

The Progress of Canada.

On Tuesday last, a meeting of the Liberal Conservative electors of Prescott was held at the village of L'Original, for the purpose of organizing a Liberal Conservative Association for the County. The attendance was large and influential, being composed of the representative men of the party from each of the townships. The Hon. John Hamilton was requested to take the chair, and Mr. Thos. White jr., editor and co-proprietor of the *Montreal Gazette*, who had been requested to deliver an address, was also present. Hon. Mr. Hamilton, in introducing Mr. White, briefly referred to the object of the meeting. The Liberal Conservative party was at this moment organizing in all parts of the Dominion, the defeats of the last election having roused them thoroughly to a conviction of the importance of this step, in order that they might be better prepared for a contest in the future. He would not detain them further than to say that the formation of an association for the county met with his most cordial sympathy, and should receive his best support. He would now simply introduce Mr. White, who had chosen for the subject of his address "Twenty Years of Liberal Conservative Administration in Canada." Mr. White's address occupies nine columns of the *Gazette*. In it he furnishes a record of the doings of the party during the period specified—commencing with its formation and winding up with a defence of the late government in the matter of the Pacific Railway scandal. It is not our intention to follow Mr. White through the various points of his address; but conceiving that his statements with reference to the progress of the country during the past twenty years—making every allowance for party bias—might be of interest to our readers, we subjoin that portion of the address which specially refers to that subject. Mr. White said:

Now let us look at the progress which the country has made in those 20 years of Liberal Conservative administration. For the purpose of comparison I take the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and for this reason: that I have not been able to get access to the trade and navigation returns of the Lower Provinces previous to 1867; but at any rate, as they were not part of Canada, and as the policy of the Liberal Conservatives had no effect upon them they are better left out for the purpose of comparison and to show the progress made during the 20 years. In 1854 when the Liberal Conservatives came into office the aggregate trade of the Province of Canada was \$63,543,515. In 1872, the last year for which we have full returns, the aggregate trade of the two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec amounted to \$153,900,704, an increase of upwards of 142 per cent. That is progress of which any people may fairly be proud [cheers.] Then take

the aggregate trade of the whole Dominion—and I give you the statement as made by the Finance Minister last week at Ottawa—for the year ending on the 30th June last it amounted to \$216,000,000, which, assuming the population at four millions—rather more than the population really is—represents \$54 per head of the population. Well, gentlemen, the aggregate trade of the United States, which we have been in the habit of looking upon as a wonderfully prosperous country for 1870, was \$961,420,145, which, taking their population at 38 millions, equals \$25.30 per head for the trade of the whole of the United States, as compared with \$54 per head for the aggregate trade of the Dominion of Canada. And that you may be assured that this statement of the United States is not an exceptionally low one, we will go back to 1863. I find at that period the aggregate trade only only \$17.09 per head, while the trade of the Dominion the same year was \$50. Since that time we have constructed railroads in every direction. When the Government came in in 1854, the Grand Trunk had only been commenced. The Great Western was in operation, but none of the other railways that have since made Canada so prosperous were even in a state of construction. Since then we have gone on building railways in every direction, until, taking the population into account, the miles of railway of Canada are almost equal to those of any other country on the face of the globe. Many of these roads have been aided by large subsidies by which the Government enabled the Companies to carry on the work. Harbors have been constructed and improvements of every kind effected by those subsidies. In the one matter of lighthouses—and in a country like this, holding as it does the great channel of communication between the great west and the other side of the Atlantic, it is of the utmost importance that navigation should be made safe for vessels of every description—the improvement is strongly marked. During the last seven years since Confederation the Government have built 28 lighthouses in Ontario, 20 in Quebec, 37 in Nova Scotia, 39 in New Brunswick, and one in British Columbia, making a total of 125, whereas before that time we had only altogether 186. But in addition to the lighthouses, they constructed 16 fog whistles and six lightships, and there were in course of construction when they left office five lighthouses in Ontario, 10 in Quebec, 12 in Nova Scotia, two in New Brunswick, and one in British Columbia, making a total of 30. The fog whistles under contract numbered five. These improvements alone involved an annual expenditure of \$120,000 since Confederation, for the purpose of building up our means of communication and making the navigation of our rivers and coast safe for every description of craft. (Cheers.) What I wish you to observe is that all this has been accomplished

without perceptibly increasing the taxation of the people. (Cheers.) We hear of the extravagance of the old Government. Look at the progress made, the expenditure incurred by public works of every description, and then at the small taxation of the present, and for the purpose of aiding you I give you this fact, that when the Liberal Conservatives came into power in 1854 the customs duties bore to the imports the relation of 14½ per cent, while in 1872 the relation was only 11 1-6. When there is an achievement of that kind to show, when the country is prosperous in every direction, and the taxes of the country not increased, it is but just to say that the party that performed this is entitled to the confidence of the people of the country, and is one to which, I am quite satisfied, the people of this country will give their confidence in the future. (Loud cheers.) I am aware that it may be said in reference to those percentages just given, that there was but a small excise revenue in 1854, whereas in 1872 the revenue from excise duties was large. That is true. But, even adding the excise duty in 1872 to the customs, and the relation of both together is only 15½ per cent. And when you take into account the territorial revenue of old Canada, which is not included in the revenue since Confederation, the difference is more than made up, and we have actually lower taxation to-day, while the ability of the people to bear the burden of taxation has been enormously increased, than we had in 1854. And, in this connection, it should be remembered that in our annual expenditure we do not simply maintain the Government at Ottawa, but to a large extent, through the subsidies to the Provinces, the Provincial Governments as well. (Cheers.) I am aware, gentlemen, that the common answer to these statements is, that the prosperity of the country springs from the industry and enterprise of the people, and is in no way due to the Government. I should be sorry to take from the people of Canada in the slightest degree the great credit which is due to them as an enterprising and progressive people. I am too proud of my country as a native Canadian to do that. But in a country like Canada, situated as we are in close proximity to the United States, the great element of prosperity must always be confidence in the political institutions of the country. That confidence has been more than once shaken by the political agitations of unthinking men; and by the removal of those questions of agitation, by their solution in a manner satisfactory to the public at large, only can we secure that political quiet which is the best guarantee of public confidence, and the best incentive to the introduction and investment of capital among us. To the settlement of the great questions to which I have to-day referred is due the confidence of the moneyed men of the world in the future liability of our political system, and the great prosperity which has followed that confidence; and as the administration of the Liberal Conservatives during the last twenty years is ere the removal of these causes of agitation, to them must fairly be accorded credit for the prosperity of Canada. (Cheers.)—*Quebec Gazette*.