

first time in an extended address, is a gentleman who has rendered conspicuous public service in his own Province, and I am sure he will do credit to and be an ornament to this House. No reference to my honourable friend who seconded the motion is necessary, because his experience and ability and judgment are so well known to this House that we always greet his utterances with pleasure.

I admired the frankness and fairness of the honourable gentleman from Moncton, in pointing out that at the beginning of the Speech from the Throne it is stated that the world economic situation has improved during the past year. Then he assures us that the Government of Canada does not assume credit for that improvement. That I mark as a frank admission of fact. In the next sentence of the first paragraph of the Speech from the Throne a statement is made in which my honourable friend concurred, and which, while true, in my humble opinion does not imply or carry with it all the encouragement that might be taken from it. It is stated that the year 1924 was a period of substantial progress in Canada, and that the value of our exports over imports for that year amounted to \$260,000,000.

My honourable friend, however, perhaps overlooked the fact that that apparently satisfactory condition was brought about by reason of the fact that our imports during the year 1924 fell from \$907,000,000 to \$812,000,000, a drop of \$95,000,000, which of course automatically increased the margin of exports over imports. It therefore follows that if our imports—which in other words means the ability of our people to purchase from their neighbours in other countries—continue to fall to the extent of another \$95,000,000 or \$100,000,000 next year, it will probably again be said, although our exports increased not at all, that the condition is substantially further improved. I therefore must accept with reservations the statement that an excess of exports over imports indicates national prosperity.

I will have occasion later on to make some mention of the trade convalescence and the convalescence of our transportation systems to which the honourable gentleman has referred. I might agree with him that the ship of state has had perhaps as turbulent a voyage during the last ten years as during the past three. But one recalls the fact that about a year ago or less the captain was ringing the bells of freer trade and the mate was ringing the knell of protection, and the ship of state was preparing to sail away on its voyage to the freer ports, and we were to have a freer interchange of goods with other nations; but

the expectations which the people experienced, and which they had a right to entertain, have not been altogether realized. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been a tendency towards freer trade by means of a reduction in tariff duties, in order to make the flow of international trade more easy, and, as the Government said, to reduce the cost of living, this policy has not worked out as I am sure the Government honestly expected. We find before Parliament met this Session the Prime Minister appearing before the people and telling them he is going to wait awhile now and see whether or not the experiment of freer trade and tariff reduction of last Session has been a success before he will tamper with the tariff again. That indicates to one who attempts to judge fairly, and I hope with reason, that the venture was an experiment, and that the Government itself is not sure whether it has been a successful one or not; so that during the present Session of Parliament there is no intention of any further move in that direction, but rather the Government are contemplating changing the course of the ship of state and sailing away on another mission, namely, an attempt to control the freight rates on the waters of the world.

The Speech from the Throne says: "The year 1924 was a period of substantial progress." One should stop to consider just what that progress has been. When we speak of national progress, especially in a young country such as this is, we naturally think of an expansion of trade, of an increase in our productions of all sorts, of an increase in our national revenues, of a better relation between revenues and expenditures, of increased population, of a decreased cost of living and an improved condition of the people generally, by reason of constantly-increasing values of properties that they own; and one of the questions that must for many years arise in the mind of a Canadian is whether or not our great national railway undertaking has been making progress forward or backward.

Let us for a moment consider some of these important points in order to reach a conclusion as to whether or not Canada made substantial progress in 1924. When we consider that the total export and import trade of Canada for the year just past is forty-eight and a half million dollars less than it was for the corresponding period one year previous, we can hardly put that down as an indication of substantial progress. With regard to Canada's revenues, when we find the Canada Gazette, the official Government publication issued just a few days ago, showing that the revenues of this country for the ten months'