

deal of their value in a strange market. This system of transportation will be still further improved. It will be important to instruct our farmers as to the necessity of being more careful in the making of these products, and in the details which contribute to their perfection in a manner to enable them to compete with Russia, Denmark and other producing countries.

The general trade of the country has increased in enormous proportions. Whereas in 1896 the total amount of imports reached the sum of \$118,011,508, in 1903 it rose to the sum of \$241,214,961, an increase of \$123,203,293. In 1896 our exports were \$121,013,852; in 1903 they were \$225,849,724, an increase of \$104,835,872. In 1896 our exports of Canadian products rose to the sum of \$109,915,337; in 1903 to the sum of \$214,401,674, an increase of \$104,486,337. In 1896 our exports of products of the farm were \$55,378,407; in 1903 we exported \$114,441,863, an increase of \$59,063,456.

In 1896, when the Liberal party came into power, the debt of Canada was \$50.96 per head. In 1903, under the administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, it was \$47.37, a decrease of \$3.59 per head. The debt of Canada has been diminished by \$9,885,811. It is not astonishing that this progress of our affairs has attracted general attention to Canada, and that a considerable flow of immigrants should be directed towards our country. The announcement of the construction of a new transcontinental railway cannot fail to stimulate this movement of immigration and the desire of a great number of strangers to become a part of the Canadian nation. Let us hope that our immigration agents will be careful to choose these new settlers among the healthiest of the populations of Europe and of the United States, in order that their presence here may be a gain and an aid in the development of the country.

It is useless to make a long speech on the policy of the government concerning railways, especially the Grand Trunk Pacific, of which so much was said last session. The government has appointed a railway commission, and if we may judge by what we see in the press, it appears certain that it will render great services.

As to the Grand Trunk Pacific, we learn with pleasure that the deposit of \$5,000,000

has been made in conformity with the conditions of the contract with the company. This is calculated to reassure the public, whose confidence may have been shaken by the pessimism of certain newspapers. There is nothing extraordinary, in a matter of this magnitude, where a company like the Grand Trunk is called upon to assume so heavy a responsibility, to find objections raised and demands that some modifications of the contract shall be sanctioned by parliament. These modifications will no doubt be explained without delay by the government. It is necessary that this enterprise, which has been received with so much favour, should be commenced soon in all its parts from the Pacific ocean to Moncton, passing through the rich valley of Peace river, near Lake Manitoba, to the north of Lake Nipigon and Lake Abitibi, through the north of the province of Ontario and Quebec, opening up vast and fertile regions to cultivation and industrial development. Prof. Bell, head of Geological Survey, in a speech recently in Quebec demonstrated that these regions of the west, which he had himself explored with care, are fertile and easy of access. This new transcontinental railway is, therefore, a great national work which the legislators are presenting to the country.

A word on the subject of the militia, as to which we are told a Bill will be presented to parliament to increase its effectiveness and efficiency. Military science progresses in common with all the sciences. Parliament will readily consent to improve our militia, though the spectre of war may be far from us and though, in view of its geographical position, Canada, as a country has no reason to fear such a contingency. We have good military schools, but I am told that in some of them there is a marked tendency to bestow the best positions to young officers coming as strangers, who often have neither the knowledge nor the experience of officers in the Canadian army. I hope that when occasion arises to choose between an outsider and a Canadian officer, the rule will be adopted to give the preference to a fellow-countryman provided he has equal qualifications.

The government tell us that they will communicate to us the decision determining