

and destroying the very foundation of their prosperity, the hon. gentleman, with a large surplus, and in the expectation of a still larger surplus, for sole panacea, proposes to add still further to the burthens of the people. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not in his place, but I am afraid that after listening to his speech, I must say to him, as I have said to some of his predecessors, that he has sunk the high and responsible position of the Minister of Finance, the sworn guardian of all classes of the people, to the position of speaking trumpet for a number of combines. The hon. gentleman is not only deaf to the murmurs of distress at home, which ought to have reached his ears, but he is likewise deaf to certain threatening aspects abroad, which no statesman should venture to disregard for a moment. He is satisfied, and he asks us to be satisfied, if the huge taxation which he and his comrades have imposed, is successful in filling their coffers. But, Sir, he never pauses, nor have they paused, nor have their masters and paymasters ever paused, to consider at what a cost to the whole community these results have been obtained. As was said of another person in somewhat similar circumstances

'Half ignorant he turns an easy wheel

Which sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.'

Now, I have long seen and known, for my part, that the propositions which were made to us from the other side of the House, when we were asked again and again to impose additional taxes on the people for the purpose of promoting this or that infant industry, were, to all intents and purposes, attempts to obtain money from us under false pretences. They may, in a number of cases, have fostered new industries, they may occasionally have produced a temporary splutter; some weak industry may have been nursed into existence for a few months and years, and afterwards disappeared. But, although the industry disappeared, although the promised benefit to Canada disappeared, although it vanished into the thinnest of thin air, the tax remained, and no doubt helped to swell the surplus of which the hon. gentleman boasts to-day. Now, Sir, to me, and I think to most gentlemen in this House who have studied and reflected on the present position of Canada, there are two questions which tower above all others. Those questions are closely related, no doubt, to each other; nevertheless, they are distinct, and require distinct treatment. One of those is the present condition of Canada as regards the United States, and the other is the condition of the agricultural population of this Dominion. Now, no Canadian statesman ought, in delivering a discourse on the financial condition of the country, to ignore the unsatisfactory conditions which exist with respect to these two great questions; and yet I put it to the intelligence of this House, whether, during his entire speech, the hon. Minister of Finance appears to have had even the slightest appreciation of the real position of these two great questions. I will pause here for a moment or two, to review one or two of the statements which were made by that hon. gentleman. I agree with him that he deserves, in this respect, at any rate, a reasonable amount of credit, in that, I think, he fairly estimated both the revenue and the expenditure of the past year, and I daresay he has made a reasonably fair approximate estimate of the probable income and the probable expendi-

ture for the present and succeeding years. But, as I have said, I dissent entirely from the hon. gentleman, I take issue with him in the strongest possible terms, when he states that, on the whole, the last year has been a satisfactory one, and much more, when he stated that our farmers and fishermen were in a condition of fair prosperity, that want was practically unknown, that labor had found full and fair remuneration in Canada, and that all we need, forsooth, to make us a united and happy people, was swift communication with the West Indies and other countries to the south of them—and, I suppose, liberal subsidies for the benefit of my hon. friend from St. John, and some other friends of the hon. gentlemen who also reside in St. John. I notice that the hon. gentleman declares that it is communication with countries to the south that we must look to. But his vision swept over 5,000 miles of territory in order to see countries south of the equator, to whom he holds we must look for profitable trade and intercourse. He cannot see, though we can, that there is a country to the south, in communication with which, in free trade and free relations with which, an infinitely more valuable, an infinitely more important trade, a trade of infinitely greater consequence to all classes in this community, can be had if there were only a little wise statesmanship and a little common sense displayed in the conduct of the Government of this country. The hon. gentleman went on to tell us that we had laid broad and wide the foundations of a development, the like of which—if I understand him aright—the world has never seen. Well, I hope he may be correct. The hon. gentleman went on to say that, in laying broad and wide the foundations of this development, we had poured out treasure like water, a statement no one on this side of the House will contradict, though we may dissent extremely from his other statement that every dollar of that treasure had been wisely spent, that we had a princely equipment and a royal endowment. When we turn to one of these princely equipments and royal endowments—which its other name is the Intercolonial Railway—we find that it cost us fifty-one millions of dollars, and, according to the last statement which has been placed in my hands, in the first eight months of this year, besides not paying one cent of interest on this fifty-one millions, it shows a deficit of actual working expenses over receipts of \$416,000. That is the royal endowment, and that is the proof of the wise expenditure of every dollar which the hon. gentleman assures us has taken place. Then the hon. gentleman proceeded to reproach my friend beside me because my hon. friend had ventured to say that the intelligence and good sense of the people of the United States would, he thought, ere long free them from their protectionist trammels; and, with a singular ignorance—although perhaps, looking to the previous part of his speech—it was not an unnatural ignorance—of what transpired in the United States at the late presidential election, the hon. gentleman went on to declare that the people of the United States were practically unanimous in their adherence to their tariff policy, when it must be known to him that, in the last great contest between the protectionist and free trade parties in that country, President Cleveland, the champion of the free party, had a popular majority of over 100,000

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