

Government in the endeavour—we are aware that engagements were incurred during last session, which were calculated to strain the resources of the country to some extent—in that endeavour, we desire therefore to incur in this session as few expenditures as we possibly can, consistent with the absolute needs of the country. One thing more. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) could not conclude his speech without alluding to the “ruthless tongue” of my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). It is the first time I have heard that epithet applied to my right hon. friend, although there is no doubt that he has deserved on many occasions high eulogy for his powers as an orator. He (Mr. Foster) talked of the humiliation and disaster we have encountered, and he had the audacity to tell us that he believed the future historian would dwell with pride and pleasure on the eighteen years during which he and his friends held power. Sir, the future historian whether he be Grit or Tory, if he be an honest man, will feel himself compelled to say when the time for writing the history of Canada comes: that Canada never sustained a greater misfortune than when in 1878 it turned out Alexander Mackenzie and replaced him by the hon. baronet and his friends. I have before this maintained on the floor of Parliament, and I am prepared to maintain it again: that if an honest debit and credit account be taken of the resources of Canada in 1878 and the resources of Canada when these gentlemen went out of office, the balance would tell very heavily against them. Putting aside the mere material question, the well-known enormous depreciation of property of the greatest portion of the population which went on during that period, what, after all, is the real wealth of the country? The real wealth of the country is the number of intelligent, God-fearing and industrious men and women who exist in it; and when, Sir, in the history of Canada, did Canada see so poor and mean a record as during the eighteen years of these hon. gentlemen’s management? As I have said before, I am astonished at the audacity of any hon. gentleman hailing from the maritime provinces, and most of all hailing from the province of New Brunswick, who, with the knowledge that his own province was reduced to a state of atrophy for ten years, with no increase to the population, rises and tells us that the last eighteen years will be for ever bright spots, bright and particular stars, in the history of Canada. Sir, I tell the hon. gentleman that the result of those eighteen years was, as his own conduct in 1896, and the conduct of a great many of his associates at that time, showed, so to debauch and degrade and demoralize public life in Canada, that it may well require more than eighteen months to restore it to the position it formerly occupied.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

Though I have good hopes that within a reasonable space of time, having set our faces in the right direction, we may succeed in achieving a great improvement, I do not mean to say that any country could trust these hon. gentlemen for eighteen years and not be materially the worse for it. I know well that they have alleged that they added to the wealth of Canada. They did no such thing. They added to the wealth of a few individuals in Canada, and they impoverished the great mass of the people. I repeat that if a just and true estimate were taken, it would be found that if you placed on one side the increase of the debt, public and private, and the enormous depreciation of property which took place throughout Canada, and on the other side everything they choose to claim as additions to our wealth made during that period, the debit account would be very heavy against them. On the other hand, I tell the hon. gentleman and his friends that there never was a period in the history of Canada when our public life had sunk so low as it had during the concluding years of their reign. We are bound to take example by these hon. gentlemen. I am perfectly willing to hear their criticism, and I am bound to say that I regard the hon. gentleman as to a great extent the right man in the right place. His volubility will be well used in calling in question what we have said on previous occasions. I am not disposed to differ from him on that head: I welcome his criticism; I am glad he should make it. But I am not prepared to allow him or any other hon. gentleman on that side to contend that Canada had anything to be proud of under their regime.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Mr. Speaker, I do not think the members on this side of the House have, so far, any great reason to complain of the manner in which the debate has gone on, or to regret much that has been said from the Treasury benches. I think this House was somewhat surprised that a man with the parliamentary experience and knowledge of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) was reduced to such a poor line of argument and declamation as he has given an exhibition of this evening. We have heard better speeches than this from the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and, if he will allow me to say so, we recognized in some of the personal language in which he indulged, the old member for South Oxford, who, on account of those serious crimes and misdemeanours, in the opinion of his party, was deposed from the position of financial adviser and locked up during the last general election. It seemed to us, last session, that the lesson had done him good, for a more urbane, courteous and delightful parliamentarian it was impossible to pick out from the benches opposite than the hon. Minister of Trade and