

and which in former days did characterize the public men of this country.

We have come to the end of another Session which has cost the country \$600,000, in round figures, for legislation, and we have also come to the end of the Parliament which has cost the country \$3,000,000, and I would ask hon. gentlemen to look back at the legislation of the past five years, and to point to measures worth what they have cost—something that has been given to the people by Parliament in return for the confidence reposed in it, and the enormous cost of legislation. I have in my hand a list of the bills passed this Session. In casting my eye over it, I fail to discover any Act of real importance, any Act that was indispensable. Most of the Acts I may describe as local in character, Acts that might have been passed by the Local Legislatures, and which, so far as their importance goes, might be passed by any of our county councils in Ontario. There is scarcely a bill worthy of this Parliament, and yet three hundred gentlemen have been sitting here for three months at a cost to the country of at least \$600,000. This last Session is but one of five equally barren of useful legislation. The promises were very great indeed, and the hopes of the country were high, but the result has been infinitesimal, except in the broken promises of Ministers and their supporters. This is lamentable. Has the Government attempted to do anything for the prosperity of the country? Was there ever so much necessity for a wise policy on the part of the Government? Who but the present Government doubts that it was in their power to promote the prosperity of the country? But they proclaim that they are helpless. In fact, they have had no policy, and, therefore, there has been a feeling of uncertainty as to what policy they might adopt; the people have lacked confidence in the Government, and this has had an evil effect upon the trade and industries of the country. The depression, while this Government has been in office, has been unexampled. I do not hold them responsible for the whole of it by any means, but they have done nothing to mitigate it. The distress in the country has been unprecedented; the insolvencies have been altogether without

parallel, and if they are diminishing in number, I fear it is very much for the cause which checks great conflagrations—the want of material to consume and destroy. This is the condition of the country. It is exceedingly distasteful to me to speak of the Government of my country as I have done. I should much rather be able to hold them up to commendation and speak of them as a Government which once existed in England was described—as the Government of all the talents—but unfortunately I cannot do that. On the contrary, while there may be some men of ability in it, yet the Government has unquestionably exhibited a marvellous want of capacity, an extraordinary failure to realize the responsibility which rests on the rulers of this country, and an inability to seize and grapple with the great interests of the Dominion. To such an extent has this been the case, that I very much fear the historian of the future will speak of this Administration as “the Government of the Incapables.”

Hon. Gentlemen—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—There are gentlemen in it who will be excepted, but the Administration as a whole may be spoken of as “the Government of the Incapables.” Now, if we have not got useful measures, what have we got from the Government? I will tell this honorable House what the country has got during the years this Government has been in office. The annual controllable expenditure was increased up to the end of the last financial year, the 30th June last by the immense sum of \$2,300,000. How much that sum will be further increased at the end of the current financial year remains to be seen. Our annual expenditure may fairly be looked upon in the same light as the interest upon our debt. It is an annual charge, which to realize the burden of, must be capitalized. If you will capitalize this increased annual expenditure, of \$2,300,000 at five per cent, it will give you as the product the immense sum of \$46,000,000, that is, the increased annual controllable expenditure incurred by the present Government is equal to the interest at 5 per cent upon \$46,000,000. In addition to this, the public debt has been increased since 1873 by no less a sum than \$44,932,402. If you add this

Hon. Mr. Macpherson.