

April 14, 1874

House, and he did not desire the impression to go forth to the people that was desired to be conveyed with regard to the manner in which the late Government had discharged the high duties which had been entrusted to them—that there should go forth to the country something more reliable and sound than those utterances.

He referred to papers which had been laid on the table of the House by the Government—the trade and navigation returns and public accounts. Those documents would give an emphatic and official contradiction to the references that had been made to the past administration of the public affairs of this country. They would be sufficient to render harmless and inoperative any of the strictures that had been offered in the House tonight, and those documents showed that the late Government had succeeded in carrying into effect the union of the British North American Provinces—that they had successfully created a Dominion out of a number of isolated provinces with antagonistic interests.

What was the financial condition of the Provinces at the time the Union took place? Who was there that did not know that there was scarcely one of the Provinces that formed a portion of the Dominion but was financially embarrassed? Who was there that did not know that Ontario and Quebec had an annual deficit, and that a gigantic debt had threatened to paralyse the country and imperil its credit?

The documents to which he had referred showed that such had been the administration of public affairs in this country that in the short period of five years the exports rose from \$57,567,888 to \$89,789,922—an increase of no less than \$32,222,034 in that short period. There had been an increase in the imports during those five years of no less than \$54,451,637. Some five years ago all that the tariff of the Dominion gave to the Government was \$8,819,431, and yet today, taxes having been swept away that bore an onerous weight upon some portion of the population, with a largely decreased and lightened taxation, there had been an increase in the revenue in this respect of no less than \$4,198,309. Yet the hon. gentleman would venture to lead the people of this country to suppose that its public affairs had been managed unwisely, and that the condition of this country was one to be deplored.

He had listened to the delivery of the Speech from the Throne with infinite pleasure, because from the beginning to the end he saw there was one continued tribute of respect and admiration from the present Government to the policy their predecessor had advocated and he thought that this was such a tribute that the late Administration deserved the title of Liberals as well as Conservatives.

There was a passage in the speech which he read with deep pain, and that was that the country was suffering from a commercial depression. Had the Hon. Finance Minister in his speech borne out that statement? The only industry he pretended was suffering the slightest depression was the agricultural interest, and he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) would ask the great consuming population of the country whether they thought the agricultural interest was suffering. (*Hear, hear.*) He thought they would give a decided response without any hesitation, that the agricultural interest at this moment was enjoying a condition of prosperity second to that of no agricultural interests

in the world. That was the only interest the hon. gentleman ventured to say was suffering from depression.

Hon. Mr. HOLTON remarked that reference was made to the lumbering interest in the financial speech.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said that reference had escaped him.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said that the Hon. Minister of Finance had stated that the interest which, in its exporting powers, was much larger than the agricultural interest, was also depressed.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said that those connected with the lumbering interest of this country might not be amassing fortunes with the celerity they had done for the past few years, but he considered that this industry could afford a certain amount of temporary depression.

He continued. He said the last Minister of Finance had estimated that the deficiency would be \$250,000, and the actual deficiency was something over \$80,000. This showed that his hon. friend, Mr. Tilley, instead of being sanguine as had been alleged against him, was too cautious. There was \$1,316,000 already to meet any deficiency that might occur during the current year. If ever there was a Government which stood in a position to have their conduct criticised it was not the late Administration. What had they done?

Six years ago the people of the country paid about 12 1/4 per cent duty on the entire imports, and the late Minister of Finance had been able to show the House that, after five years of administration of affairs, the rate of taxation had been reduced from 12 1/4 per cent to less than 9 1/2 per cent. That was the financial condition of affairs, and that was the mode that the Government of Union and Progress had adopted. The late Government were prepared here and elsewhere to take upon themselves the entire responsibility of being the men who consolidated—he might say created in the first instance—this great Union, and who had extended it until it not only reached from the Atlantic, but embraced the gem of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Island of Prince Edward.

He was disappointed as he listened to the taunting remarks of the Hon. Minister of Finance towards Prince Edward Island. He trusted that, whatever Party was in power, such a policy would never be pursued in regard to that Island as would cause it to regret that it trusted to Canada. What had this Union done for old Canada? Contrasting our position then with that of the present day, he asked every member from Ontario and Quebec if this Union had not been attended with very great advantages, financially and politically.

The Hon. Minister of Finance had said that the actual outlay of the current year would be \$24,000,000; but he had followed it with so many “ifs” that he had left the House in the dark. In the figures which the hon. gentleman had offered to the House, he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) had failed to find any justification for the paragraph on the paper for the proposal of adding \$3,000,000 to the taxation.

The House had heard a great deal about the vicious results of a Coalition Government. If ever there was a vicious Coalition, it was the present combination. He would mention, *en passant*, that when the Hon. Minister of Finance had withdrawn from his associates of twenty years, he left them on the avowed ground that he did it as a