

best elements of the British Isles, continental Europe and the United States. I am pleased to believe that we are getting a fair share of immigrants, and more care is being taken with regard to the quality of those who come to this country. Year after year, when we pointed out that in immigration quality was to be considered rather than quantity, and when we raised objection to the character of many of the immigrants coming to Canada, we were assured that none but the very best were coming to this country, farmers and farm labourers—not artisans or mechanics—the very cream of the British Islands and of continental Europe. And this notwithstanding that the Doukhobors were coming, the Galicians, the Finlanders and the people of almost every benighted country in the world. At last the government themselves were obliged to take note of the complaints concerning their immigrants that were being complained of in every part of the country. They were even obliged to deport many of them, and the reports laid before the House disclosed the fact that they have sent back thousands of these immigrants within the last few years. We have been endeavouring for the past ten years to convince them that there was urgent need for the improvement in the selection of immigrants, and it was said over and over again that the class who were coming were of the very best—that we could not expect or hope for better. But, after a time there was the admission on the part of the government that this was not correct, and now they boast of how many of these immigrants they have sent back.

We feel grateful to His Excellency for the assurance he has given us that trade and commerce have made rapid strides during the year and that in every direction the commerce of the country is expanding. One would have thought that commerce would almost have come to a standstill when Mr. W. T. R. Preston decided to leave Japan, packed his gripsack and commenced to hunt another job. He seemed to be the one man depended on by the government to regulate everything wherever he went and in whatever line he happened to be engaged. He endeavoured to do that with regard to immigration in the old country, and when he went to Japan he had not been there very long before he was in trouble with the officials in regard to trade with that country. We were told that he had revolutionized commerce so that Canada would develop immensely by reason of her increased trade with these great oriental peoples numbering 450,000,000. In a short time, he was obliged to leave, and he is now away hunting a new field. Notwithstanding this, we are told that trade is rapidly developing, and for this we certainly should be grateful.

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Transcontinental Railway has made substantial advance during the year. And very reasonably might have been added, so has the debt. For one of the greatest increases in the debt of this country for the last forty years has been made in the last year or year and a half. The government have been pushing on the Transcontinental railway and expending money right and left. We know that the statement has been made, and, I think, established to the satisfaction of almost every business man in this House that a great deal of that money was improperly expended, that there was overcharging, that there was wrong classification, extravagance, improper making of contracts and graft in connection with almost every part of this business. This was emphatically denied two years ago. Complaint was made by Mr. Hodgins, the engineer, and there was an inquiry, and a whitewashing report handed to this House by the majority of the committee engaged in the work. Notwithstanding that, we have the undeniable fact that the very parties who above all others interested in this matter, the railway company themselves, declare that there was over-classification, that there was improper expenditure, and I understand they intend to go into the courts in order to establish the fact. This is exactly what was brought out by the evidence in the committee, notwithstanding the whitewashing of the commissioners by the report. But that is not all. I have here the report of the Auditor General, and I notice that that officer raises objections. There is correspondence between the Transcontinental Commission and Mr. Fraser, the Auditor General, on the subject. One of the letters of the Auditor General reads as follows:

Audit Office, Ottawa, Jan. 25, 1909.

Sir,—I have not received a reply to my letter of Jan. 5, re payments to M. P. & J. T. Davis and Macdonell & O'Brien on the Hogan & Macdonell contract for 'excavation of foundations, solid rock,' at three times the schedule rate for solid rock.

'Three times the rate.' That was practically the contention of Mr. Hodgins, viz., that by the improper classification of the material, the contractor was being paid three times as much as he was entitled to. But the government contended, and established to the satisfaction of the majority of this House, that there was nothing wrong about it. In another letter, the Auditor General says that not only three times the schedule rate was paid, but that three times the amount done was charged up in progress estimates given. That is another device for paying out to their favourite friends more money than the country ought to pay for this work. And that is going on to-day.