

April 30, 1874

income was attributable to the late Government. The fact was, however, that out of nearly \$2,700,000 asked under this head, more than nine-tenths was the result of engagements entered into by the hon. gentleman's colleagues. As for the million and a half which the hon. gentleman said he might count upon from imports under the tariff which previously existed, he confessed his inability to know how, with the clearest evidence before them that the imports were not only stationary but declining, any such inference could be drawn. If the amount fairly chargeable for the entrance of Prince Edward Island into the union were deducted, there was no increase on the amounts entered for consumption.

The increase in post offices, et cetera, to which the hon. gentleman alluded, was due to a bookkeeping change made by the late Government in 1872-1873 by which the work of some of the minor offices was transferred to the Department.

With regard to the item of collection of revenue for public works, the revenue for the nine months ending the 1st of April, 1874, amounted to \$1,011,000. The estimate of his predecessor was two and a quarter million for the current month.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said that estimate was prepared under the impression that the Government were going to take the portion of the road from Rivière du Loup, now worked by the Grand Trunk, and that the section of the Intercolonial Railway would be opened.

Hon. Mr. CARTWRIGHT said he was most thankful that that expectation was not fulfilled, as it would probably cost \$300,000 or \$400,000 more. Taking into account the addition of Prince Edward Island, the customs in 1873-1874 were nearly exactly equal for the nine months—in other words, we had stood precisely equal in that matter.

He had not stated that the country had retrograded, but merely that after a year of unexampled commercial prosperity a pause had occurred. It was absurd to pretend that the imports were likely to increase, when they knew they were perfectly stationary up to the 1st of April. The nominal receipts and expenditure had almost balanced on the 1st of April, 1873. There was a surplus of \$1,600,000 as against \$100,000 for this year. In 1872 the surplus was \$3,000,000 and in 1871, \$3,100,000. There was no ground for assuming from the fact that the receipts and expenditures so nearly balanced that there would be anything like a surplus, because the greater portion of the expenses were not entered in their books until some time after they had been actually incurred.

He hoped at a very early period to be able to lay before the House the supplementary estimates for 1873-1874. The hon. gentleman had commiserated with him on the painful humiliation he supposed him to have experienced in making an announcement of modification of the tariff. He was, however, like the hon. gentleman, a little pachydermatous, and was satisfied so long as the House gave the money. He had merely made alterations in detail, and he did not wish to have three and a quarter million out of the people of this country, and had given back the quarter of a million in the way which he thought would be most acceptable to the country at large. It would have been in bad taste for him to have exaggerated or perverted the facts, but it was his duty to state the

facts as they were, and to let the people know the magnitude of the engagements which they had undertaken, and the ways in which they might look for relief. (*Hear, hear.*)

They had to provide for steadily increasing burdens in the future, otherwise so much taxation might not have been required. The hon. gentleman forgot the spectacle which had been witnessed when he was upon the Ministerial benches. (*Cheers.*) The present Government had taken fourteen or sixteen days to consider the representations made to them, and had altered their policy only in detail, while standing fast to their principles. The late Government created and burned their national policy in three hours, and he believed the hon. member for Cumberland (Hon. Mr. Tupper) had a leading part in the transaction.

Sir Alexander Galt himself made as important a change as this on the introduction of his first budget in 1866. Sir John Rose had made changes, and all the gentlemen whom he had succeeded, with the exception of Mr. Tilley, had made more than one change. He thought there should be no false shame in amending a mistake, if mistake it were, especially when only minor details—as details they were—were concerned. (*Cheers.*)

Hon. Mr. HOLTON said that, although he did not propose to answer the speech of the hon. member for Cumberland (Hon. Mr. Tupper), which had been met by the Hon. Minister of Finance, yet he would be calling attention to the extraordinary position assumed by him. He had listened to a good many disingenuous and a good many dishonest speeches, but he had never listened to one in which all these qualities were combined to such an extent. (*"Hear, hear" from the Government benches, and "No, no" and "Order" from the Opposition.*) His words were parliamentary, although they might be strong. They were intended to be strong. The speech was more audacious even than that delivered by the right hon. gentleman the other night.

Mr. PLUMB: Are you really serious?

Hon. Mr. HOLTON said he was serious. He did not think that the hon. gentleman opposite, who had been declared by the country wholly unfit to be entrusted any longer with the management of its affairs, who had brought the finances into a condition which rendered a change in the tariff absolutely necessary, should accuse the hon. gentleman who was dealing with the consequences of that Administration.

With reference to the qualified modifications of the Finance Minister, he believed they would be received with entire satisfaction. (*Hear, hear.*) In no one point had he abandoned the main feature of his scheme, which was the necessity for three million dollars of additional taxation.

He contended that a heaven-born Minister—and there were no heaven-born Ministers now-a-days—could have foreseen, in the quiet of his study, all the objections that had since been raised against the tariff. Instead of the criticism and ridicule of gentlemen opposite, the Finance Minister deserved the highest praise of the country. The modifications submitted by him, he contended, entitled him to the cordial support of the whole House. (*Applause.*)