

under three or four heads—we are here; the country is behind us; the country is prosperous. We do not find fault with that assertion. On this side of the House we stand to assert and to maintain that with equal strength and power with hon. gentlemen opposite. We may be pardoned, however, if we may have ideas differing from those hon. gentlemen opposite as to the reasons why this country is prosperous at the present time. When we take the great interests of this country and look at them separately, even though briefly, we may be pardoned the expression that though there is great prosperity in this country, it is quite possible that there might be still greater prosperity, and we are not of that kind, at least, who in these respects think it is best to let well enough alone. We never can be so prosperous in this country but that we must hope and aspire to still greater prosperity. Take, for instance, the great lumbering industries of this country; I do not think that hon. members opposite will maintain that the lumbering interests of this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific are in a very buoyant and prosperous condition at the present time. I think representations have been made to hon. gentlemen opposite as to the reasons why this great industry is not so prosperous as it might be. In this year of grace the mills and productive power in the lumber interests of this country are doing only part time where they might be doing more time, and the reason is not far to seek. It is because of the unequal and unfair competition which is imposed upon this industry from the country south of us. This then is the condition of one of the important industries or interests in this country which might be better than it is if the government had taken the proper steps to moderate that competition and bring it down to a fairer and sounder basis as between us and our neighbours to the south of us. Take again, the mineral interests of this country. They are great; they are important, but is it or is it not a fact that any single line of policy of hon. gentlemen opposite has contributed to make the mineral industries of this country more prosperous than they would otherwise have been? Is there to-day a single thing which goes into the products of the miner which is got by him at less cost than in 1896? On the other hand, has the market for the minerals which are produced been widened or extended? With respect to that second great branch of the interest and industries of this country, the mineral or mining interests, things certainly have worked out in their own way, and no great claim can be made of their having been extraordinarily helped by hon. gentlemen opposite through any line of their policy.

Take again the great agricultural interests. They are prosperous in a part of our Dominion most certainly; in other parts of our Dominion they are not so prosperous. The centre of agricultural prosperity to-day

Mr. FOSTER.

is to be found in the great Northwest; in that land so lately opened, so richly endowed and so full of promise for the future.

Take the remaining great interest of Canada, the industrial interests of the country. Although these are to a certain extent prosperous, one seeks in vain for any very strong reason why they should have enjoyed that prosperity from any help or aid which has been given to them by hon. gentlemen opposite through their policy. Yes, the country is prosperous, but who laid the foundation of that prosperity? One of my hon. friends who has spoken to us to-day declared that the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian Northern were the great harbingers of the prosperity of the west. The prosperity of the west is due, outside of that country's own intrinsic richness, outside of its own great productive capacity and extent, to two things: It is due to the opening up and the proving up of that country. If hon. gentlemen go back in their minds to 1897, when they came into power actively, they will find that every system of transport into and out of that Northwest which exists to-day was at that time existent in the Northwest. By whose policy? By whose action? If there has been any expansion of any transport system it has been by extension only, by extension in carrying out the system which was laid down, made possible, made existent under the guidance and by the aid of the Liberal-Conservative party of this country. The great Northwest had not only been opened up, but it has been proved up. There was the experimental stage. Time was necessary in order to prove to the world that however rich that country might be, and however broad its acres, its productivity was likely to be permanent and to be built up upon broad foundations. It was necessary to prove to the world the uniform and permanent productive power of that country; that required a period of experimentation, and for eight, or ten, or twelve years the pioneers of that great Northwest country were busily engaged in that work of experimentation. The frosts had to be combated and studied, the conditions of climate had to be given attention to, the methods of cultivation, which were different in that country from those in the countries to the east, had to be studied and carefully noted, and through year after year of failure and experimentation in the course of ten or twelve years, proof has been given to the world, not only of the productivity of that country, but of its permanent and uniform productivity. These two things done; the permanent productivity of the country proved to the world and its transport system opened up, then prosperity began to show itself. Then people came into that country; then production increased ten, twenty, one hundred, a thousand-fold; and by men who wish to reason soundly or to come to just conclusions, these things must be taken into account. The chronicler has given us a brief and interest-