

do so, as on a recent occasion, he made light of the task of borrowing money in England for renewal of debt, even in the face of difficulties brought about by his own *laches*, and at a crisis of unparalleled severity in the money market of Lombard street. They must strike off the \$35,000,000 under this head. Thus they relieved him very easily of one half of his load. \$30,000,000 for the Pacific Railway and \$35,000,000 for renewal—\$65,000,000 in all. They had not cost him many sleepless nights. Then there were in his list, \$43,800,000 for the enlargement and construction of Canals, and among these the Baie Verte figured for \$8,500,000. The other items were nearly as illusory and misleading. The whole presentation was more than unfair. Except the repeal of the Pacific Railway Act, no legislation that he (Mr. Plumb) could remember had relieved the country of any liability; and the fidelity of the atrabilious statements of the late Finance Minister might be tested by ascertaining what amounts he stated in his last Budget speech would be required to complete the works in hand except the Pacific Railway, for all the expenditure on which, except \$1,391,618, incurred prior to 1874, the late Government must be held wholly and rigidly responsible. These amounts, estimated as of the 1st. July, 1878, were: For completion of Welland and Lachine Canals, \$5,500,000; Miscellaneous Works, \$5,000,000, or ten millions and a half altogether; and it might be said, in passing, that with much of this sum the late Government should also be charged. The net increase of debt from July 1st, 1873, to July 1st, 1878, was \$40,513,607. From this amount must be deducted discount on renewals, \$3,901,444, and amount expended on Pacific Railway, \$8,812,233, leaving the increase for all expenditure on capital account for every other purpose, \$27,799,930. Add to this the ten millions and a half still required for the completion of the canals, and the frightful \$131,300,000 shrank to \$38,300,000—a decrease of a mere trifle of ninety-three millions, or 71 per cent., which might gauge, with tolerable accuracy, the allowance that must be made for the Finance Minister's calculations. But it was by no means to be admitted that the hon. gentleman's

predecessors were responsible for the \$38,300,000. He (Mr. Plumb) ventured to assert that his hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Tilley) and his colleagues would have curtailed expenditure in every possible way, having proper regard to the public interest, if they had continued in power. Their Estimates were based upon a condition of things which was totally changed when Parliament met in 1874. The late Government, with a vast majority at its back, had full power to reverse the policy of its predecessors. Whatever, in their judgment, had been improperly or unwisely done, should have been promptly undone. It was their duty to apply the knife and to cut down outlay whenever the knife was needed. They had command of the ship. It was their duty, when they saw a financial storm lowering in the horizon, to shorten sail and economise. Could it be supposed for a moment that his hon. friend who sat in front of him (Mr. Tilley) would not have had sufficient intelligence, honesty, and courage to meet the exigencies of the time, if he found there was a decreasing revenue? The late Finance Minister and his friends made the enormously exaggerated statement which he (Mr. Plumb) had dissected, in order to bewilder the public, in order to show that his own enormous expenditure was no falsification of the promises his colleagues had made when in Opposition. They sought to cover up their tracks. The most efficient way to do that was for the Finance Minister to largely overestimate the burdens thrown upon him. And how had the inherited obligations been discharged, and how had the new ones undertaken been fulfilled, on July 1st, 1878? The Pacific Railway construction had swallowed up \$8,812,833, and there were enormous sums since paid, and yet due. They had a glimpse, and as yet a glimpse only, of the reckless haste, and waste, and jobbery which had characterised that work. Not a section of the line from Fort William to Red River could be brought into use for at least three years, because the connecting link between English River and Keewatin had been left untouched, and a large annual charge of interest would be totally lost, until the road could be made available for traffic. In regard to the Wel-