Hon. David Mills At Ridgetown

Another Powerful Speech by the Minister of Justice.

Charges Answered == Profitable Expenditure Warranted =- The Returning Tide =- Benefits of Immigration == Progress and Contentment Everywhere-- A Splendid Reception.

house was well filled this evening on the circumstances under which it had the occasion of an address being delivithe constitutional system of governered on questions of the day by the ment which prevails in a country in-Ridgetown is in Kent county, but it growth. It springs from the exigencies and surrounding townships giving Lib- time to time, to correct abuses which eral majorities were hived in West El- have grown out of the conduct of public gin, by the late government, being taken from the riding of Bothwell in order to drive Hon. Mr. Mills from poli- ly as possible, an adequate remedy for therefore has many warm friends in this locality, who gave him a cordial reception on his arrival from the Dresden nomination. The chair was occupied by ex-Mayor Dart, president of the Liberal Association, and the speaker of the evening was accompanied to the platform by Mr. Geo. E. Casey, M. P. for the riding, and Mr. Talbot Macbeth, Q. C., London, The chairman said this was not, as had been said, the first rally of the campaign, but the association had taken the opportunity presented by the presence in the district of the minister of justice, who had a legion of friends in this part of Canada, to ask him to speak to them on live public topics. Hon. Mr. Mills was a son of the district; they were proud to claim him as their own, and he was sure that when they heard his address they would agree with him that the conduct of the government is such that there can be no doubt that it will again be returned to power at the elections soon to take place.

MR. GEORGE E. CASEY, M. P. The chairman then introduced Mr. Casey, M. P., who was very warmly received. He disciaimed any intention of making a long speech, as he had come with them to listen to the distinguished minister of the crown there present. Mr. Casey referred to his long connection with Elgin as member, he having served the constituency to the best of his ability for 28 years. He pointed out that against their will the people of Ridgetown and neighboring municipalities had been forced out of Bothwell and into West Eligin by the late government, for the purpose of ac plishing the political ruin of Hon. David Mills. That ruin had not been accomplished, for Mr. Mills has remained and is today a powerful factor in the government of the Dominion. Hon. Mr. Mills had been re-elected each recurring contest till 1896, in spite of the gerrymander, and he believed that he was elected then, though the ballots were made to say differently. The opposition majority in the senate has thwarted the present government in carrying out their pledge to undo the gerrymander, but it will undoubtedly undone, and a fair redistribution made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his supporters immediately after the next general election. Mr. Casey proceeded in an admirable address to show by the record of the present administration that the Liberal party is well worthy of public confidence, and he expressed the belief that they would be sustained in the large majority of the constituencies in the general election soon to come off.

HON. DAVID MILLS.

Hon. David Mills, who was loudly applauded, spoke as follows: When I accepted office in the present administration, you here presented me with an address in which you expressed for me your personal good-will and your confidence in me as a public man. Since then nearly three years have passed, and it has now become my duty to say something in respect to the am a member, and to show you that it has done nothing to lessen your confidence or diminish the political sympathy which you extended to us as a party when in opposition, or to lessen the political support which you extended to me when I joined the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier

I do not claim that the present administration has attained to a standard of ideal perfectability. No administration ever does so. There are many things at which a ministry may aim which it finds itself unable to accomplish. New questions of an urgent character are constantly arising, which a ministry eannot postpone, and which other questions to which ministers, as leaders of a party, stand pledged. I think I may fairly claim for the present government that it has made an earnest and honest effort to carry on the affairs of the country in the public interest, and to pursue a policy both legislative and administrative in furtherance of the public welfare.

CHARGES AGAINST MINISTERS. There have been several charges made against ministers, imputing to them a departure from the policy diberately put forward while the Reform party were out of office between 1878 and 1896. I think that if these imputations are carefully investigated and candidly considered, they will be tound to be without any satisfactory foundation. The policy of a party cannot be called into existence at a public meeting. It is not to be learned from expression spoken in the heat of debate and put forward as an ab-

Ridgetown, Aug. 29. - The opera struct proposition, disassociated from Hon. David Mills, minister of justice. habitated by free men, is a thing of affairs. It is intended to obviate mistakes and to put an end to their continuance, and so to provide, as prompttical life. The minister of justice recognized evils which are called into existence by the incapacity or the want of scruple on the part of those whom the work of government at the time may have been intrusted.

The policy of the Reform party is to put an end to evils in the state, by providing for them as opportunity occurs appropriate remedies; and so, in order to judge of the propriety of the reform proposed, it is necessary to bear in mind the mischief that such proposal was intended to redress.

EVILS MINIMISED BY TIME. It may well be, in the political life of a country, that, as time advances, the evils which spring mistaken or line of action will become proper less and less important, because in a state in which the vital forces are such The strong, the influence of mistakes for evil diminishes. mischief complained of becomes incorporated with the other institutions of the state so closely that the attempt to remove it may produce more serious evils than can be done by permitting it to remain. We made no mistake when we protested against the matter complained of. We were right in seeking to prevent its being we think so still; but we are ready to admit that the evil has been overshadowed and dwarfed by things useful and good; that it is growing in such close contact with things useful that it | gress was being made in the Australian cannot, it may be, be removed without colonies, in South Africa, and in some the outset, and which could have been readily corrected before they had taken root, may, by the force of circumstances and by the growth of new occupations and new institutions, have lost their original importance, so that their removal may have become wholly unnecessary.

EXPENDITURE. It must never be forgotten that the

function of government is not to at-

tempt to make radical changes in the constitution of society itself, but to govern the country as it is. Wise legislation and the vital forces which are ever operating to correct mistakes have also their influence in minimising their evil effects. A great deal has been said in respect to the economy formerly preached, and the extravagance more recently practised by the Reform party since their accession to office. In fact, so much has been said on this subject, and there being some apparent ground for criticism, it is only proper that I should give to these criticisms some consideration. Our opponents say that I suggested at one time that there might be a reduction of several millions a year in the public expenditure. Mr. Foster announced in the House of Commons, during the past session, that I said five millions a year. I never did. I did say on one occasion four millions. I thought at that time it was the proper thing to say under the circumstances, and had the condition of the country in respect to settlement and industrial progress conpolicy of the government of which I tinued as it then was, I should say so still. I was then of opinion that a careful revision of the cost of government and a simplification of its administrative machinery were needed. I thought that if the public business were conducted on business principles a marked reduction in expenditure could be effected. I was referring at the time to expenditure on capital account, as well as to the expenditure properly chargeable to revenue. I thought economic reform could be carried out without impairing the efficiency of the public service. It seemed to me that owing to the large emigration of our people, and the small accession to our numbers from abroad, such a line of public policy was called for in the public interest, and if the circumstances of the country had continued as they then were, I would still be of the same mind. What was then the proper thing to do is not the proper thing to do at this moment. PROSPERITY WORKS CHANGES.

Our commerce has grown more, by many millions, during the past three years, than during the whole eighteen years immediately preceding. Our revenue has risen in four years from \$34,000,000 to upwards of \$49,000,000, under the lower rate of taxation. Large enterprises have been projected, and what would in a period of stagnation have been an improvident course to take, during a period of activity becomes a policy of prudence and wise forethought. There has been no change of policy on our part, but there have been very great changes in the circumstances of the country, and those changes have made it the duty of

When the circumstances of the country showed that the addition to our population by immigration was less than the loss we sustained by the emigration of our own native population, it was clear to the mind of every thoughtful man that economy was ur-gently called for. What I had in my mind, when I spoke of diminishing the public burdens, was both to lessen the ordinary expenses of government and the expenditure upon large enterprises, for which there was at the time no

BAD FOR HARD TIMES.

The government, for many years. had expended large sums on capital account in the construction of railways. Large land grants were made and large bonuses in money were given to enterprises that had not behind them any pressure arising from the progress of settlement or the development of mines, or indeed public necessities of any kind. Charters were given for the construction of railways in parts of the Northwest Territories where scarcely anybody had gone, and where there were no prospects of settlements being formed at an early day. Charters were obtained seemingly for no other purpose than to allow those who received them-accompanied as they were with promised aid in land and money-to hawk them among capitalists in New York and London, with the sole object of securing a fortune out of the proposed enterprises. Let anyone consider the number of

railway projects that were started by the friends of those who were politically opposed to us, apart from the Canadian-Pacific Railway. Let him say how much the country profited by these various projects. Occasionally a line of railway was projected in a direction at variance with the commercial requirements of the districts through which it passes, and which must be in into the interior. We have also had time superseded by other lines, to the a large immigration from Southeastern time superseded by other lines, to the loss of those who put their money in the first enterprise. It is clear to anywho will make himself familiar with the subject that there was no well considered plan of railway colonization prepared by the government to meet the requirements of the great prairies of the Northwest.

FAILURE OF LAST GOVERNMENT. It is only necessary to consider certain facts in order to see there was something very defective in the policy of those who preceded us in office, and who had the sole direction of affairs for nearly nineteen years. This was surely a sufficient time to afford a full and fair trial to the policy of those to whom the public interests were committed. What was the result? That in population and in wealth the growth of the country fell far below what was anticipated. Agricultural lands shrank in value. Every kind of farm product diminished in price, and at the end of this long period the leaders of the Conservative party retired from office with all their confident predictions unfulfilled; for the shrinkage of the value of real estate was in excess of all the sums spent by the government in public enterprise, supplemented by all the investments made by private parties planted in our soil. We said, it is a investments made by private parties tare; that an enemy hath done this; and public corporations, the paternity of which was due to the encouragement

which the government had given. It is an important question to consider why it was that while great profor all these years well nigh at a colonization within which hundreds of miles of railway were built and millions of dollars expended, and where immigration was aided by grants from the public treasury, was there so little return for the efforts put forward. though the attention of our political opponents has again and again been called to these matters, they have never been able to give, from their own point of view, any satisfactory explanation for the tremendous failure that characterized their regime. They have spoken of the stagnation of commercial enterprise; of the little growth that took place during this period in the great industrial states of Christendom; but these excuses are all beside the question, as they declared that their policy would make the prosperity of Canada wholly independent of the prosperity of any other state, although the facts show that the prosperity of Great Britain herself, notwithstanding the very large emigration from the country from year to year, both in wealth and in population, was relatively greatthan in Canada during this period of time.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES NOT RE-

SPONSIBLE. The stringency in the financial world and the depression of trade elsewhere. do not explain the facts. We had a stagnation of trade in this country and elsewhere from 1874 to 1879, far more severe than any that marked any subsequent period. The cities of the United States for the time ceased to grow: large manufacturing establishments were there closed, the laborers were supported by charity or migrated from the cities to the west, and abandoned the pursuits in which they had been before employed. So that our customers felt the stringency of the times no less than we did ourselves. Since then no such retrograde movement elsewhere has been shown, yet the commerce of Canada during the long period that I have mentioned was well nigh stationary. An attempt was made to make the census support the policy of restriction. Statistics were furnished that were altogether unreliable, but notwithstanding all that was done in this way, the policy of our predecessors was unvindicated. It was incapable of vindication. Neither in regard to the growth of commerce, nor in the colonization of the country, could anything be found to uphold the policy which had been pursued. PROFITABLE EXPENDITURES

WARRANTED. Between 1872 and 1878 a large number of Mennonites and Icelanders came to Canada and settled in Manitoba and the Territories; but since then, until the present government came into office there has been indeed but little to show that any considerable numbers from the continent of Europe found their way into the unoccupied possessions of this country, though efforts were made to secure them. Our opponents said, all that could be done was done in this way, and our reply was that there was nothing done to justify the expenditure that had been made from the public treasury with a view of securing the occupation of the waste

lands of Canada. We did not say, we never said, that if adequate results could be shown form the moneys expended on railway enterprise, on public works, on improv ing the highways of commerce, and on securing immigration, that these expenditures ought not to be made. But we did say that, looking at the results. they ought not to have been made, and that the government could accomplish results equally satisfactory and conduct public affairs with much greater economy—that the money that was mother tongue, to learn that of Eng-

meney less advantageously used than it might have been if it had been left with those to whom it primarily be-

THE RETURNING TIDE. There have been a very large number of Canadians who settled in the United States a few years ago who have returned, to become permanent settlers in Canada. There have been a large number of natives of the United States who have come with them, and who go to swell the aggregate of our population. We have had many thousands from Galicia, in Austria, who have come into our Northwest country, who have taken possession of the land, who are anxious to become Canadians, in language, in habit, and in their notions of government. They have come hither to better their condition. They are content with the country. They admire the freedom which our institutions secure to them, and they ardently desire to become better informed in all that relates to the public affairs of this country. They are, by habit and training, agriculturists; they are content with agricultural life. So far as there has yet been an opportunity of judging, in respect to them, they are proving a thrifty population. I believe large numbers of them can still be secured as settlers in this country, and, in my opinion, it is of great moment that the tens of thousands who are ready to come hither to better their condition, upon the favorable reports that have been made to them by their countrymen who have preceded them, ought to be encouraged to come. They will assist in maintaining the government; they will make it possible to lighten the burdens of taxation, and they will give additional security and strength to the country, by settling those portions extending from the border to a distance of hundreds of miles Russia-the Doukhobors, who, in their industrial habits, in their religious tendencies, and in their exemplary moral conduct, give promise of being, in every way, a beneficial factor added to our original population. The conduct of Russia towards portions of her population has given us the Mennonites, the Doukhobors, and promises to give us a large addition to our population from Finland. The Finns are a Teutonic race; they are lovers of constitutional government. They are hardy, industrious, courageous and enterprising; and, in my opinion, this country will be singularly fortunate if, in addition to the two great streams from the continent that are flowing in the direction of Canada, it can add this third one to the other two, and so contribute, at an early date, to make a great and

substantial addition to the population of Canada. BENEFITS OF IMMIGRATION. I occasionally hear it said that we would be better without some of these people. This is a new doctrine preached by a number of our political oppoonly since discovered that the present government have been successful in these additions securing numbers. I have no fear of complaints of this kind proving truthful predictions. We have but to look at the history of immigration in neighboring republic from 1830 to 1880 to see with how much ease and facility the process of transformation goes on. injury to them. It does so happen of the western states of the neighbor- In the United States there have been that at times evils complained of at ing republic, Canada should have been tens of thousands of poor immigrants from the old world entering the counfollowing the Irish famine, the num- lish literature, English institutions, bers from Ireland alone must have and English habits of thought; and reached 100,000 a year. Later, have been immense numbers of English and Germans; and still later, Italians, Portuguese, Scandinavians and Russians. See with whalt rapidity these people of almost every European nationality and tongue, have been transformed into American citizens. In most instances all those under thirty years of age at the time of their immigration become thoroughly Americanized during their lifetime. The influence of the American press, the American school, of American thought, the discharge of municipal and other local duties-all awaken new lines of thought, call into existence new activities, and transform them from being European foreigners practically into an indiscriminate portion of the American population. It is true that the adoption of a high pro- | BRIGHT OUTLOOK IN THE NORTHtective tariff-which has concentrated many of the foreign population into the cities who formerly went abroad into the rual districts-has, in some degree. there checked the process of transfor mation, because it has practically made each nationality in the large cities a

> less celerity, than in the rural regions. PRAIRIE HOMES FOR MILLIONS. Here, however, we are in the position that the American republic was in for the thirty years preceding the civil war. We have, as it had at that time, millions of acres of fertile land, still unoccupied, and ready for the cultivation of any settler who may take possession of them. The immigrants whom we are getting are immigrants from the rural districts of Europe. They have not adopted any of the socialistic theories of property and of society which have found lodgement in the minds of many of those who are from the cities of Austria. Germany and Italy. They are content to remain ag-They are ready to assist riculturists. in the cultivation of the soil, in the raising of farm produce for shipment abroad, and so to increase the commerce and revenues of the country, and to furnish further resources to promote its settlement. I cannot conceive anything that

distinct community, speaking their own

language and perpetuating the forms

of life and habits of thought they have

brought across the Atlantic with them.

But even in respect to those, the

change at length comes, though with

would be more disastrous to this country than a successful attempt to check the immigration which is now proceeding. I have been in several of our newer districts of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, and although we have added to our population many thousands during the past and present years. I find that these settlements form but mere specks upon the immense area of territory which this country holds in trust, under Providence, for the benefit of men who may come hither to settle it, and to make it the home for millions of Canadians. I say Canadians, because the power of transforming the foreign population under free institutions into Canadians, is a power that is very great, and will make them not less certainly Canadians than we ourselves are. For the most part, the people come amongst us are not those carrying with them the institutions and the literature, well as the language, of the country of their birth. They are people who were discontented in their own country, and who have come hither to enjoy greater freedom, more material comforts, and to become possessed of greater privileges, which they highly value, and which were denied to them

statesmen to take note of the facts, being taken from the pockets of the and to govern themselves accordingly. people to be expended in this way was Time, Toil and Temper are Savec by using

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opened to them English they will at the same time have closed the doors to the literature of the country of their birth, which they never knew and cannot appreciate. will be a sealed book, and here they begin life anew. It must not be forgotten that these things have more to do with making the foreign population who settle in this country good citizens, genuine Canadians, than all other causes combined. We have abundance of room in Canada for a population quite as large as that which, at the present time, exists in the United States; and no man can be counted loyal to this country who puts impediments in the way of its settlement. even though vast numbers of these settlers come from the continent of Europe.

WEST.

At the present time we are receiving thirty to forty thousand settlers year, and this number might be in- ada, at one time, were under the jur-creased threefold for the next quarter isdiction of the Hudson's Bay Comof a century, and still half of the lands available for agriculture in Canada would be unoccupied. Let anyone travel through Manitoba and the North-west Territories, and let him visit the districts into which the thousands of newcomers of the past two years have gone, and he will see that the settlements which they have made, including those which have been formed by those who have gone thither from the United Kingdom, and from other portions of Canada, and from the United States constitute but mere patches,

upon a far more extensive area. We must also bear in mind that there are immense areas fit for settlein Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The immense possibilities of Columbia, containing as it does 400,000 square riles, with an admirable cli-mate, unlimited mineral resources, as well as no inconsiderable expanse of territory suited to agriculture.

PROSPECTS IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Recent explorations in the Province of Quebec and in the Province of On- suited for agriculture. tario show that the territory lying beyond the Height of Land, which sep- tion and use of large sections of arates the waters flowing into the St. | country without some friction, but no Lawrence and the Great Lakes from those flowing into the Hudson's Bay, is a country well adapted for agriculture. It is said by those officers who have explored the country that there are not less than 30,000 square miles in each province north of the Height of Land well suited for agricultural settlement. There is good soil, plenty of timber, and fine streams, which contain an abundant supply of fish. Then there is in the Province of Ontario itself the Height of Land which though often sterile and uninviting in appearance, nevertheless contains immense deposits of minerals-iron ore, copper, lead, silver, gold and nickelbesides other mineral products.

This country, which was pronounced at one time a mere ragged edge cut off from the territories of the United States, has an area of very great extent, capable of sustaining a population as large as that of Russia Europe. Instead of being a mere fringe along the American border it country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and having a depth of several hundred miles, capable of sustaining a hardy and industrious population. It is true that we occupy a higher latitude than our neighbors. Our climate, it may be, is somewhat

land, which we speak. They will have more severe, but this is an advantage, and not a disadvantage, from a na-tional point of view. The climate of the country is far less severe than the people of the Mother Country suppose. It is one well adapted to the production and support of a hardy and enterprising race—a people who will receive from the pursuits in which they engage ample reward for their toil; who will live in a country where the climate does not enervate, and if they love justice, and hate falsehood, love industry, and despise idleness, and are loyal to their great priviledges and great opportunities, there is no reason why Canada should not, as a portion of the British Empire, become as powerful, as influential, as any other country upon the American continent.

SELFISH OPPONENTS OF IMMI-GRATION

There are no doubt some people who will cry out against the settlements formed by the Galicians and Doukhobors, but they would equally object to settlements formed from the United Kingdom, from Germany, or Scandinavia. Vast possessions in Canpany. It was their interest to continue the monopoly, and to preserve it as long as they could, as a fur-producing territory. Next you have another class—the ranchers—win also occupy the country in their own interest, and who have practically had placed within their reach an empire for their own use well nigh without charge. It is natural that those who have used for years for ranching purposes immense stretches of prairie, who have had the use of luxuriant meadows, from which hundreds and thousands of tons of hay are obtained, for feeding their stock during the winter season, and which cost them but a mere trifie--it ment beside those unoccupied districts is natural. I say, that those ranchers should object to Galicians and Doukhobors Lecause they happen to be the this country, from an agricultural only people who are trespassers upon point of view, are not at all appreciated the territories of which some of them ed by our people, nor are they yet fully have long had the exclusive possesappreciated by the majority of our 1e- sion. Of course the settlement of the presentative men. We have but to country is not in some cases in the inconsider the immense area of British terest of the individual rancher, but when it is divided up into private holdings, besides an immense produc-tion of cereals, there will be many times more cattle in the hands of private holders than the country will sustain while it is in the hands the ranchers. And so the rancher must ultimately give place to the settler, and be confined to the lands un-You cannot have a transformation in the occupaone can doubt that the settlers each of whom takes up a !ew hundred acres, and each of whom devotes himself to the cultivation of the soil, will contribute annually, more to the wealth of the country than the proprietors of a few herds of cattle that wander over the unsettled prairie. All these settlers are producing cattle and grain for exportation. They are the consumers of goods, both domestic and foreign. Their necessities go to swell the revenues of the country, and to essen the burdens of taxation which fall upon each individual. They go to strengthen the country for defensive purposes, and to give it security, under all circumstances against the possible danger of foreign invasion. They contribute to strengthen British prestige [Continued on page 4.]

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