

\$40,000,000, in my judgment an inordinate sum for a country of our age, and circumstances, and population, to be called upon to raise or to spend. But I want to call attention to this other important fact, that of the total expenditure, about three-fourths is interest on mortgages, to all intents and purposes. If hon. gentlemen will take up the ordinary estimates, they will find that the very first item that strikes them is a charge of \$19,320,000 for sums authorized by statute, almost all of which are absolutely beyond our control. If they carry their eyes a little further, they will see that there is a further charge of about ten millions rendered necessary for what is called collection of revenue, that is for the maintenance of our railways, of our post offices, of our customs and of our excise and other similar services. Now, practically it would be equally true to say that in the small remaining amount of nine or ten millions, a large percentage is for services over which we can exercise very little control. We cannot afford to disregard treaty obligations that we have entered into with the Indians, we must provide for the proper government of the North-west Territories; we cannot allow our lighthouse service to get into disorder; and we are obliged to maintain and to keep in proper repair the public buildings from one end of this Dominion to the other. The consequence is that we find when we sit down to the task of retrenchment, that our retrenchment must be exercised not on an expenditure of thirty-nine or forty millions, but on an expenditure of about eight or nine millions. Sir, these are important facts, these are disagreeable facts; I would, with all my heart, that it were otherwise. But I am bound to tell the House, and I speak with some knowledge of the subject, that although I believe some considerable reductions may be made, still in a general way, what the House has to look for is better government and better results, rather than any great decrease in the expenditure of eight or nine millions in a country like this. I want the House to understand, I should like the country to understand when they talk of a revenue and expenditure of \$40,000,000 they would be more correct if they talked of a revenue and expenditure of \$9,000,000 or \$10,000,000. If they will bear that simple fact in mind, they will understand some of the difficulties with which the Finance Minister and my hon. friends have to contend. I may add, however, that if we had a true statement of the expenditures hon. gentlemen opposite have incurred, and a true estimate of all they proposed to incur, the estimates made by some of my hon. friends so far as regards possible reductions would have been fulfilled to the letter. I may ask, and ask fairly, who is, after all, to blame for this state of things? When we left office in 1878 the total annual expenditure was less than four and twenty

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

millions. When we returned to office it had grown to \$40,000,000 without any corresponding growth—and I say it advisedly—not merely in population but in wealth and resources, for most assuredly what we have gained in one direction has been almost entirely taken from us in another. The truth is that hon. gentlemen opposite gambled on a growth that did not come. They incurred expenditures which they were not warranted in making; they imperilled our whole future for the purpose of gratifying their immediate political interests, and we are obliged to pay the creditors. They lost population we might have had here. If this growth on which they counted did not come, I tell them now and here that it was largely on account of their own deliberate misconduct. It was necessary, if Canada was to compete fairly in the markets of the world, that our farmers should produce cheaply. All hon. gentlemen opposite did was to make Canada a country in which production was dear. It was necessary if Canada was to prosper, to bring more people here, and especially have more people in the North-west, and it was necessary to concentrate them when there. The result of their policy was to drive people out of the North-west and scatter those they did bring in, not in one strong province, but along a line of many thousand miles. Sir, briefly, the whole result is this, we had a huge outlay and a very insignificant return.

Now, I do not at all mean to say that perhaps some items of this huge debt and expenditure were incurred for purposes that might have been good in themselves on certain other conditions. My point is this, that those hon. gentlemen blundered, and blundered uniformly and frightfully in endeavouring to carry out what, if carried out, under other conditions and by better methods might have resulted to the advantage of Canada. I will not hold hon. gentlemen opposite responsible for our first mistake when, in 1867, we let slip one of the most grand opportunities given to any country, a chance which, if used and handled properly would have enabled us to have greatly reduced the burdens and taxes of the people, and greatly augmented our revenue at the expense of the neighbouring country, and, at the same time probably it would have done more to bring the Americans into a situation and disposition in which they would welcome a reciprocity treaty than anything that could have been done.

I note that the hon. gentleman before me (Mr. Foster) demanded what precedents we had for our action, particularly what precedents we had for our action, I suppose, in regard to the offer we are about to make to Great Britain. I have to say to the hon. gentleman this, that our position is in most important respects utterly unprecedented, and we had a perfect right to make our own precedent in this matter. Canada is not, and it is well to remember it, not in a normal position at all. Sir, we are called