

I am like my hon. friend from Pictou in recognizing that, this discussion having gone on for upwards of a week, it is very difficult to contribute anything new to the debate. It is, therefore, my purpose not to delay the House long, but to be as brief as I can. I shall try to emulate the example of my hon. friend from Pictou and not inflict upon the House any large array of figures. We have had to listen to a considerable number of figures during the past week, and it will be my aim to give as few figures as I possibly can. With regard to the prosperity of the country, I think there are some evidences that it exists. Hon. members opposite invariably open their speeches by the admission that the country is prosperous, but almost invariably they conclude their speeches, like the hon. member who has just taken his seat, by asserting that the country is not prosperous. For my part I am satisfied to take the trade returns as a proof that there is prosperity in this country. It is not denied that trade during the past five or six years has increased tremendously, and relying upon the trade returns for the proof of my statement, I should not dwell at any greater length upon it.

Our hon. friends opposite, both in the House and outside of it, have had a good deal to say during the past five or six years with regard to the expenditure of public money in this country. We hear from day to day charges made against the government that the expenditure is growing. I am going to admit, if it is any consolation to my hon. friends opposite, that the expenditure is growing; and for my part I am satisfied that the expenditure should keep on growing, provided always that we have good results from it. I take it that a young country like our own must, if its resources are to be developed, expend a good deal of money in their development, and for my part I am prepared to support a policy of a generous expenditure of public money throughout this country.

An hon. MEMBER. Hear, hear.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Cape Breton). I am glad that my hon. friends opposite are prepared to support the policy of a generous expenditure of public money. I was saying that if the resources of this country are to be developed, an expenditure of public money is necessary. We have a great country to the west, stretching to the shores of the Pacific ocean, a country of marvellous resources; and if that country is to be developed the government must be generous in the expenditure of public money for that purpose, but without forgetting at the same time the necessities of the older provinces. In the province from which I come we are not satisfied that the time has been reached when there should be no further expenditure for the development of its resources, and I think the general opinion throughout all parts of the Dominion is that

the time has not yet arrived when the expenditure of public money should be curtailed.

But while our friends opposite are profuse in their criticisms of this expenditure, they take very good care, both in the House and outside of it, not to particularize, not to single out any particular item to which they object. Now, Sir, if they expect their criticisms to have any weight it will be necessary for them to point out the particular items in the expenditure to which they object. I sat in this House during the whole of last session, and I do not now recollect that during the whole of that session our hon. friends opposite put themselves on record as opposed to any particular item in the expenditure made by this government. I say if they expect their criticisms to bear fruit and to be taken seriously by the people, they must point out the items to which they object. That is the position which hon. members on the government side of the House will take, and that is the position which people generally throughout the country will expect the opposition to take.

We have been told that the public debt of this country has been increased. I am not going to deny that it has increased. But it has not been increased to any alarming extent, and I do not think that there is anybody in this country who seriously believes that the increase in the public debt during the past five years has been an alarming feature of the present administration. I think most people, when they calmly reflect upon the question, will conclude that the increase has been a very moderate one. If hon. gentlemen will compare the increase in the debt during the last five years with the increase during the period our hon. friends opposite were in power, they will find that the increase during the last five years has been very slow compared with that during the eighteen previous years. For every dollar that the present government has added to the debt, they have added very largely to the trade of the country; while for every dollar that the government supported by our friends opposite added to the debt, there was no corresponding increase in the trade of the country. The hon. member who has just taken his seat is not very hopeful it seems to me, of the conditions which obtain in this country. I am not disposed to agree with him that the situation in Canada to-day is without some hope. I am not disposed to agree with him that Canada has not a bright future; or that we have any reason to expect that we should not witness a continuation of the prosperity which we are at present enjoying. For my part I would be sorry indeed to sound a note of alarm throughout the country at this particular time.

On the question of the tariff I shall have very little to say. I suppose I shall be expected to make my profession of faith on the question of the tariff, and I shall do