

up the time of the House in my present state of health, did I not feel bound to discharge a duty which I owe to myself and my constituents. I join my congratulations to those of the government on the prosperity now existing throughout the Dominion. I am glad when we are in a prosperous condition; I rejoice when our trade and commerce are flourishing as they are to-day. I go further, and give the government considerable credit for the prosperity we are now enjoying. I think that prosperity is largely due to the fact that the government have not carried out the policy on which they appealed to the country. Had they brought down a tariff for revenue only, or a tariff based on free trade as they have it in England, we would not be in the position in which we now find ourselves. Governments may come and governments may go, but, so long as protection is the basis of our trade and fiscal policy, the prosperity of Canada is assured.

Sir, I suppose it is my duty to make some reference to the hon. gentleman who preceded me in discussing the budget last night—the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Holmes). I would like to congratulate the hon. gentleman, for I like to say pleasant things, I like to say sweet things; but, if I should undertake to congratulate the hon. gentleman, I do not think I could congratulate him upon his modesty. If I understood him correctly, he referred to the Conservative party as being in a condition of decay and dry-rot—moribund. I do not think that such an expression came with very good grace from the hon. gentleman. He should have considered his surroundings and the means used to gain him a seat in this House. I think he would have acted more wisely if he had been a little more modest. There was one thing with regard to which I agreed with the hon. gentleman. He stated in his address, regarding the preferential tariff, that it had done no good to England and very little good to Canada. That is my opinion. And, having found a point on which I can agree with the hon. gentleman, I will say no more.

Now, I wish to say a word with regard to one particular point in the speech of the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), an hon. gentleman for whom I have the highest regard, a gentleman whose views as expressed in this House impressed me very strongly, a gentleman with whose view on one particular point I agreed—superannuation. I remember well how he laboured in this House. I remember that he was instant in season and out of season denouncing inconsistency and corruption in connection with this superannuation system. I did expect that he would continue his labours, and that when his party came into power that great reformation would take place which he had so often pictured. I will not detain the House, nor will I trouble you by quoting figures at length.

Mr. BELL (Addington).

But, regarding superannuation, I have a few figures here. The average amount paid in 1897, 1898 and 1899, was \$324,512; the average in 1894, 1895 and 1896, was \$279,639. The average yearly increase was \$44,873. Has not the hon. gentleman succeeded marvellously in bringing about a better state of things in regard to superannuation? But then, he said, he would have succeeded in having the whole thing abolished and wiped out if it had not been for the opposition. What a weak government, Mr. Speaker—a government that could carry through a Drummond County deal, that could carry through a Redistribution Bill, and yet could not carry through what that hon. gentleman so long advocated, the doing away with the corruption and extravagance which he said characterized the Conservative government's management of the superannuation system, and not only that but spent on the average \$44,873 more every year. I was a little amused at that hon. gentleman. He finished up with a sort of Shakesperian play, leading us through quite a few acts, showing the corruption of the Conservative party. He referred to the Curran Bridge and many other things, and said to the young men of Canada: Young men, read, mark, learn the history of your country. I should say to the young men: Read and mark well the course of the hon. member for North Wellington regarding superannuation; but if you expect to reach the heights of fame, I would advise you not to follow in his footsteps.

Sir, I have been pleased with the debate, to which I have listened attentively. I wish to deal with the question before us as a fair-minded man. I was very much pleased with the speech of the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Henderson), which was delivered in a dispassionate, candid, and deliberate manner, not as a partisan politician, but dealing with the questions upon their merits, and proving his position step by step, making a case so strong that the hon. member for North Wellington dare not attack it in any way. Now, it seems to me—and I hope I am not partial, I think I can claim at least a certain amount of independence, and that I can deal with these questions fairly and judge them without being partisan—it does seem to me that the speeches on this side of the House are more like the speeches of business men dealing with the business of the country than those of hon. gentlemen opposite. Listening to the hon. member for Kent, Ont., (Mr. Campbell) and others on that side who have spoken, it seems to me that their whole effort is to make excuses, to offer apologies and to varnish over what the government has done. They speak from a political standpoint altogether. My attention was drawn particularly to the speech made by the hon. Minister of Customs (Mr. Pater-son). I remember the evening when he addressed this House with loud intonation