

perhaps pernicious one, and one not likely to inspire any very great confidence in the future of the country.

I do not offer these remarks, Sir, in any spirit of unkind criticism, nor with the idea of exciting discussion upon them; but I offer them more as a prelude to a statement which I would now venture to make. Whether it has arisen from the course of hon. gentlemen opposite, whether, perhaps, in some degree it may have arisen from the course of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House during their somewhat prolonged training as an opposition, or whether it arises entirely from other causes, there is in Canada an opinion of some prevalence which I think should be discouraged; that is, that trade conditions in this country are almost entirely dominated or controlled by trade conditions throughout the world—that the world's prosperity is necessary to ensure Canadian success, and that world-wide trade depression will involve this country in calamity as surely as night follows day. Now, Sir, I for one most emphatically dissent from a proposition involving such a wholesale admission that the trade conditions of this country are so entirely dependent upon foreign conditions. While it would be unreasonable to argue that we can pursue the even tenor of our way in peace and plenty, absolutely indifferent to or independent of external conditions, what I do maintain is this, that Canada should be far less dependent upon external conditions than almost any other nation in the world. Be the world's distress as marked as it may be, that is no conclusive reason why with reasonably progressive and able government, Canada should not at all times and under all circumstances enjoy a very fair measure of prosperity, and no period of prolonged or marked distress at all. I do not believe we shall ever go seriously behind the proud record which has been established in the last few years. Certain it is that without the very grossest mismanagement and incapacity, Canada will never be relegated to that humiliating, that melancholy condition through which Canadians made so gallant a struggle for two or three years prior to 1896.

I do not make these remarks in any spirit of idle boasting. I believe the position is well backed up by the facts. I feel that we occupy a position of superior advantage to that of other commercial nations, and superior advantage to that of our chief trade competitor, the United States. Hon. members know far better than I do the facts and reasons that go to prove the truth of this assertion. I can only mention a few of them, and discuss them most superficially.

In the first place, we are a very new and young country. National youth may involve some disabilities; but it has compensating advantages, and Canada's youth is by no

means the least of her advantages. We have an intelligent and educated population, and a population capable of great adaptability; and that is a great thing in a country offering such a diversity of opportunity as Canada offers.

Then, Sir, a more important reason is that we have untold natural wealth. The natural wealth of this country is its reserve capital, a capital which has hardly yet been drawn upon at all—resources, not piled in impossible situations, not stored under impossible conditions, but for the most part ready for the hand of man. Take not only the fact that we have these resources, but consider the nature of the resources. Look at the natural products of the country, look at all the products of the country, if you will, and what will strike one who examines the trade reports is the very great proportion of our total trade which is made up of that class of commerce which the world deems necessities, and the relatively small proportion of our trade which is made up of that class of commerce which the world calls luxuries. Older countries claiming greater refinement and larger riches, go into the production of luxuries to a far greater extent than a new country does; and in a moment of world-wide depression that country which produces luxuries is the country first to suffer, while the country which produces the prime necessities of life, as Canada does in abundance, will be the last country in the world to feel the depression. There will never be a time, Sir, when the people do not want bread, meat, and the other food products which this country offers. There will never be a time when the commercial requirements of the age will not demand iron, steel, timber, fuel and the like articles of prime necessity which Canada can supply in abundance.

Then, Sir, as another reason why we occupy so essentially good a position, consider the natural advantages of the country. Take the great waterways extending from the very heart of the country to the seaboard; improved, it is true, by artificial means involving great expenditure, but now forming a reasonably complete system from the centre of the country to the Atlantic ocean. If there is one thing which the government of the day, and perhaps parliament, may take credit for, it is the manner in which they have viewed the question of transportation in recent years. I do not think anything has been done in recent years that has been more appreciated by the people of Canada than the wise expenditure which has taken place in bettering the transportation facilities of this country. The man who ten years ago would predict that raw fruit grown in Canada would be exhibited in Europe and carry off many of the leading prizes there, would have been looked upon as an idle dreamer; yet, Sir, in this first year of the new century, that is an accomplished fact; and that fact alone