

from this state of things. They, on the contrary, are prosperous, and in our history the farmers never occupied so excellent a position as they do to-day; no thanks, however, to the Government of the day for that. Our farming population has made greater progress than any other section of our people, being intelligent, enterprising, and alive to their interests. They have always been industrious, and as one cause for this I may say that the schoolmaster has been abroad.

I hope that the Government will be forced to stop that useless piece of work, the construction of the Georgian Bay branch of the Pacific Railway, a premature and unwise undertaking, as the resolutions adopted by this House solemnly stated. But these words are hardly strong enough to fitly characterize the expenditure of public money being made in this relation, which is perfectly useless and even worse than useless in my opinion. Six roads are already built to afford accommodation for the traffic of that portion of the country, and when this branch is completed it will destroy the other lines without ensuring its own success. If it takes the business from the other routes, it will destroy them, and if it fails to do so, it will then be worse than valueless. I took exception in 1874 to the increased tariff. I believed that I was right then, and I hold that opinion still more strongly now. I thought that the revenue was sufficient and more than sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses of the country. I gave figures to prove the correctness of my position, and was pleased to notice that our Finance Minister, in his letter written in London, last October, fully corroborated them—indeed he quoted them almost line for line—as to the results of the administration of public affairs during the eight years following the accomplishment of Confederation. It seems strange, but I have on my desk one of his statements—the Budget Speech of 1874—in which he takes the most gloomy and despondent view of the financial condition and prospects of the country, and another prepared in London only two years afterwards of quite a different character. In the course of the latter, he shows that at the very time I brought up the matter in 1874, we had ten millions of a surplus, as I then declared, and in fact, though the figures are in pounds, the results are exactly the same. This is deeply grati-

fying to me; and I say that his former allegations were extremely mischievous. They did us harm, and I am pleased to find that in England he was obliged to make quite a different, and what I believe to be a correct statement, over his own signature. Was it necessary to increase the tariff in 1874? and what became of the money? If any person will take the trouble to examine the banking returns of this country, they will find that the very money so obtained was deposited in different banks; and was it used? No, I declare that it was not employed, and that it was not required. We find that at that date the Finance Minister announced in his Budget Speech that the deposits in Canadian Banks amounted to \$7,275,121; and what do we observe one year later? That the sum deposited by the Government in the banks of this country reached \$10,426,216—hence the extra taxation obtained was not needed, for the increased revenue only went into the banks, in which, in addition, there were four or five millions more, held for the Government in England. This shows, as the bank statement will prove, that the surplus was not expended. We discover that the amounts deposited on the part of the Government during the twelve months following, at all events, exceeded three millions; that was all very well, but the money had to be spent, and what did the Government do with it? Without the authority of Parliament, they bought steel rails to the value of \$2,700,000.

An hon. gentleman—No!

Hon. Mr. READ—Yes! and although the Government stated that they purchased rails for 372 miles of railway, they in reality obtained a sufficient quantity to lay 550 miles. To-day rails of the same description, delivered in this country, would cost £43 per ton, but the price given was £54.

An hon. gentleman—£43?

Hon. Mr. READ—£43, the price at which these rails have been offered to the Northern Colonization Railway Company—\$8 a ton of difference in England. The result of the transaction, merely calculating the difference in price then and now, a loss of \$550,000. And are they to be used? They are distributed all over the country, some in Nanaimo and Esquimaux, and others I don't know where. And this is not all, for are we not losing the interest of 4½ per cent. for the space of at least two years, before which they cannot be employed, making another difference of £250,000, and an aggregate loss to the