

were increasing in an alarming proportion; the coasting trade and navigation proper were dwindling away; the stoppage of our manufactures was the order of the day; but no sooner had the Liberal government inaugurated their policy, than our trade increased in a wonderful way; prosperity went forward by leaps and bounds; failures decreased by one-fourth, business improved in all directions, and the government had to set to work to improve the channel of the St. Lawrence and extend our harbour in order to accommodate the ever-increasing number of ships coming into it from all parts of the world.

We are bound to build grain elevators and warehouses which will cost millions of dollars, if we wish to keep pace with the increase of trade. Now, Mr. Speaker, in corroboration of the facts I have just pointed out, let me call the attention of the House to the report of the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal, just published by the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Star*. That report is signed by Mr. Smith, in his quality as president of that body, a gentleman who, so far as I know was never a supporter of the Liberal party. Therefore, it is obvious that the government policy has brought back peace and prosperity throughout the country. But, say certain opponents of the government, that prosperity, which is self-evident, is not the outcome of the policy of the Liberal party. but, on the contrary, it is the result of the Conservative policy! I am quite ready to admit, Mr. Speaker, that the bountiful harvest with which the country was blessed last year, was not the result of the policy of the Liberal party. But, it is not enough to have a bountiful harvest; outlets have, moreover, to be provided, to dispose of the products of the soil, and to enable us to obtain paying returns for them.

The Conservative party, I presume, do not pretend to claim as a result of their policy, the tariff reform; the extension of the Intercolonial Railway; the important improvements made in the harbour of Montreal and in our canals and our navigable streams; the arrangements entered into with Great Britain for the transportation of our products, and, from the standpoint of our trade relations with the mother country, the abrogation of the Belgian and German treaties; the postal reforms, the adoption of the penny-postage; the cold storage system, established by the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Fisher) for the transportation of the dairy products and of perishable products; the abrogation of the Franchise Bill, with its costly machinery, to the general satisfaction of the public; the peace restored to the country since the settlement of the Manitoba school question. All those measures which have brought about the result referred to, have been bitterly opposed by the hon. gentlemen opposite. Therefore, I think the general policy of the govern-

ment has restored peace and brought back prosperity into the country, and the people will give them credit for it.

Now, Sir, I am delighted to see that the government have given evidence of the great interest they bear the working classes, by adopting a body of regulations to the effect of compelling the railway companies and the undertakers of important public works, necessitating the agglomeration of working men, to put into effect more practical hygienic rules and to afford workmen a larger measure of protection, which will result in decreased diseases and accidents. If there is a class of our population which is entitled to the protection of the state, it is, beyond question, the workmen and the labourers, inasmuch as they are less in position than other classes, owing no doubt to their lack of education, to protect themselves from the ill-will or the greediness of their employers.

It is contemplated to create a tribunal of conciliation for the settlement of conflicts arising between workmen and their employers, which would result in putting a stop to strikes, or, at least, in averting in a large measure those difficulties which always prove disastrous to both interested parties, and which bear almost invariably more heavily upon the workmen than upon their employers.

The influx of immigrants into Canada has considerably increased, and our vacant lands are being taken up in all the different parts of Canada, and what is still more satisfactory, many of our fellow-countrymen are being repatriated. Those who have closely watched the evils caused by the exodus of our farmers towards the United States, observe with pleasure that this exodus is being stopped, and the deserted farms are once more being occupied by their former owners.

I see with pleasure that the government contemplate renewing and amending the banking laws. The recent disasters which have occurred in connection with some banks shows the necessity of promptly remedying the defects of the law; otherwise, the confidence reposed in our monetary institutions will grow weaker from day to day.

It is of the utmost importance that the deepening of our canals should be proceeded with without any delay; a large portion of those works has already been carried out, but there still remains something to be done, and when they are completed, we will be able to transport by the St. Lawrence route hundreds of millions of tons of grain, which, up to the present, have taken the other route to reach the ocean.

The most important event of the year, and the one, among those referred to in the speech from the Throne, which has chiefly engaged the attention and inflamed the public mind throughout the empire, is