

wasting the public revenue, and that there was no justification for their expenditure. He took so gloomy and desperate a view of the resources of the country that he thought the country was going to be plunged into debt and ruined, but every budget had given them millions more than the hon. gentleman said it would. They were open to his criticism in 1871-1872, in 1872-1873 and in 1873-1874; and he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) asked if these were legitimate criticisms and if the late Government had not some excuse for lavish expenditure, because they found themselves in this position; with reduced taxation and reduced burdens on the people, they had abundant money to expend upon public services requiring the aid and support of the Government.

The hon. gentleman said in his speech that a great many of the services were charged to current expenditure which might more properly belong to capital, and that every Government was in the habit of charging such works as Custom Houses and the Post Office at Montreal to capital, and not to current expenditure. He (Hon. Mr. Tupper) would tell the hon. gentleman he would agree with him that such large expenditures should not be charged to current expenditure unless they were in a position to show that the revenue of the day, under the existing tariff, would provide for them. That was the position of the late Government. Their position was that in six years, notwithstanding this lavish expenditure, \$11,726,045 had been expended out of the current revenue on permanent public works chargeable to capital. The public debt by this action of the late Government was upwards of \$11,000,000, and less than it would have been had they not appropriated this sum to public works—chargeable to capital.

They paid the further sum of over \$260,000 into the sinking fund for the reduction of the debt, independent of that, and while they were doing this, notwithstanding their lavish expenditure they were able to show that they could not only reduce the public debt, expend millions on public works chargeable to capital, but at the same time reduce the rate of taxation on imports for consumption from 18 1/2 to 10 1/2 per cent, which they did in three years including the present year. He would ask if a Government that stood in that position was not in a position to carry on the public services of the country, not only in a generous manner but to lavishly expend the public funds in the construction of the various public works needed in the various Provinces.

What was the hon. gentleman's own position? He, who denounced the late Government as unworthy of the confidence of the country, the Government which had made these expenditures, while they had abundant means after decreasing the tariff, came before the House and said, "I am going not only to ask the House to make just as lavish expenditure as that I have denounced, but bring down a heavier Budget than even they did."

He (Hon. Mr. Tupper) maintained that the hon. gentleman was in a completely untenable position, and the hon. gentleman faltered when he stood up before the House and asked the House to levy \$3,000,000 additional taxation, and with the same breath for a vote of a larger sum of money for current expenditure than his predecessor, whom he denounced, has ever asked for. The Finance Minister was on the horns of a dilemma and he attempted to escape

from it by the most disingenuous statement a Finance Minister ever made.

Here was a remarkable statement which the hon. gentleman addressed to this House in justification of this position and he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) invited the careful attention of the House to this statement of the Finance Minister. This portion of his speech was as follows: "Then with regard to public works chargeable to income, my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works estimates that he will require no less than \$2,630,000. That estimate is larger than Mr. Tilley's, which was \$2,450,000; but I call the attention of the Committee to those items of the estimates, because they will find that in the particulars chargeable to income, my hon. friend has hardly an item on his own account with the exception of St. John's Harbour, the whole of this sum being devoted to carrying out works actually engaged in by his predecessors. I am aware that some of my hon. friends think this an enormous outlay that need not be gone on with but I desire to say that the public works which are in process of construction must be completed within a short time. I can see no purpose to be served by "cooking" our estimates, and apparently reducing the amount chargeable this year in order that it may be swollen the next."

"My hon. friend has preferred, and I think he was perfectly right in so doing, to bring down these estimates to show the obligations placed on him by the action of the late Government. I invite the special attention of the Committee to these items, because they will see that, in going through the estimates of roads and bridges and buildings in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, votes had been taken, money spent, and work actually engaged in by my hon. friend's predecessors. I contend that my hon. friend cannot fairly be held responsible for going on with works which he found actually commenced, and in some cases half completed by the late Government, and if these items are excessive, the fault does not lie with my hon. friend; the fault lies with the hon. gentlemen who rendered it necessary that he should demand this sum at the hands of the House." (*Hear, hear.*)

"We are at this moment engaged in completing extensive public works of this particular kind, and possibly some of this might fairly be charged to capital account, but it has not been done heretofore and on the whole it would not now be expedient to commence, though in any case I hope a considerable saving will be effected. I must again repeat that it would be in the last degree unjust to my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works to hold him responsible for this state of things, or to ask him to stop works already commenced and to put a reduced sum in the estimates; but, when the works now engaged in are completed, which I expect will be the case in eighteen months, a considerable saving will be effected in the annual expenditure, though for this considerable period of time it is necessarily required." (*Hear, hear.*)

On this very point the Hon. Minister of Finance had especially denounced his predecessors. He and his colleagues had especially denounced the late Government for this class of public works as bribes to constituencies for the purchase of support in Parliament. The Hon. Minister of Finance brought down a budget containing a total of public works chargeable to income of \$2,723,300 against