

can choose which he likes ; the fact remains. How many taxes did the opposition during the last dozen years propose to reduce ? Have they tried to reduce the people's burdens ? I cannot recall one single occasion on which the opposition either collectively or individually moved to reduce a solitary tax now imposed on the people of Canada ; but I can recall a very considerable number of occasions when the opposition expressed their earnest desire that we should double, treble, or quadruple the tax on particular articles. In conclusion let me say this: the government are not blind to the fact that there has been a very serious reduction in the revenue, and that the depression may last some time, and that in any case it is now desirable to call a halt and bring our expenditure within stricter limits than has been hitherto thought necessary. The government desire to reduce the expenditure as far as lies in their power, which perhaps will not prove to be very great, inasmuch as my hon. friend knows we have an enormous mass of fixed charges which neither this nor any other government can interfere with. The government do not desire, in spite of the demands of the opposition, to be pressed into new works until they have got rid of the important enterprises they now have in hand. If that is done, I think after a reasonable period, looking to the enormous expansion going on in the Northwest, and the enormous immigration which is pouring into the country in spite of the depression elsewhere, and at the quality of that immigration, we shall be able very shortly to congratulate ourselves that Canada has resumed its position as practically the leader in the expansion, not merely of the Dominion, but the other countries belonging to the British empire. My hon. friend took exception to the expenditure on immigration. I am advised by my hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture that very little is being done in the way of assisted immigration. What is being done is entirely in bringing in a desirable class of agricultural labourers.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—It was only with reference to the bonusing of immigrants that I spoke.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—He proposes to diminish it still further. I

may also incidentally remark he has adopted a strict policy for the purpose of keeping out undesirable immigrants who are likely to be dumped on Canada by various so-called charitable associations and others. But the point I more particularly desire to call attention to is this ; in the case of immigration there has been an enormous expansion. We are spending to-day \$8 for one that was spent in 1896. The expenditure then was \$120,000 ; the expenditure to-day is something like \$1,100,000. I doubt whether there ever was any sum of money spent to greater practical advantage than that expended in the last few years by the Department of Immigration. The mere settlers' goods brought in by these immigrants during those twelve years amounts to—I speak from recollection—something like fifty or sixty million dollars. That has been added to the wealth of this country, and most of it goes at once towards assisting production.

What the value of the immigration may be, I would rather leave to my hon. friend to say. If you add a million, or if you add half a million, to our population in the Northwest, and if a half million continue to produce one-half as well as they have done hitherto, the accession to the wealth and the annual income of the country and to the revenue of the country from these people would probably equal something like one hundred and fifty millions a year, if we are to place reliance on the census statistics. Thereon it is that the justification of the policy of the government must rest. If they add largely to the productive population of this country, if they add to the productive resources of the country and the general income of the country, they may be pardoned if they have, perhaps in their zeal, a little overstepped the bounds and spent a few hundred thousand dollars which might have been saved by a more frugal administration. Be that as it may, I repeat the assurance that it will be the policy of the government to reduce the expenditure within the narrowest bounds compatible with the efficient discharge of their duty, and that they are not disposed to engage in any further works, at any rate until we see our way to getting through with those we have already undertaken.