

reference to the balance of trade? Why, I remember when the hon. gentleman pointed out with pride and glory, I think only two years ago—

An hon. MEMBER. Three years.

Mr. BLAKE. Three years was it?—that for the first time in the history of Canada the balance of trade was in its favour, that we had exported more than we imported, and he told us what he had accomplished, and he told us how he had accomplished it. And before that he had pointed out what his duty was in that regard. He told us at an earlier period that we had to attain to a different condition of things from that which had existed before. It is true it was not very bad. It is true the amount of our importations was not very large. But the hon. gentleman, in 1879, said: "Regarding the matter as I do, I think it is to be regretted that the volume of imports has not been materially reduced." Reduced from its volume then, reduced from the small volume that then existed. "I look upon the large imports ever since the Dominion was organized, showing a large balance of trade against it, as one of the causes of trouble with which we have to contend, one of the difficulties that it is our duty to remedy. They have been decreasing to a certain extent, but are still very large"—how do they compare with those of last year?—"showing distinctly and clearly, in my judgment, that they ought to be still further diminished. I think then, without entering into a discussion of Free Trade and Protection, so far as they affect England and the United States, we may fairly conclude that the prosperity of the one country, at this moment, is caused in a great measure by the large surplus in its favour, and the depression in the other, by the large deficiency." He then gives the figures, and concludes: "Under these circumstances, it appears to me that we should turn our attention to the best means of reducing the volume of imports from all parts of the world." Having declared his duty, having proposed to perform it, having rejoiced three years ago in the success which had attended his efforts, I want to know, to-day, what has happened to the National Policy? Is it asleep? Has it gone upon a journey? How is the balance of trade now? How was it last year and the year before together? How does it compare with the balance of trade in the year when he complained so much?

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. Very well.

Mr. BLAKE. I know, Mr. Speaker, what the hon. gentleman will do. I know him of old, Sir. He will take a lot of averages. He is great on averages. He does not mind the story that the figures tell, if you look at their consecutive order, but he will take them back and forth, and will take the average of a number of years. But we are speaking of the year 1879, when he spoke of the then existing condition of things, and the subsequent years, when he spoke of what it was his duty to do and what he had accomplished, and we are comparing the year preceding 1879 and the condition of things to-day, as to the volume of imports and the balance of trade; we are comparing it in its progressive manner. He had obtained perfection three years ago, but now I suppose he will average the three years, and say, "What have you to do with the returns of last year? Look at the average."

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. No; we will take both.

Mr. BLAKE. Then, besides the other progeny of the hon. gentleman, he brought forth a little domestic loan this year. He thought the people did not know what to do with the rest of their money. After he had taken \$20,000,000 or \$30,000,000, as I have pointed out, from them more than was required, he said, "Gentlemen, there is something left in your pockets, and I believe that you had better let me have it at four per cent.," and the

hon. gentleman's organs pointed out with a great flourish of trumpets what a wonderful and prescient Government this was, that proposed a domestic loan at four per cent., and how wise a step it was. Well, the advertisement issued, and the time elapsed, and there was what they call "an awful pause," and the news came out that the loan had failed; and then the hon. gentleman's organs said, "What a wonderful Finance Minister this is; he knew it was better for the country that the loan should fail, and it is a most fortunate circumstance that the loan has failed." But the hon. gentleman was not content with that, he was determined to give a crowning proof of his titles to our confidence, and, as the people would not take the loan at par, he put up the rest at a premium of two and a half per cent., and the organs said, "This is the wisest thing of all." Well, Mr. Speaker, I am inclined to believe that the farmers of the country are beginning to perceive the hollowness of the hon. gentleman's plans for making them rich. I am inclined to believe that the working men are beginning to see that his Tariff is not a Tariff which protects labour or which gives continuity of employment, as was promised. Why, if the hon. gentleman would enquire as to those operatives who have been dismissed during the last few months from some of these various pet industries, I dare say they would tell him some plain truths which would do him a great deal of good. It is quite true that his organs, true to their duty to him, to prove that he is always mindful of the workingman above all, pointed out that the workingman had been working too hard for some years, that he actually had become overworked and run down and wanted a holiday, and that it was the best thing that could happen to him, just as it was the best thing for the country that the hon. gentleman's loan failed, to have a little slack time at the mill, so that he might go home and repose himself in the bosom of his family, and spend some of his surplus earnings; but I have not heard that the workingman has sympathized much with that view of the case. In Toronto city, from which I come, there is a very great deal of distress; there is more distress than I have known there for many years, due in part to special and exceptional circumstances, to which I will have to refer, and due also very largely to other circumstances to which I have alluded, and if hon. gentlemen would read the reports of those who interest themselves in the charity relief organizations of that city, they would find an account very different from that which they may be disposed to give us. So of Montreal, in which the hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. Macmaster) I believe, resides. It was but the other day that I was reading a report of a St. George's Society, as to the condition of things there. As to London, I do not know what the hon. Postmaster General will say about it, but I find, positively, Mr. Speaker, I find that they are proposing to establish—what industry do you think, now? Why, Sir, a soup kitchen, and who do you think proposed it? Why, it is the hon. gentleman's organ, the leading Conservative paper in the western part of the Province, the *London Free Press*, which, on January 5th, remarked:

"The present cold weather must be severely felt by many. The poor, 'who are always with us,' have certain means of relief from the public. For many years past the fund provided for assisting the deserving poor has been ample and systematic in its administration."

Then they proceed to point out that there are immigrants who have come in, and then they say:

"The dead of winter is a period of peculiar hardship to the stranger without means. The case of these men suggested the establishment of a soup kitchen, and this is being done in Toronto. Why can't the same thing be done here. It is a simple, effectual and inexpensive way of feeding the hungry, and, we think, a natural and necessary part of the relief system for the winter months. The existence of a public soup kitchen would protect householders from the importunity of tramps, while it might greatly assist in the general relief work of the city. Once before a soup kitchen was established here with excellent results, its operation was regarded as a blessing, and large numbers took the bene-