

to carry on the administration in the best way possible. The people of the country are to-day beginning to realize that the work which has been going on during the war, and the conditions under which they have laboured, have had an effect on the country and on the finances of the country. I think it is fair to say that only lately has the enormous destruction wrought in the world during the years of the war been brought home to the people of the country. What has brought it home to them most clearly is the depreciation of our currency. They find that their money is being taken at a discount in many of the countries of the world, and they realize that in order to overcome that difficulty they will not only have to produce more, but that they will have to spend less; they realize that it must be their aim to deal with countries where their money is accepted at a more favourable rate rather than with those which are nearest to them. This, I think, will have a tendency to bring together the various parts of the Empire. Each will find out more and more about the resources of the other, and all will come into closer relationship in trade. The effect of this will be of very great benefit not only to Canada but to all parts of the Empire.

Conditions brought about by the war have caused people to consider expenditures much more carefully, especially those made by the Government of the day. They realize that expenditures have got to be curtailed. They have learned within the last few months, for the first time, of the large sums of money required to carry on the operations of the Government railways. A short time ago it was said that the Government railways were costing the country \$2,000,000 per month over and above what was received in revenue from the roads. That large sum does not take into account the greater expense which we may be under when, in addition to those roads we already have, we take over the operation of the Grand Trunk Railway System. These figures refer only to actual operating expenses; they do not take into account the question of improvement or betterment; they do not take into account any new construction which the Government may have to undertake. At present we have not the figures to show exactly what those items have amounted to for the past year, but we may be satisfied that when they are taken into account the total will be a very considerable sum. Now that we are called upon to provide \$115,000,000 to pay the interest on the debt of the country,

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\$35,000,000, for pensions to the men who have returned from the war, and which we are only too willing to pay, and a large sum over and above that for general expenditures, when we think of the large sum of money spent upon our railways, which, if properly managed, should be bringing in a revenue instead of causing an extra expenditure for operating expenses, we will have cause for serious consideration. As time goes on I think that the people of the country will scan closely this large expenditure.

We know from the press that an agreement was submitted to the shareholders of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, and that it was accepted by them, but as yet we have not seen it. Last year, in the dying days of the session, we were called upon to put through a Bill for the acquisition of that railway, without having an opportunity of seeing the full details of the agreement that was to be made with the company. We had to act on the faith that the agreement would be a satisfactory one in the interests of Canada. We expect now that the Government will bring that agreement down to the House without further delay, and that we shall have an opportunity of studying it and seeing whether or not our hopes in that regard have been realized.

In years gone by we always expected that the Speech from the Throne would mention the legislation that the Government intended to ask Parliament to deal with during the session, but the information contained in the Speech from the Throne is very meagre in that respect. Last session the Speech from the Throne said nothing at all about the purchase of the Grand Trunk railway, and the legislation was not brought down until the members of both Houses expected that they would very shortly be dismissed and allowed to return to their homes. I hope that the fact that very little legislation is mentioned in the Speech from the Throne on this occasion does not mean that legislation is going to be sprung upon us in the same way; and I trust that we shall not be asked to deal with questions which have not been announced to the country, and which the country has not had an opportunity of thoroughly studying before they are to become law.

In a country as large as the Dominion of Canada it is most important that proposed legislation should be announced in the Speech from the Throne so that the people, as well as the representatives of the people