

dock) made a very fine speech about the decisions of the Versailles Conference; but the workers of this country to-day are like hungry lads outside a confectioner's shop window. When these workers are driven to desperation the Minister of National Defence will not hesitate to send the militia there as he sent them to Sydney last year. In the past we have seen empires rise, reach their zenith, wane and pass away. The verdict of history points to the cause as being the lack of interest on the part of the common people in their civilization and their government. Russia is the last case in point where the wedge of privilege was driven in to cause a cleavage and separate the toilers from any interest they might have in their common wealth.

If the protectionist dominions of the British Empire, and especially this Dominion, fell in line with the Mother Country in a free trade policy they would place themselves in a position to share with her the material benefits which the economic blunders of other nations are forcing upon her in the hope of bringing about her ruin. England to-day is the centre, the trading mart, of the world, just as she used to be. Month by month she is increasing her trade and shipbuilding, while we are making the same mistake as the United States did some years ago when she taxed foreign goods and shipping in the hope of making that country the great trading and carrying country of the world. Our short-sighted policy of placing a penalty on the trade of the country has involved this Dominion in a huge deficit in respect of our merchant marine fleet, and the day is close at hand when we shall see the end of that venture unless we reverse our national policy. England is still the greatest carrier of the world. She cares nought for the tariffs of other countries; the mistaken policies of other countries are keeping the cost of production so low in Great Britain that tariff policies of other lands make little difference to her. Canada, under the mistaken policy of protection, has impoverished the industries natural to this country in order to maintain an export trade for industries that admittedly cannot stand on their own feet. I say admittedly, and this, I want to inform my hon. friends, is where the hallucination may be again applied. Our statesmen to-day, ignorant of economies, are refusing, even if they are able, to see the consequences of their own action in the depletion of the farms in every province of this Dominion and the exodus of mechanics to seek work in other lands. The fact is that they have killed their own home market by the shortsighted policy of protection.

[Mr. Evans.]

Britain will be the first country in the world to free herself from the abnormal load of debt occasioned by the war, in which she placed all her allies in a position to resist the kaiserism and bondage that threatened the world at that time. Britain has now arrested the decline in shipbuilding. Last month an increase was reported in the tonnage built of 24,000 tons over the output for the previous three months, while we in Canada have a modern merchant marine fleet which under present policy we would be well rid of. Britain's exports expanded by \$15,000,000 in the same period, and the fiscal year which has just terminated yielded a surplus revenue of \$500,000,000, which is being applied to the redemption of the public debt, thus simplifying the problem of national finance for the present year. And most important of all, there is a reduction of 6 pence in the pound in the income tax, as well as a cutting of the corporation tax in half and a lowering of the excise on certain articles. During the year gone by we, on the other hand, have had to increase our national debt and the Minister of Finance is hard put to it to find sufficient revenue for the current year.

Protectionist countries contribute to the cheapness of production in Britain by taxing themselves to bonus importations into that country, and this generosity on our part is so costly that we have in the past been keeping the financiers of Britain and other countries busy furnishing loans to make good the difference. At the same time, our natural resources are not developed as they should be, and we are stifling to death the one basic industry that may be able under other conditions to pay its way—agriculture.

I did hope to see in this budget some consistency regarding the tariff. If we need tariff for revenue, why do we maintain tariff laws and regulations that can absolutely, at the will of the minister, prohibit imports on which revenue may be collected? I am speaking now of the anti-dumping clause with its latest amendments and regulations, all interpreted in favour of those whose interest it is to eliminate competition and not to collect revenue. When we go back to our constituencies what shall we advise our people to do? Shall we tell them to buy foreign-made goods so that we may furnish revenue for the carrying on of government? Or shall we advise them to buy the home-made product enhanced in price by import penalties and help to swell the coffers of the protected industries, the distributing combines, and so on, and give them the increase of power that goes with money to dictate the policy of this country?