

matter of much of its wonted dryness, and to hold the attention of his auditors to the close. Nor can it be said that from this point of view his exhibit itself was unsatisfactory, save in the now unavoidable largeness of the public debt, and the fixed annual expenditure. During the last year or two there has been a marked tendency towards economy on the part of the Government, a tendency which it is to be hoped may continue to grow.

But the larger part of Mr. Foster's speech on this occasion, whether that be a proper or desirable feature of such a speech or not, was devoted to a defence, we might say a laudation of the policy of the Government, especially its protective system. In this branch of his address he was less satisfactory, though perhaps no less able. There was the laboured and now familiar argument from the statistics of exports and imports, of industrial establishments, of bank deposits, &c., to show that the country is prosperous. Were it not for its very serious side there would be something almost ludicrous in these persistent efforts of the friends of the high tariff to convince the people of Canada that they are doing well and ought to be contented. Two or three remarks must suffice with regard to these alleged proofs of general prosperity, and even these must necessarily be little more than repetitions of what has already appeared again and again in these columns and in numerous other discussions of this much discussed subject. First, it is clear that the mere bulk of commercial transactions of itself affords no reliable gauge of the accruing profit. It is quite conceivable that the loss of a nearer and more profitable market may compel a people to redouble their efforts to enlarge their transactions in a more distant and less profitable one, in order to make up in quantity what is lacking in profitableness. This effect may be good in promoting energy and enterprise, but the cause is to be deplored, nevertheless. We must all rejoice in the extension of our trade with the Mother Country and hope that it may continually increase, but it would not, probably, be difficult to show that a good deal of the trade which has been diverted across the Atlantic has been carried on with smaller margins of profit to the original producers than those which have hitherto obtained. As to the industrial statistics, it must be repeated, as often as these figures are marshalled for the glory of the "N. P.," that in the first place, there is a palpable fallacy in the assumption or suggestion that all of those industries which do now actually exist are due to the policy of protection, the fact being, as was pretty conclusively shewn by Mr. Patterson and others, that very many of the most valuable were flourishing before the "N. P." existed, and that the rate of growth prior to 1878 was little if at all less than it has been since, in any except a few of what may be called the "hot-house" kind. It is, in a word, impossible to prove that had the rates of duty which prevailed twelve or fourteen years ago been steadily maintained, the growth of manufactures would not have been on the whole as large and much more substantial. In the second place, it must not be forgotten that the figures so much vaunted are, themselves, directly challenged, and in fact in several specific instances shown to be incapable of verification—a most serious fact with which no speaker on the government side has at this date fairly grappled. The consequence is that before we can accept as fact the alleged growth of manufacturing industries under the fostering

"N. P." the figures given must be proved and then reduced by the sum of all the industries that were in successful operation before the high tariff was imposed, plus an allowance for the increase that might have been naturally expected to take place had the revenue tariff been maintained to date.

But these are, after all, round-about processes for the settlement of such a question. There is a much more direct way of getting at the fact, viz., by inquiring of the people themselves. Mr. Foster's own admission, which really was the reason for being of a considerable part of his speech, that there is widespread unrest and dissatisfaction throughout the country, is worth more as evidence in regard to the point under consideration than reams of statistics. Whether the manufacturers and traders are prosperous or not, there can be no doubt that the farmers, who constitute the bulk of the population and the backbone of the country's strength, are not prosperous. Hence this strong tariff-reform movement even amongst the supporters of the Government.

One proposition laid down and reiterated by Mr. Foster deserves special attention. Pointing out very truly that the country must have a revenue, and under existing circumstances, a pretty large revenue, and that this can be had only by taxation in some form, he says again and again, in effect, that it is the duty of the Government to see that this burden is fairly distributed among all classes and that all should be willing to bear their shares of the burden. Why, it is just here that the strongest indictment against protectionism is laid. The principle of fair and equal taxation of all classes for the support of the public service underlies both the free-trade and the revenue-tariff systems. The gravamen of the impeachment of the "N. P.," and of every system of protection, is that instead of taxing all citizens alike for the maintenance of the public service, they tax one class of citizens for the benefit of another, and especially tax all other classes for the benefit of the manufacturers. What is protested against is not so much the tax which goes into the public chest as the other and larger tax which goes to the protected manufacturers, and enables many of them to become millionaires at the expense of the general public. The tariff-reformers might well thank Mr. Foster for teaching them that watch-word, "Taxes that bear equally on all classes of citizens," as distinguished from taxes which take money out of the pockets of one class and transfer it to those of another, which take money out of the pockets of the many and transfer it to those of the few.

The Government's reduction of the duty on two out of the many articles in regard to which the demand is being made might be accepted as an earnest of good things to come were it not that every prospect of possible relief held out in the latter part of Mr. Foster's speech was carefully guarded by a counter assurance that the protective policy would be maintained. It can hardly be that these vague promises to inquire into the matter and possibly make some readjustments can satisfy the recalcitrant supporters of the Government. It is still less supposable that it can satisfy the farmers and others all over the country who are, or believe that they are, feeling the pinching of unfair and unnecessarily high taxation for the benefit of a class. As a matter of statesmanship, it is surely bad policy to create a

feeling of distrust and misgiving which can hardly fail to have a disturbing and more or less paralyzing effect upon all branches of protected industries for a year. As a matter of responsible administration the point seems well taken, that it is paying a poor compliment to the representatives of the people, who have come from all parts of the Dominion, and may be supposed to know more about the state of business than three or four members of the Government can possibly find out in a year, for the Ministers to announce that they will personally inquire into the matter. One might almost ask what is the use of popular representation if it cannot be depended upon for information in a case of this kind.

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

Early in the month of May next an event of unusual interest to every part of the British Empire will take place at South Kensington, England. We refer, of course, to the formal opening by the Queen in person of the Imperial Institute. This institution had its origin, it will be remembered, in a suggestion made by the Prince of Wales, in a letter addressed to the Lord Mayor of London, in 1886, the Jubilee Year. In this letter His Royal Highness proposed that advantage be taken of the remarkable interest excited by the recent Colonial and Indian Exhibition to perfect a scheme for the permanent representation of the resources and progress of the Colonies and India. An organizing committee was shortly afterwards appointed by the Prince of Wales for the purpose of framing a scheme for an Imperial Institute, and a report was prepared and published by that body, on the 20th December, 1886, setting forth the outline of a proposal for combining, in a harmonious form, with a view to the attainment of objects of practical utility, a representation of the Colonies and India, on the one hand, and of the United Kingdom on the other. On the 12th January, 1887, His Royal Highness presided, at St. James's Palace, over an assembly which included representatives of county, municipal, and other local authorities of the United Kingdom; the presidents, secretaries and other officers of the most prominent scientific, commercial, artistic and technical institutions and associations of the country, and the leading home-representatives of the Colonies and India. At this meeting resolutions approving of the proposals set forth in the report of the organizing committee were unanimously adopted. A very numerously-attended public meeting was held at the Mansion House the same day, when resolutions were passed similar to those adopted at the meeting at St. James' Palace. Active measures were at once taken for the collection of subscriptions throughout the Empire for the establishment and maintenance of the Imperial Institute, and before the end of the year 1887, contributions amounting to nearly £350,000 had been promised. Canada's contribution, through the Dominion Government, was £20,000. Most of the other Colonies of the Empire contributed in proportion. The subscriptions received from native Princes, public bodies, and private individuals in India amounted up to June 30th, 1891, to more than \$100,000.

A Report recently received brings the further history of the enterprise up to a date near the end of 1892. The building, which it is expected will be completed, or nearly completed,