

for the second period to \$952,000,000, being an increase in the six years of \$341,000,000 in our exports only. Our total foreign trade in 1896 was \$239,000,000; in 1902 it attained \$423,000,000, being an increase during that period of \$184,000,000. In 1878 the total commerce of the country was \$172,000,000. In 1886 it amounted to \$239,000,000, showing an increase in the course of 18 years of \$66,000,000. Now, during the years which elapsed from 1896 to 1902 we have an increase of \$184,000,000. These last figures show an increase three times as great during these six last years as during the eighteen preceding years.

We have enjoyed an era of prosperity without precedent in our history and possibly in that of any country in the world. This period of prosperity has not been confined to Canada, but what is extremely gratifying to us is the fact that Canada is at the head of all the nations in the world in the increase of its commerce. Statistics show us that in the six years the increase in commerce has been as follows in the countries named: the commerce of Canada has been increased by 96 per cent; of Japan 89 per cent; of Australia 62 per cent; of the United States 48 per cent; of Holland 43 per cent; of Italy 39 per cent; of America 32 per cent; of Belgium 32 per cent; of Argentina 30 per cent; of Great Britain 24 per cent; of France 18 per cent.

As I have said, Canada is at the head of all the countries of the civilized world in this progressive movement. We cannot too greatly rejoice at this state of things; but I do not press the contention to the point of attributing to the government the exclusive merit of this extraordinary expansion of our affairs generally, though it will be admitted that the government which conducts the affairs of a country with wisdom and ability counts for something in the confidence which the public repose in them when they put forth freely their capital and their work in the development of industries and commerce.

Under the present government confidence has revived in the country. Business men have not been afraid to risk their capital and to aid in the immense progress which we have seen accomplished. We have also seen the manufacturers increasing their establishments, perfecting their ma-

chinery and in consequence we have seen towns doubling their population in a very short time with a view to having at the place the necessary workmen to supply the demand for labour. I say further, we have seen towns rise as if by enchantment such as Grand'Mère, Shawenegan, Sault Ste. Marie and others, near these magnificent water powers, near these natural forces which until late years have remained undeveloped and unproductive. This state of things could not be otherwise than gratifying to public men who are interested in the country.

A striking incident, hon. gentlemen, was presented last year when the colonial conference was convoked by the government of His Majesty on the occasion of the crowning of our Sovereign, Edward VII., which attracted the attention of all the great colonies of the empire. Canada on that occasion was represented by its Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and some of his colleagues. We cannot do otherwise than rejoice at the circumstances which arise from time to time in which the men charged with directing the destinies of the country know how to attract attention to the extent of our country and our natural resources of all sorts yet undeveloped, and in making them known more and more in the different countries of Europe and of the whole world.

And, hon. gentlemen, could we in truth have sent a better delegation to make ourselves known than that which went to represent us at London on that occasion? The opinion expressed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on that occasion was certainly of incalculable merit. The first minister, with his well known tact and the ability which he has displayed on more than one occasion, was truly the man we needed to go to Europe to make known the advantages which our country possesses, and to invite the population to come and settle amongst us and to attract the best possible people.

I believe that we ought also to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister on the success which he achieved at the intercolonial conference in preventing the adoption of a new policy, without dangerous or regrettable friction—in preventing, I say, the colonies being forced to take part in the future in the wars of the empire. The time certainly