 years ending 1902..	36,500,000	6.93
For 5 years ending 1907..	57,000,000	9.47
For 9 months ending March 31, 1907, at the rate of..	68,750,000	10.34

During every week of the year, under the taxation imposed by this government, the people of Canada have paid into the treasury of this country \$1,322,000 or \$800,000 per week more than they paid eleven years ago. Not only is the taxation per capita increased, but the amount actually paid in custom duties on a pound or yard of material coming into this country is increased, by reason of the greater price of these commodities and the ad valorem tariff. The cost

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of living in this country has increased very largely during the past ten or eleven years, and during recent years we have had a remarkable condition of affairs in connection with the balance of trade against Canada in its trade with the world. My hon. friend from Peterborough (Mr. Hall) referred to the great development of Canadian trade. Let me point out to the House and to the country the figures showing the state of our trade:

Adverse balance of trade.

For 5 years ending 1896..	\$ 8,250,900
For 5 years ending 1902..	2,529,450
For 5 years ending 1907..	57,432,200

Total adverse balance of trade in the past five years ending June 30, 1907, \$287,161,004.

And the adverse balance for the single year ending June 30, 1907, was no less than \$120,000,000. I have obtained that figure by taking the completed returns to March 31, 1907, and adding the further returns to be found in publications of the Department of Trade and Commerce and the Department of Customs. These figures I am bound to believe to be authentic and correct. These figures are a strange commentary upon what we have heard from the hon. gentlemen who addressed the House to-day in their praises of the government. Do not these hon. gentlemen think that there is some food for reflection in these figures? And does not the Minister of Finance, when he boasts of his surpluses, recall his own language of bygone days? The hon. Minister of Finance boasts of his surpluses of the past eight or ten years, amounting to perhaps \$90,000,000—I trust I am not doing injustice to his figures; the total may be more. What did he say in 1882 or 1883, when he occupied the editorial chair of the Halifax 'Chronicle,' and when the Conservative government of that day announced a surplus? He said:

If these surpluses were created by the government in some magic way there may be in them a cause for thankfulness to Sir John Macdonald and his followers, but when it is considered that every dollar of the surplus is taken out of the pockets of the people without the shadow of an excuse, money not required even by the reckless expenditure of the government, there is not much cause for rejoicing.

And the 'reckless expenditure' of the government of that day was a good deal less than half—not much more than one-third—of the far more reckless expenditure in which the present Minister of Finance indulges. In the following year there was another surplus, and the hon. gentleman broke out again, and this is what he said during the following year:

That millions of dollars should be unnecessarily taken yearly from the consuming classes of the country, and this without being absolutely necessary, is a cardinal principle of the Finance Minister, to which even his best