

and text of his remarks the speech of the seconder of the resolution. I do not know what the hon. gentleman would have done if the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Townshend) had not furnished him with the text on which he preached such an eloquent, and at the same time, a rather discursive, amusing and instructive address. All three speeches were eloquent; but there was a difference in the style of their eloquence. The hon. gentleman stated, while paying a compliment to my hon. friend behind me, that all his language was euphemistic and hyperbolic. It cannot be said, in regard to any remarks made by the hon. gentleman opposite, with respect to the development of Canada, that his remarks were either euphemistic or hyperbolic. He is pessimistic—and I was going to say maledicent. The hon. gentleman said with a very grave face—he had to admit it, though he did so with some reluctance—that we had had a very good crop, an abundant harvest. He said that gloomily, but his countenance lighted up when he added that the prices are very low; and he alluded to a remark made by my old friend Rufus Stephenson, some years ago, that \$1 was the normal value of that important cereal, wheat. The hon. gentleman was quite cheery at the idea that this country was not so prosperous—at all events that the Speech did not announce universal prosperity, as previous Speeches from the Throne had done. Well, we had to tell the truth; we did tell the truth: that Canada was suffering, but in no very great degree, from the depression which existed alike in the protectionist country of the United States and the free trade country of Great Britain and Ireland. The hon. gentleman stated that the chief cause of the depression in this country was the high, unjust taxation which oppressed the people. I would ask him, I would ask this House and the country, if there is any evidence of the people objecting to the present system of taxation. In 1879 the tariff was introduced with the general assent of the people and of their representatives. The tariff has in no great degree been altered since that time. The oppression, if it took place, took place in and from 1879. Since that time there has been an appeal to the people. Has there been laid on this Table any petition from any body, large or small, important or insignificant, showing that the country is suffering from excessive, unjust, sectional, exorbitant or oppressive taxation? No. We hear throughout the country that the millers and some other interests are asking an increase of taxation; but no body, party or individual is complaining of the policy of the Government in establishing this protective tariff. The hon. gentleman should not set up his own opinion, for it represents but a small minority in the country who are free traders. The hon. gentleman knows, if he will admit it, that a very large body of those acting with him, and called Reformers, those having general confidence in him and want of confidence in the present Administration, aye, those hon. gentlemen who sit behind and cheer him, would not allow him, if he occupied my position, to carry out the extreme views of free trade which he has enunciated to-night here, and has enunciated elsewhere. They would not allow him to do it, and he knows this right well. The hon. gentleman made, however, one very important admission in his speech. He admitted for the first time in his life that there had been a brief gleam of prosperity—a too brief gleam of prosperity; and it was, I repeat, the first occasion on which he, as the leader of the party which he leads so ably, admitted that there was any prosperity. Let us look back to the faithful *Hansard*; let us read the speeches made by him in the years 1879-80-81-82-83-84, and we will find that during the period of this brief prosperity, in every Session and in every speech, without one single admission of there being even a gleam of prosperity, the same pessimistic cry was raised that the country was ruined and oppressed; that this enormous taxation was ruinous to the country's best interests; and now the hon. gentleman

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is obliged to admit that there has been a gleam of prosperity. And it has passed; it was too brief; it only lasted a short time. Mr. Speaker, it exists at this moment.

Mr. MILLS. Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes; the hon. gentlemen will laugh and sneer and regret it, as they do regret it, but I say that this country at this moment is substantially prosperous. It is a prosperous country, and when the hon. gentleman or any other hon. gentleman says there is anything like real poverty, in the European sense—aye, or in the American sense of poverty—by which a man cannot get bread for himself and family, I deny it. I say he is libelling this country; he is making an untruthful statement regarding the condition of the people of this country. I say that, looking at the country as a whole, from one end to the other, any industrious man can earn a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. To be sure, the hon. gentleman says, "Look at the factories; look at Cornwall and Kingston, and several other places where the cotton trade was suffering, where there was depression." Well, we all know, and we said at the time the tariff was introduced—my hon. friend the Minister of Finance said it, and I in my place said, when we were told that the consequence of introducing the National Policy would be that there would be a great number of cotton lords having a monopoly of the trade, that they would build up enormous fortunes at the expense of oppressing the people, that there was an absence of free competition—we said no, there will be home competition; the natural competition which will arise when our manufacturers find that when they are protected from the free influx of foreign goods, the struggle, the competition between man and man, between capitalist and capitalist, will bring down the price. Is not that so? Are not prices lower than ever before? Is not the price of cotton lower than it ever has been? Is not nearly every article which is produced by industries introduced into Canada, at less than the normal price? The consequence of that competition has been that in the cotton industry, for instance, there was an undue rush into it; there was a speculative spirit arose, and more money was invested in that particular industry than the restricted market required. That was prophesied. But it is all for the benefit of the consumer; the bloated aristocrats are the sufferers, and the people of the country are the gainers. This condition of things will remedy itself, and we see how it is being remedied. The manufacturers meet; they say, we make too many grey cottons, for instance; we will diminish the quantity so as to suit our market; we hope the Government and Parliament will get us foreign markets, but in the meantime we will diversify our industries; we will go into prints or other cottons; we will use our machinery for other purposes than those for which it was originally established. That kind of thing regulates the supply until there is such a diminution of the supply as to bring it to an equality with the demand; and meantime the country has been the gainer. Then the hon. gentleman says that we see the miserable operatives' sufferings. The operatives are not suffering. There may be, in places, a diminution of wages, but there is enough wage left to enable an industrious man to support himself and his family in comfort. There may be workmen on short time in some places, but that only exists until the balance between the demand and supply is adjusted. In the meantime what would the condition of things have been but for the National Policy? The hon. gentleman will not deny that the sufferings among the operatives in the United States are greater than in Canada; that their sufferings in England are greater than in Canada. He cannot truthfully deny it. Then the hon. gentleman says that the exodus of our population, over which he used to gloat, is going on. Our people were seeking among the manufacturers of the United States for the employment which they could not get in Canada. But