

our exports in these lines increase *pari passu* with our general progress in the export trade? There seems to be something the matter with reference to these products, and in some way or other there is not that stimulus, there is not that production of these which in an eminently agricultural country like Canada there ought to be. We ought to keep pace with the home consumption needs of this country, and at the same time increase our exports. The facts are that we are decreasing our exports almost to the vanishing point, and if the present tendency continues the time will rapidly come when we will have to import these articles. Yet some gentlemen talk about the great necessity for opening and extending markets for these very same commodities.

The only thing that saves us in the agricultural line is the exportation of grains and their products. The total export of agricultural products in 1900 was \$27,000,000, and in 1910 \$90,000,000. That is satisfactory. The exports of grain in 1900 were \$18,000,000 and in 1910 \$56,000,000. That you say is satisfactory. Wheat flour shows \$2,700,000 in 1900 running up to \$14,800,000 in 1910. That is eminently satisfactory because wheat flour is not only an agricultural product but it is a raw product turned into a partly manufactured article, and we have all the advantages that accrue from the doing of that work in this country.

The total exports of grain products increase from \$3,000,000 in 1900 to \$16,000,000 in 1910. Now, although that is satisfactory in one respect yet when you come to think of the area of new lands that we are adding each year to the cultivable area, thus producing the larger quantity for that export, a certain amount of that satisfaction is taken away. It would be strange indeed if, when we were bringing millions of acres of new lands out of the rough into the producing condition, we should not largely increase our exports.

But when we go back to the old and stable and settled agricultural products and find our exports dwindling and our home consumption calling for almost everything we produce, the condition is not so satisfactory.

Another unsatisfactory situation has developed to-day, not by the fault of Canada, but by the fault of this government itself, that is the disturbance and unsettlement of trade conditions in this country. The Finance Minister sang us a song to the refrain 'Let well enough alone,' and his view of letting well enough alone was to tear up all our railways, do away with our steamship lines and stop all our mechanism of development and transport. That, he said, would be letting well enough alone. I think that would be tearing well enough all to

pieces. Does he mean to say that is a fair way to meet our argument? Here we are with an immense production and an immense mechanism of transport and distribution going on swimmingly. Some one says that is an unexampled progress, let well enough alone. Oh, the minister says, if you mean to adopt that principle of letting well enough alone, you must go to work and tear up your railway tracks and take off your steamship lines and destroy all the mechanism of production and transport. Not at all. We admit the principle that progress must always be our motto, that there must be a constant impulse forward. But rashness may imperil the present situation of progress and development, and you cannot excuse that rashness by singing a parody upon the refrain 'Let well enough alone,' with the interpretation given to-day by the Minister of Finance.

As I listened to the opening words of the Minister of Finance, that every thing in Canada was prosperous, giving the prospect of permanency and great development, and as he went on with his story, it impressed itself more and more upon my mind as to why, in that condition of things, where there was no doubt, no contingency, and no risk, the whole frame work and service of our business and trade should be disturbed, dislocated, unsettled, by a rash jump into a new venture the outcome of which the Finance Minister himself is absolutely unable to see. There is unsettlement, there is no doubt about it. I want to ask the Finance Minister one question, the answer to which is historical and a proof of the value of stable settlement. When was it that this Dominion of Canada, as to its constituent parts, began to make real and settled progress? It was when the people made up their minds to join together and make one country. Up to that time the provinces did not know what their future was to be, and there was the searching after something from the country to the south of us, every province diverse, no union. When out of that period of doubt and uncertainty we made up our minds to join our fortunes, to adopt the national idea, that settled all uncertainty for ever, and we commenced to make real progress. When in 1878 we undertook to establish the principle of protection and the National Policy so-called, it was a step in the direction which wise men thought was necessary, and which the event proved was salutary; but when we established the principle in 1879 in our first tariff, matters were not settled, because nearly one-half of the people of this country and a great political party were fighting against it, sworn to defeat it. We are told that progress was not very great at first. How could it be, with near-

Mr. FOSTER.