

We had another exemplification of this incompetency in the collapse of the Quebec bridge, entailing the loss of millions of dollars besides the irreparable loss of many lives. I am strongly of the opinion that had the government taken proper precautions by having its own inspector on the grounds and by having the plans and specifications passed upon by its own inspector as well as the construction of same, much sorrow might have been alleviated, much destruction of life, and much loss of money.

The Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson), when he uttered these prophetic words I have quoted, no doubt had some dim anticipation of the Moncton land deal by which certain lands required by this government were secured by party friends at current figures and then sold to the government in the course of a few weeks at enormous profits.

No doubt he also could see in anticipation the subsidizing of the party press, by paying out annually hundreds of thousands of dollars for the purpose of polluting the fountains of information.

No doubt also he could see in the future the paying out of the treasury of Canada millions of dollars annually, in the form of bonuses, which he and his friends declared was a most vicious form of protection.

With such a mirage passing before his eyes, no doubt the hon. Minister of Customs (Mr. Paterson) spoke prophetically when he said that surpluses were an evil and tended to extravagance. When the crops are good, when prices are good, when money is plentiful, when trade and commerce is expanding, it does not require a master hand to guide the ship of state. The test of true statesmanship is to be found in the hour of adversity. Judged by this standard, how lamentably have the present administration failed. Contrast the activity displayed in the recent crisis by the American government with the apathy of this administration. While the American government grappled strenuously with the difficulty, this government did nothing to alleviate the hard times. By interviews in the press, the Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding) endeavoured to excuse his inactivity and explained the difference between Canadian and American banking operations. But he was forced to take action by his own supporters. Rumour has it that a certain senator came from Manitoba to urge him to make the pretense of doing something to relieve the situation in the west and thus help the party. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding), did take some action and make some sort of a pretense of activity, and thus gave an excuse to party leaders in the west for declaring that he was placing \$10,000,000 to the credit of the banks for the purpose of moving the grain of the west to the head waters of lake navigation and thus take away all grounds of complaint. But wonderful to say that \$10,000,000 is not

forthcoming, and the moving of the grain is still handicapped by want of funds, and in the meantime the lake navigation is closing. Prices are taking another drop, as they always do at the close of navigation, and this serious state of affairs will be seriously intensified by the want of confidence in the Finance Minister's administration of our financial affairs.

If such a condition of affairs existed under a Conservative administration how the welkin would ring with charges of Tory incapacity and Tory incompetence! It is difficult to estimate the great loss that has been sustained by the people of the Northwest by reason of their not being able to find a ready market for their grain this fall. Owing to unfavourable climatic conditions, there was a great percentage of frosted grain this year, and on account of the lateness of the harvest many farmers were compelled to cut their grain on the green side, and it was only by finding a ready sale for such grain that it could be prevented from deteriorating. I know personally of cases where farmers hauled grain many miles to market only to be informed that the elevators could not find room for such grain, as so much grain was stored in special bins, and therefore these farmers were compelled to take the grain home again at great trouble and cost or to dispose of it at sacrifice prices. In the meantime the farmers were being pressed for overdue accounts by merchants, the merchants by the wholesalers, and the wholesalers by the manufacturers. I know personally of many men who have been refused their usual lines of credit or have had them seriously curtailed so that they could not obtain the money requisite for their legitimate lines of business. Then too, many farmers have been induced to hold grain in the hope of higher prices by reason of the fictitious reports sent out by the eastern papers, which were copied by many of the western papers, to the effect that the Finance Minister, in his zeal for the welfare of the financial institutions of the country was rushing to their assistance and placing at the disposal of the banks the treasury of this country; but when we came to investigate the condition of our treasury we found it was empty, the spendthrift had been there in advance. This is an exemplification of Liberal statesmanship, of the administration of a government who have boasted of their surpluses, but who have fallen down when confronted with the first serious difficulties of a financial character involving the interests of producers and business men—difficulties which might have been avoided or largely remedied if proper measures had been applied.

The speech from the Throne referred to the large revenues which the Post Office Department has been reaping during the last few years, and this question of the surplus in the post office seems to be a