

April 30, 1874

must acknowledge that the estimates were not so well prepared as he would have liked them to have been, because in his famous speech he had stated that during the five months he had been in office he had spent three of them in the elections, and had only been able to devote eight weeks to the affairs of the country and he had the humiliating confession tonight that he had miscalculated the true interest of the people in the important question of levying taxes to the extent of three million.

It did not become the hon. gentleman to question the fact he stated to the House, that there never was a time in the history of this country that it was more necessary that every independent member should address himself to the consideration of the important questions upon which the prosperity of Canada depended.

Now the hon. gentleman had said they had no reason to expect more than twenty-two million of revenue during the coming year. He (Hon. Mr. Tupper) joined issue there with the hon. gentleman. He could go back and take up year after year and show a steadily increasing revenue in the face of decreased taxation. He could show that they had reduced the taxation over \$2,000,000 a year; that they had still a surplus of upwards of \$1,600,000 last year, and that in the current year they might look for over one and a half million income from the existing tariff. They might assume that the revenue for the last three months of the current year at the rate of the first nine months would be \$520,000; so the revenue of this year would be \$22,200,000.

The revenue of last year—"the year of heedless plenty", as the Hon. Minister of Finance had termed it, whatever he might mean by that—the revenue of last year, he repeated, it would be seen, was exceeded by the revenue of the current year by \$1,447,000. He thought he had established the point that there had been no falling off in the trade and business of the country, but that on the contrary it had been steadily increasing. If the Hon. Minister of Finance would add that \$1,500,000 to the \$2,260,000 that he had in the previous year, he would find he would have no excuse for asking for the imposition of a single dollar of additional taxation, even in view of the expenditure.

Having disposed of the question of the deficit—as to whether any would exist on the 1st of July, 1874—he proposed to examine the estimates the hon. gentleman had laid upon the table of the House, and he intended to show the House that the statement the hon. gentleman made a few nights previously was the most disingenuous speech that ever fell from the lips of any Finance Minister in the world. He would show that it would be impossible by terms to be found in the English language to convey a more disingenuous, a more unfair, or a more unjust statement of the public affairs of the country than that which the hon. gentleman had delivered.

If the hon. gentlemen would turn to the speech which he delivered, they would find this remarkable passage: "I do not know of any instance in which a Government having such a windfall of prosperity succeeded in four years in turning a surplus of \$4,000,000 into a deficit in the face of progressive revenue." (*Hear, hear.*) That sentiment was cheered by hon. gentlemen who sat behind the Finance Minister, and he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) supposed

they accepted it as true. It would be impossible in as many lines to make any statement so unfounded in fact, and so fully at variance with the facts.

He could refer them to a case, which occurred lately, in which a surplus of five million was turned into a deficit in an hour. Had the hon. gentleman read the speech of Sir Stafford Northcote, who rose to speak with a surplus of 5,000,000 pounds and who sat down with a deficit? The Chancellor of the Exchequer of England reduced his surplus just as the late Government reduced theirs. How did he do this? He did it by taking a penny off the income tax! How did the late Government dispose of ours? Why by reducing the taxation of the country \$2,000,000 a year, and expending the balance in the manner most useful to the country.

Hon. gentlemen knew they brought Provinces into the Dominion reducing this surplus; they had assumed the debt of Ontario and Quebec. That policy was sustained by an overwhelming majority of the House, and many of the tried supporters of the hon. leader of the Government abandoned him and voted against him on that policy. In the Maritime Provinces everyone knew there was but one sentiment. It was not increasing the debt of the country, but merely placing it in a different position and relieving Ontario and Quebec of this incubus. These Provinces were now enabled to employ the money they would have paid as interest on their debts in opening up the country and fostering the industries. That policy had stimulated the business and increased the revenues of the country. That policy would increase the business of the country which was going to pour money into our coffers, which money the Hon. Finance Minister seemed disposed to spend so lavishly.

The late Government spent \$150,000 in carrying out an important branch of the Reciprocity Treaty, in compensating the Province of New Brunswick for their export duty. He would ask if that was a waste of money. Hon. gentlemen had obstructed it to a certain point, but not one of them ventured to record a vote against it.

Then there were the charges in connection with the Northwest and the interest on the Intercolonial Railway loan by which they had converted the surplus into a deficit, but he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) called it reducing the surplus, as no deficit existed. They had paid nearly \$3,000,000 of money into the sinking fund, which had gone to the redemption of the debt, and which would, in about thirty-five years, wipe out the debt of the Intercolonial Railway. They had reduced the surplus of \$4,000,000 by remitting the taxation on the people and by providing liberally for the service of the country. In the face of these facts the hon. gentlemen opposite had flung taunts across the floor of the House, as if they (the Opposition) had been guilty of criminal waste of money while in power.

For the past three years the Hon. Finance Minister had been one of the most severe critics of the budgets brought down, and he (Hon. Mr. Tupper) appealed to every gentleman who was in the late Parliament as to whether he was correct in saying that there was no man in the House who denounced the late Government so continually and so pertinaciously for excessive expenditure. He held out to the people of the country that the late Government was