

gain that he could find was something like three-quarters of one per cent reduction on the tariff. Well, I think his reduction, after two years cogitation was about one-fortieth of one per cent, so that at any rate we are thirty times better than he is. Be that as it may, I want to point out to him, because I am not sure he understands it, and I want to point out to the House, that this question of taking averages is essentially a fallacious one. The effect of such a tariff as he had on the Statute-book with its heavy specific duties, with its tendency towards high protection was largely this: that a great many articles were absolutely prohibited from entering into this country at all. Now, I could draw a tariff, and I have no doubt the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) if he applied his mind could also draw a tariff, in which there would appear to be a comparatively small sum levied, and it is a comparatively low average rate of duty, and which at the same time might exclude so many goods as to act as an extremely heavy burden on the people of this country. Where there are two tariffs, both ad valorem, there might be some reason in his comparison, but where he compares a tariff, largely specific, or specific and ad valorem, with a tariff which is chiefly ad valorem, he entirely mistakes the real trend and condition of the case when he alleges, that he can show there is only at present this apparent reduction, and he will remember that one-half of our scheme has yet to come into effect, which he does not seem to have taken at all into consideration—he will find that the reduction is probably much more considerable than he states.

Then, Sir, it is not our fault if our income is very heavily mortgaged. Those hon. gentlemen who have listened to the remarks I have made from the other side of the House in past years, will do me the justice to remember that the point I chiefly insisted upon on all occasions, in opposition to the projects of the hon. gentlemen then in power, was this: that they were mortgaging the entire income of the country. I know of no country where the available funds in proportion to the expenditure are so small, where the mortgages, so to speak, of our collective income are so large as in Canada to-day; and it is no credit to the Ministers of Finance of the period to which he alluded, that that state of things should have been permitted to exist. I have said that the immediate chances of large retrenchments are not great, and for this simple reason: that we have not got \$38,000,000 or \$39,000,000 to cut and come upon, but that we are practically cut down to a matter of \$8,000,000 or \$9,000,000, and what retrenchments can be made must be made from that comparatively limited area.

I have stated before, and I repeat it now, that the best way to improve our condition is by such measures as my hon. friend the

Postmaster General has taken, who I hope will be able to show the House when his estimates come down, that the huge deficit amounting to nearly three-quarters of a million of dollars which has so long prevailed between revenue and expenditure in the post office, is being wholly extinguished. Another mode by which I hope—although I admit there are great difficulties in the way of my hon. friend (Mr. Blair)—another mode by which I hope the public revenue can be enlarged and practically speaking the burdens of the people greatly reduced, will be, by such improved administration of our railway system, that we may obtain some moderate return on the \$55,000,000 sunk in the Intercolonial Railway. Another thing, which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) treats lightly enough, is that the success of my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) on my left, has paved the way for an enormous reduction ultimately in the burdens of the people. To-day, on our sinking funds and ordinary interest we pay a matter of about \$12,000,000 a year. If the policy of my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) succeeds; if we are able within a moderate space of time to get rid of the sinking funds, and to reduce the rate of interest on our debt to 2½ per cent or thereabouts, the result will be that the \$12,000,000 charges that now stand in our books will be reduced to \$7,000,000. Those are modes in which substantial and great savings can be made; those are modes to which my hon. friends in the Cabinet are applying themselves with all diligence. But, Sir, in the course of eighteen months we cannot overcome the consequences of the folly of our predecessors in power; the Augean stable takes more time to clean, and in eighteen months we could not be expected to overcome the results of accumulated errors and misconduct of eighteen years. I add this: there is every reason to believe that the policy of my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton), in taking advantage of these mineral discoveries, to which my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) opposite rightly attributes a good measure of the prosperity we hope to enjoy, is likely to result in a very large addition to the population of our country, and in that way too, a very large and important reduction in the burdens of the people will be made. If we can bring down the gross expenditure to \$35,000,000 on a population of 7,000,000, I take it the country will be a great deal better off than with a gross expenditure of \$40,000,000 and a population of 5,000,000. These things I think are now within measurable distance.

Sir, for that end, as I have said, we must ask for time. We must ask for something more; we must ask for the same loyal and generous support from our friends that has been so freely given us in the past. We on our part are bound to try our best to deserve it, and to that end, among other things, I am authorized to say, that the