

venerable friend and predecessor to induce him to remain in office was made use of, I am sorry to say without success. I did so for two reasons, because I felt that it was in the interest of the country that he should do so. I felt under his administration of the last three years that he had been most successful in securing the confidence of a large portion of the people, and I am sure a large portion of the members of the last House and of many of them who differed with him in politics. I felt it was desirable that he should continue to occupy the position for that reason; but I had other reasons that were of more importance.

It was when I found that, if he retired from the responsible position he then occupied, those responsibilities must fall on my shoulders, shoulders less able to bear them, and upon one who would less worthily and less ably advocate and present the views and opinions of the Government before this Parliament, that I deeply regretted his retirement. And I felt also on personal grounds that following so able and experienced a statesman and with such short notice, I was placed in a very unfavourable position as compared with the position I might occupy under other circumstances. For these and other reasons I said all I could say to my predecessor and to my colleagues to induce him to remain. I am sure that my endeavours were followed up by those of every one of his colleague and every member of the Government in the same spirit and in the same direction; and it was only when he informed me that it was declared by his medical advisers that, unless he retired from active political life it would shorten his days, and involve him in the most serious responsibilities, that I ceased to urge upon him the arguments and inducements I had been presenting.

Now, Sir, leaving this point, I come to the consideration of the grave questions which are to be presented to this House today. It is usual, on such occasions, to take into consideration the period of three years, embracing the preceding year, the current year, and the year that is to come but I desire, by permission of the House, and it is of some importance that I should do so, to extend my enquiries a little further back than the preceding year, and extend them over the first five years of Confederation. I do so because in this House there are a great many new members who have not had an opportunity of studying our financial position, as other members of this House have had who have been here during those five years. One-third of the members are new faces, and I am satisfied that some of them have not had an opportunity of looking into, investigating, and enquiring into the financial condition of the country during the last five years.

I do so also, Sir, because whatever may be said upon this subject outside of Parliament through the press, by the Government or the friends of the Government, or by the leaders of the Opposition or their supporters with reference to our financial condition in the past, still there may be some question as to the correctness and accuracy of those statements so put forth. There might, I say, be some question, because it would naturally be considered from whatever side those statements emanated, that some allowances were to be made; in fact that the gentleman who made them, or the press which

put them forth, were influenced by Party considerations. But, Sir, on the floor of this House, in the presence of the able leaders of the Opposition, with all the facts and figures before them, and they thoroughly and perfectly cognizant with respect to them, I feel that, if the statements made here cannot be gainsaid, if they cannot be shown to be incorrect or unreliable, the country will be in a position to accept those statements as trustworthy and to be depended upon.

Now, Sir, I may say that, rising from the consideration of the past five years, no matter how we view it, whether in a commercial point of view, whether with respect to trade and commerce, its banking operations, its imports and exports, the increase of the tonnage of our vessels, or with respect to the financial condition of the Dominion, in every aspect in which we view it, I rise from the enquiry, feeling the greatest possible encouragement not only with regard to the past, but with regard to the present, and with regard to the future. (*Loud cheers.*)

Now, Sir, with respect to the last five years, let me call the attention of the House to a few facts which are calculated to show what has been the material progress of the Dominion in the period. First, I call the attention of the House to the marvellous and wonderful increase in the capital that is invested in the banking operations of the Dominion. I call the attention of the House to the extraordinary increase in the deposits of the banks of the Dominion. Nothing can show more clearly and satisfactorily the steady and gradual increase in the wealth of the population of this Dominion, than the facts to which I am now about to call the attention of the House.

Let me first refer to the paid up capital of the banks in 1867. In February 1867, the paid up capital of the banks was \$28,692,980; the paid up capital in 1873 was \$49,189,969. We take now the deposits in 1867, and we find the amount to be \$26,103,004, and in 1873 \$59,560,003. Add to these the deposits in the savings' banks, and we have a net increase of deposits, in the ordinary banks of the country and the savings' banks, of nearly \$33,000,000 within the space of six years. With regard to the increase of the paid-up capital of the banks—and this calculation was confined to Ontario and Quebec, because the returns for the other Provinces had not all come in—it amounted to \$20,497,000. This gives evidence of the progress and prosperity of the Dominion.

But I desire to call the attention of the House to the steady progress made in the imports of the Dominion since the Union; and in the exports, I am glad to say as well. First, with respect to the exports. In 1868, they amounted to \$57,567,888; in 1869 to \$60,474,781, in 1870, to \$73,573,490; in 1871 to \$74,173,618; in 1872, to \$82,639,663, and in the first-half of the current year, to \$53,488,968. (*Cheers.*)

Now then, Sir, we come to the value of the goods entered for consumption during the same period. We find that the goods entered for consumption in 1868 were of the value of \$71,985,306; in 1869, of \$67,402,170, a falling off in that year of upwards of \$4,000,000, which might be attributed to the fact that during the