

goods over the years immediately preceding, and it is generally understood that the value of these goods entered for consumption during 1882 will exhibit a still greater increase, and will exceed that of 1881 by upwards of \$1,500,000, or nearly 50 per cent. It is also generally understood that the returns will show a large increase in the importation of cotton and woollen goods, notwithstanding the increased quantity manufactured in the country, proving a large increase in the consumption of these goods. The same will be found true of the importation as well as the manufacture of boots and shoes and many other articles, such for instance as Brussels, tapestry and common carpeting, chinaware, common pottery, earthenware, silver-plated ware, wines, liquors, tobacco, and many other of our imports which it is not necessary, for present purposes, I should now enumerate. My object is rather to direct attention generally to the increase of our imports; as showing first, that general prosperity prevails, and, secondly, that that prosperity is shared in by all classes of society. This cannot be better illustrated than by referring to the article of tea, in the consumption of which there has been an enormous increase within the past two years, something upwards of 60 per cent., indicating not that the richer classes drink more tea but that the consumption has become more general and extends to a class of people who, in times of greater scarcity and want, are compelled to deprive themselves of this the very commonest luxury of our lives. Fears have been entertained that the present Tariff would bear unfairly and oppressively upon the poor man. Its operation, thus far, tends to show that it does not discriminate against the poor man's interest, and in the burdens it imposes, it does not oppress the weak, but, on the contrary, that while the wealthy and independent classes have, since it came in operation, been indulging more freely in the luxuries of life, there are also more comforts in the poor man's home and fewer half-clad and poorly fed children in our streets. We have evidence from another source to confirm this view—the increase in the deposits in the chartered banks and Government savings banks during the last four years, which, exclusive of Government deposits in the chartered banks, during the time mentioned, are upwards of \$43,000,000—the increase in the savings banks alone being upwards of \$13,000,000. While the former denote that general prosperity prevails, the latter it is well known are principally made up of small sums from the earnings of the poorer classes of our people, and I know of no better evidence that can be furnished of the improved condition of the laboring classes, showing as it does, that they have not only been able to supply their immediate wants, but to provide also against future needs. No one who has listened to or read the public utterances of our public men, can entertain a reasonable doubt that the subject which most fully occupies the thoughts and lies nearest to the hearts of the people's representatives, is the comfort and welfare of the poor man, and I, therefore, feel warranted in saying that the information which the public records furnish, that among the working men income has exceeded expenditure and a surplus has been announced in the Budget Speech, in so many a poor man's home will cause throughout this House more universal and heartfelt pleasure, even though it may not awaken the same enthusiasm as the similar announcements when they are made in the Budget Speech of the hon. the Finance Minister of this Dominion. At the time the present Tariff was introduced, opposition was offered to its adoption, based upon the theory that so highly protective was its character, and so tempting the field it opened for manufacturing enterprise at home, that the result would be a decrease in our imports and a reduction in our revenue which even then was inadequate to meet the ordinary requirements of the country. It may now be

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anticipated that four years' practical experience of its operation may create an opposition of an entirely different character, and lead to demands upon the Government for modifications and reductions, upon the ground that our revenue is in excess of our requirements. I am not aware to what extent the Government may feel disposed to respond to this demand should it be made. No doubt the experience of the past has suggested changes which they will deem of advantage to the country to adopt, but at the present time, when there are so many evidences of prosperity around us, when the ability of our people, both rich and poor, to purchase and enjoy so many of the comforts and luxuries of life, is clearly demonstrated, and when it is well known large expenditure in the future must continue to be made upon public works, rendered necessary by the growth of the country and for the development of its resources, under these circumstances, although I recognize the necessity of lightening as far as practicable the burden of our taxation, I would still regret that any material change should be proposed, the effect of which would be not only to reduce our annual surplus, but to increase more rapidly our debt and imperil and weaken our credit abroad. My remarks thus far have had reference to the effects of the legislation of the past; I will say but little upon the prospective legislation of the present Session. Among the measures which will be submitted, that which proposes a franchise law for the Dominion will, I assume, excite most general interest. It is well known that at the present time the franchise is under the control of the Local Legislatures of the different Provinces; that the result is want of uniformity; a class of persons voting and having representation here in one Province that in another are denied that right, a state of things that should be no longer permitted to exist. I am not aware upon what basis the Government will propose to fix the franchise for the future, but I may venture to express the hope that in establishing uniformity the limitations which now exist in some of the Provinces may be so far removed that the result will be upon the whole an extension of the franchise. The importance of a measure to provide a valid license law for the regulation of the liquor traffic will be readily appreciated, as well as the necessity of one to restrict, within proper limits, the class of labor that shall find employment in our factories. The experience of other countries has shown that the constant and regular employment of children in factories, at an early age, injures their health, weakens their constitution, diminishes their mental vigor and prevents intellectual development, and stringent enactments to prevent this evil have in the older manufacturing countries been deemed necessary. At the present time the increase in the number of factories in this country suggests the importance at the outset of surrounding the operatives with every possible safeguard, to protect them from the dangers to which I have alluded. The advantages of consolidating portions of existing laws are too apparent to need any comment. And I need but remind you of the sad disasters that have recently occurred upon our lakes, involving loss of property and more serious loss of life, to show the need of any legislation which will tend to prevent the recurrence of such scenes. I have before me a statement of the casualties upon our lakes during the last two years, and find they have resulted in the loss of nearly 400 lives. It is impossible to say how far these may be rightly attributed to want of experience and efficiency on the part of the officers in command, nor can we presume to say that accidents will not occur despite our best efforts to prevent them; but the fact that the officers are not subjected to any examination, that they hold no certificates of competency or character, will create doubts and suspicions in the public mind. In justice to the masters and mates themselves, as well as for the protection of those who place their property and lives under their control, proper standards of com-