

tions, national conditions have all changed and materially for the better. Never in the history of Canada were the people so prosperous and contented. Never have they had such unbounded confidence in the future. Never did Canada stand so high in the estimation of the nations as she does to-day; industrial life and prosperity are evident on every hand and progress and development are to be seen on all sides. The farmers are thriving, farm mortgages are being rapidly paid off, the manufacturers are over-run with orders, the mechanics are being fully employed, and are receiving greatly increased wages, our lumbering industries are advancing by leaps and bounds and our mining interests are attracting the attention of the whole world. Our banking institutions, too, find safe and profitable investments for all their funds and our great railway corporations are receiving largely increased returns. The present Premier (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) when in opposition, once said, in reply to a long quotation of figures from the then Finance Minister (Mr. Foster), that when his party came into power it would not be necessary to quote figures to prove to the people that they were prosperous. The people would feel the jingle of prosperity in their pockets. I think that prediction has been abundantly verified; I think that the people are feeling the jingle of prosperity to-day as they never felt it before. Our foreign trade has wonderfully increased. Permit me to give a few figures in connection therewith. Our foreign trade has increased in the three years since 1896 by no less than \$82,000,000, but to enable one fully to grasp the greatness of this increase, a comparison is necessary. I find from the trade and navigation returns that the increase is greater by some \$16,000,000 than the increase for the eighteen years from 1878 to 1896. But, great as has been the increase in the last three fiscal years the trade of the present fiscal year bids fair to surpass it by many millions. Our total foreign trade for the six months ending December was \$208,000,000, which is within \$1,000,000 of the total foreign trade for the full fiscal year of 1899, and within \$25,000,000 of the total foreign trade for the full fiscal year of 1896. Our exports too, have largely increased; our exports are greater by \$20,000,000 for the six months of the present fiscal year than for the full year of 1899, and within \$12,000,000 of those for the full fiscal year of 1896. If the present rate of progress in our trade continues to the end of this fiscal year we shall touch the \$375,000,000 mark. Our highest foreign trade under the late Administration was \$247,000,000, and if expectations be realized our foreign trade for 1900 will exceed that of the best year under the late government by over \$125,000,000. These figures are eloquent in themselves and must make every true Cana-

Mr. GOULD.

dian proud of his country. This abundant prosperity is, I am sure, very gratifying to all of us, and more especially to the government who have done so much to bring it about. I am aware, Sir, that the opposition do not admit that the government are entitled to the credit for this prosperous state of affairs, but I venture to say that the great thinking public do not take that view. I believe that the great majority of the people of Canada are fully satisfied that the government are entitled to a very large measure of credit for this prosperous state of affairs. At all events, Sir, we cannot close our eyes to this fact, that immediately upon the advent of the present administration to power prosperity at once returned. Confidence was restored and business has progressed amazingly ever since. At the Reform Convention in this city, in 1893, the Liberal party declared in favour of a sound fiscal policy—a policy of tariff reform, a policy that would lighten the burdens of the people without doing any injustice to any class, and would at the same time bring back prosperity to the country, and I am bound to say that that declaration has been carried out by the present administration. The tariff has been reformed; the taxation of the people has been reduced, prosperity has returned, and the farmers especially are receiving great benefit by the changes. But, it is not through the changes in the tariff alone that the government has advanced the interests of the country. Its vigorous policy in respect to transportation is highly commendable and will receive the approbation of the country. The transportation problem is one of the greatest that can engage the attention of the government. It is of prime importance that our products be conveyed to the best markets in the cheapest possible manner and with the utmost despatch. Every dollar saved in the cost of transporting grain and other farm products is so much saved to the agriculturists, and through them, to the people. In this connection the government and the country are to be congratulated upon the completion of the St. Lawrence Canal system. We have now a system of water transport from the head of Lake Superior to the city of Montreal which will accommodate vessels drawing 14 feet of water. The greatness of this accomplishment cannot be realized now, but our own and succeeding generations of Canadians will be vastly benefited by it. And, Sir, though much has been done to develop the interests of transportation, much remains to be done. I think we are safe in saying that the present government is fully alive to the situation and that they will deal with the matter in a sound businesslike way. I am pleased to notice that the Department of Agriculture has pursued a progressive policy in reference to our cold storage and shipping