

able resources, scanty as they are, of this country, exclusively to that backbone of the whole enterprise, without the success of which there can never be a Pacific Railway from sea to sea, without the success of which our whole plan and future may be scattered to the winds. Prudence in our expenditure is essential to the success of settlement. Do you suppose that those intelligent persons who are about to emigrate to this country will be attracted or repelled by the proposal to expend \$30,000,000 in the gorges of British Columbia? Do you suppose that the suggestion that we can afford to expend this large sum at present, because these settlers will repay it in taxes and land purchases, is calculated to encourage them to go into that country? Do you suppose that these people, scanning the policy and programme of the Administration upon this subject, and understanding that this vast expenditure is to be at once incurred because they will pay it all, may not say, "perhaps we had better not join, perhaps we had better not be partners in this gigantic undertaking if we alone are to meet the expense." Prudence in the limitation of our burdens, prudence as to the increase of the National Debt, prudence as to every enterprise the Government are undertaking at the same time that they are undertaking the settlement of this country, is an essential condition to the success of their effort at colonisation. Do not frighten away those who might join us, by your lavish and reckless engagements, based on their anticipated payments and their expected taxes. Our position is critical, and we should husband our resources for what that position may demand. The hon. Minister himself stated yesterday that Canada stood in a critical position. I agree with him, and standing in that position—more critical in my view, perhaps, than in the hon. gentleman's—it is doubly necessary that we should take care not to undertake just now more than is generally agreed to be essential to the success and the future of our country. Tide us over for the present, and if your expectations are realised, if you receive these large sums within the short period you have predicted, if within four or five years these sums are paid into the Treasury, then it will be soon enough to decide that there is a practical basis upon

which business men can act; soon enough to agree that there is a foundation upon which we can proceed to build in British Columbia. Then we can honestly tell our constituents that there is money, obtained from the lands, out of which the Railway can be built, without further adding to their burdens. But, in the meantime, we cannot honestly say this; we cannot show them that the resources of this country, without using means raised by the heavy burdens of taxation levied for the purpose, will suffice to build the Railway in British Columbia; and I, for one, stand opposed to the expenditure of these heavy taxes in any such way. And now, having shown that we cannot depend on the sales, and must look to the taxes, at present, to meet the proposed expenditure, it is necessary to ascertain our present condition, as compared with our condition in 1871, and to examine into the state and resources of this country. Circumstances render it extremely difficult to form an accurate estimate of our position. Fortunately, we are called upon to form an estimate now, not for one or two years, but for a series of years. We have a policy, a plan for ten years, before us, and we are, therefore, called upon to measure the future of this country for a long term. The best course is to look back a little and see whether from the lessons of the past we can derive any light to be shed upon our future condition. It is difficult, as I have said, to deal, even in a series of years, with the question of the progress of this country. The vicissitudes of the seasons, upon which depend our main industry and source of wealth, the changes in the markets of the world, in the price of grain, and in the price of lumber, our principal articles of export, the changes in the world's trade, the succeeding depressions and inflations which result in alterations in the profits of our shipping business, and in the cost of the goods we import, all these circumstances render it an extremely difficult task for a Finance Minister from time to time to forecast the future of Canada, even for a short eighteen months; and it is with unfeigned diffidence that I venture to offer some general observations with reference to the past as throwing light on the present and future of our country. For three years after Confederation the amount of our