

that the rate of taxation was very high, and that if they got in it would be diminished. What have been the customs duties raised by the Liberal-Conservative Government from 1891 up to 1896 ?

In—

1891-92 .....	\$20,550,000
1892-93 .....	21,161,000
1893-94 .....	19,379,000
1894-95 .....	17,887,000
1895-96 .....	20,219,000

Total for the five years.... \$99,198,000

Or an average over the five years of \$19,800,000 per year.

That is a percentage of 17½ per cent upon all goods entered for consumption in the country, and, as I said before, the average per capita customs rate is \$3.95, as compared with an average of \$3.44 from 1874 to 1878, and which rose in 1875 to \$3.95.

The whole question as to whether my hon. friends opposite are going to reduce the taxation, hinges upon their expenditures. If you gentlemen expend more than we did on your consolidated revenue fund account, you must raise more revenue; and if you raise more revenue you cannot reduce the per capita rate. You are already preparing to spend millions more each year, and you must raise the per capita of expenditure in order to meet it—unless the present Finance Minister, with a light heart and a jaunty air is going to sail out upon the financial sea for the next three or four years, thinking that he can spend millions over what he receives, and pay current expenses out of loans. But I cannot think so poorly of hon. gentlemen opposite as to think they will introduce and carry out that system. Then, if they pay their way as they go on consolidated fund account, they will have to raise the per capita rate of the customs, and consequently raise the taxation. Therefore, that pledge falls to the ground.

What, Sir, about the pledge as to the debt? I do not know but that I ought to read something of the hon. gentlemen's announcements with reference to the debt, but they are fresh in their memory, and I am inclined to believe that our friends here have not forgotten them, so that I do not think it is any use warming up old porridge. Let us take it for granted, that one of the strong indictments against the Conservative party which they made was, that the debt was increasing rapidly and too heavily, and that a stop ought to be put to its increase. I appeal to my hon. friend from Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), who sits opposite me, whether he has not tuned on that minor key many and many a time in this House of Commons. But, Sir, what are they going to do about the debt? Are they going to stop it growing; are they going to reduce it; are they going to keep it from leaping up by bounds? Their own actions

Mr. FOSTER.

answer. Sir, the net debt in the following years was :

Net debt in 1890.....	\$237,533,000
do 1896.....	258,497,000

Increase in that term..... 20,964,221

Less \$2,394,000, which was a liability incurred in 1884—if it were ever incurred—and which by a method of book-keeping has now been transferred to the year 1895-96. Deducting that, it gives \$18,570,000 as the increase in the net debt from 1890 to 1896, or an average of \$2,652,900 each year.

Now, Sir, with the statement that I have made as to expenditure, and the statement I have made as to revenue, which are within sight in the year 1896-97, these hon. gentlemen will come out, not with a debt increase of \$1,750,000, as my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) stated yesterday, for this present year, but they will come out with a debt increase of nearer \$4,000,000, and with a deficit, not of \$500,000, but of nearer \$2,000,000. Therefore, the debt must be increased.

And as to the debt for 1897-98, with \$6,000,000 and odd for capital expenditure already estimated, and more to come, and a deficit by the acknowledgment of the Finance Minister which you must add to that, deducting only the sinking fund, there will be an increase of many millions of debt in 1896-97. So that, if there were any contract made between the people of this country and hon. gentlemen opposite, on the ground of the pledges of hon. gentlemen opposite that they would decrease the debt of this country, or at least would prevent it from rolling up, then that contract so signed by one party has been ignored by the other, and they are going on the straight road towards piling up millions of debt each year.

And, Sir, what else can we expect from the various hints that come to us from different quarters; from certain things that have transpired in the province of Nova Scotia; from certain things that have transpired in the province of Prince Edward Island; from certain things that are transpiring, not only as to old claims of provinces which now, when their friends are in power, they think ought to get recognition, but of the multitudinous claims rushed upon hon. gentlemen opposite to the amount of more than \$50,000,000 (by the statement of the Prime Minister himself) asked for public expenditure in this country. I am afraid, Sir, when I consider the weakness that hon. gentlemen exhibited when that hungry rush was made upon them by the back benches for offices filled by honourable men, when instead of holding themselves firm against that indecent rush they gave up their better and more matured opinions, and made of the civil service of this country a sink of distrust, and spying, and general discontent and uncertainty. If they could not hold themselves firm against that rush from the back benches to turn honest