

bear unfairly or unjustly on any portion of the Dominion. Well, Sir, the Government applied themselves to this task, and we had the satisfaction of feeling, at the close of the Session, that there was a general concurrence of feeling in the House and out of it, that the members of Parliament had redeemed their pledges, that the Liberal-Conservative party had carried out its pledges, that the Government had fulfilled its pledges; and there was every reason to expect and hope that the policy was not only acceptable to our supporters but would be beneficial to the country. It will be our duty, presently, to consider how far our hopes and expectations in that respect have been realised. But, Sir, our difficulties were not confined to the question of the Tariff; they extended to the question of finance. Why, Sir, it was shown by the statements which were submitted to the House in the Public Accounts, that for three or four years there had been a steady decline in the revenue as compared with the expenditure, and that the deficiency had reached for three years preceding, and as we estimated for the fourth year, an average of \$1,750,000. It became necessary, therefore, for the Government to consider what steps could be best taken while they were carrying out their policy with regard to the advancement of the industries of the country, at the same time to increase the revenues of the Dominion. Our difficulties were not confined to the providing for the deficiencies to which I refer. The Government found that heavy engagements had been made by their predecessors for public works embracing a great extension of our canal and railway systems. They had entered into engagements for the construction of canals involving an expenditure of millions of dollars, which the present Government were bound to carry out and to provide the means for. In passing, I may remark, that I recollect perfectly well the time when the Government proposal to construct additional canals was submitted; it was not objected to by hon. gentlemen in the Opposition, because it was found that it was then deemed advisable and necessary that employment should be given to the people, thousands of whom were idle; and it is rather a striking commentary on the present state of af-

fairs, that at the present day you do not hear, notwithstanding we are told that great depression exists, any proposition coming from either side of the House to construct public works, solely or largely, to give employment to unemployed people. But such was the case, and such engagements were entered into. Proposals had been made by our predecessors; contracts had been entered into involving a large expenditure for the extension of the railway towards Nipissing; for works west of Red river and east of Winnipeg, and for the completion of the Pembina Branch; and tenders had, moreover, been asked for 120 miles of railway in British Columbia. All these engagements required large sums of money, and added largely to the annual interest; therefore we had not only to provide for a deficiency of two millions a year, as was then estimated, but we had to look forward to an increased expenditure in the shape of interest on the Public Debt, amounting to from \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year. It was under these circumstances that the Government, having to assume heavy engagements, were called upon to give the subject our most careful consideration. Difficult as was our position at that time, the difficulty was increased from the fact that the late Administration had so arranged the expenditure for the Pacific Railway that to make it effective it became necessary that a very expensive link should be completed, in order that we might have the advantage, with the least possible delay, of the money which had already been expended. It became necessary for the Government at once to undertake the work of building 180 miles of railway, to connect the head of Lake Superior with Winnipeg, a most expensive public work; and it was not only our duty to put it under contract at once, but to stipulate that it should be completed with the least possible delay, in order that the expenditure on the works already carried out should be made effective and beneficial, and that the country might be opened for settlement and development. Well, sir, what did the Government find in addition to that? In addition to the providing for the construction of the roads named it was deemed necessary to add to our expenditure, and with the least possible delay, by providing for the