

After almost ten years of privilege, almost from the conclusion of the Great war, the government, much to the disappointment of the people, shows no sign of retrenchment nor of any effort at a permanent reduction in the national debt. Year by year we have heard of different surpluses, but when you analyze the government's own reports for the last five years, from 1921 to 1926, when you look into the liabilities in connection with the national railways, you find that our debt stands to-day at \$217,000,000 more than it did when the present government came into office. During their term of five years the government, who have been preaching economy to this side of the house and to the Dominion, with a political astuteness which we are now bound to admit and which is becoming more and more evident to the people, have been securing money from the taxpayers by a process of painless extraction. At any rate, they have collected and spent more during the past year by \$18,000,000 than the year before, and they have collected \$211,000,000 more in the five years from 1921 to 1926 than did their predecessors in the previous five years, including a part of the war period. They have indicated in this year's estimates their intention to spend \$10,000,000 more in the coming year, and for nine months of this fiscal year they have already extracted \$14,000,000 more in taxes than they did during the same period last year.

The present much talked of era of prosperity is indeed a splendid advertisement for the present administration; at least they are taking advantage of it. To quote the glib words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), prosperity is no longer in the far distant future; it is here: we have had in the past year a total trade greater by \$42,000,000 than we had in the previous year. But what are the facts? When you analyze the figures you are disappointed to find that this \$42,000,000 of a greater trade is really not so favourable as it seems on the surface, for there have been greater importations to the extent of \$103,000,000, of products that might have been manufactured in this Dominion, while there has been a diminution in exports from Canada to the extent of \$67,000,000. So that when the government boasts of an increase of \$42,000,000 in our total trade it is on the wrong side of the ledger. There has been a decrease in exports, in the nine months of the present fiscal year for which we have figures of \$56,000,000; and when we look over the monthly reports of the Department of National Revenue we find that our importations have increased by over \$33,000,000 in

[Mr. Rowe.]

the past nine months than in the same period of the previous year. It is hard to understand how the government can take credit to themselves for the era of prosperity, for which Providence is so largely responsible.

The people of this Dominion have been viewing with alarm the attitude of the government towards the manufacturing industries of this country. Hon. gentlemen opposite have negotiated several trade treaties with foreign countries, and it seems to me that they must surely admit now that they are poor international traders. They are apparently optimistic regarding their future success as ambassadors, but it seems to me that, judging from our experience of them as traders, they are hardly fitted for ambassadorial responsibilities. In the case of every trade treaty which this government has negotiated with a foreign country our favourable trade balance has appreciably diminished. I will refer the house to our treaties with Australia, New Zealand and France. I wonder what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) thinks to-day of the Australian treaty, which he once cherished so dearly. It must be a source of inspiration to him as he sings "bit by bit" the old free trade song; and no doubt, the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart) will rejoice once more in sounding the death knell of protection. I do not think, however, that the Western Dairymen's Association, the farmers and sheep-breeders throughout the country would be entertained by a duet on the part of these two ministers, because the evil effects of the Australian treaty have been felt by every farmer and dairyman throughout the Dominion. With Australia our favourable trade balance has declined by \$3,500,000, only to be followed by similar reductions in our trade balances with other countries. In the case of New Zealand our favourable trade balance has been reduced by \$5,500,000, and in the case of Belgium by \$4,500,000. With France, with whom we had that famous treaty, our trade balance has declined by \$7,500,000, and to-day we are purchasing from that country twice as much as we are selling to her. In our relations with the British West Indies, our favourable trade balance has declined by \$2,000,000, while with Japan our favourable balance has been reduced by \$8,500,000.

Under the circumstances, the present administration must realise that the home market is more important to the agriculturist, more important to the domestic producer in every line, than markets which may be sought far afield. We have often endeavoured to impress upon the government the necessity for culti-