

have them suppose. They were told that, before 1873, this country enjoyed a degree of prosperity unexampled and unparalleled; that the Government of that day, owing to their great ability and wonderful patriotism, and extraordinary powers, contrived to roll up surpluses with one hand, while, with the other, they swept away taxation. But it was important to remark that during the years before 1873, the hon. gentlemen opposite found it necessary to increase the taxation two or three different times, and so hard set were they that at one time they introduced a system of taxing all the packages in which goods were imported, adding some 5 per cent. on the total amount of taxes collected. Now, it was unquestionable that even to-day, some six months after their return to power, this country was suffering from very serious depression, which they were asked to admit was caused by the late Administration. They were told by the Minister of Public Works, too, that the magnificent fabric, the stately and beautiful and solid fabric reared by their predecessors, was ruthlessly destroyed by the bungling want of patriotism and want of ability of the Liberal Administration. That, again, was a statement entirely contrary to the facts. What was the cause of the extraordinary increase of revenue for which the gentlemen on the other side so boldly demanded credit? At the close of the American war, the whole commercial world was disturbed, and no part of it so much as Canada. The people of the United States, finding their farms without stock, and their ships and stores almost empty, bought in Canada vast numbers of horses, horned cattle, sheep, pigs, turkeys, and other fowl, at extravagant prices, and created in this country an extraordinary degree of temporary prosperity. About that time, also, there was an extraordinary amount of speculation in railway building. Ontario, from her large accumulated surpluses, had begun to assist different railways, which, with bonuses from municipalities, and the sale of bonds, led to the expenditure of some \$15,000 to \$30,000 a mile on several hundred miles of new railroads—all this contributing to swell the expenditure of the country, and increase its apparent prosperity. But, more, there was the

notorious fact that the prices of merchandise, for some extraordinary reason, advanced in an unusual degree, so that the revenue of this country increased enormously for three or four years, without any effort on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite. For this they were not entitled to the slightest credit. Nor, if they had fair pretensions to the character of statesmen, would they make any claim to credit for an increase entirely independent of anything they did, or could do. They knew that the prices of cotton goods, woollen goods, and more particularly all articles of iron, advanced remarkably in price. In that way, as their imports increased—not in quantities so much as in value—the revenue increased to an unprecedented extent. Those hon. gentlemen made extraordinary efforts to overtake that increase of revenue. Each year they framed their estimates so as to cover the increase of the previous year. With a zeal, perhaps commendable, certainly very noteworthy, they kept up this chase to the last moment. The last time the present Finance Minister appeared in the same capacity, he introduced a Budget in which he proposed to expend the extraordinary sum of \$23,500,000. The Finance Minister told them in New Brunswick, before they came into Confederation, that they would never spend more than \$11,500,000 a year in their time—that \$11,500,000 would cover all expenses for all purposes that could be imagined, even including the expenditure of \$1,000,000 for Militia expenses. But his Nemesis followed him, too, and after Confederation, in the very first year in which he became Finance Minister, he introduced an estimate for almost double the amount which he said would be sufficient. Well, they knew how this increase went on. They knew how the revenue rolled up. Great credit was taken by the men now in power for striking off taxes. They took the tax off tea and coffee the last year they were in power, because the idea of a free breakfast table had taken possession of the people of the United States, and it would have been perfect folly for a Canadian Government to attempt to collect the duty on tea and coffee under the circumstances, and, therefore, they took the duty off those articles,