

The Address—Mr. Guthrie

Mr. ROBB: Because there was more business.

Mr. GUTHRIE: And also because there was a higher tax. I will be fair enough to say that the item I have given also includes the amount received from a two cent stamp tax which was required upon every cheque. The King government increased that stamp tax to a maximum of \$1 per cheque, on cheques of large amounts. The sales and stamp taxes combined produced \$98,000,000, and this forms a heavy burden which must be borne by industry in the Dominion of Canada. How are we going to get relief from this oppressive taxation? The method I propose is boldly to strike out and do away with the sales tax.

We will assist the Minister of Finance in that work. We will also assist him in another work, namely, in keeping down the expenditure of the public money of this country. I have reason to know that since the month of July, with public affairs carried on by means of government warrants, a tremendous saving has been effected. When the government had a full treasury, and no restriction on their expenditure, they generally managed to spend all the money that came in and then borrowed a little more. After the month of July it was impossible to spend money in that way. Every dollar that was spent had to be procured in the first place by a warrant from His Excellency the Governor General, and it had to be shown that the expenditure was immediate and necessary expenditure. Now what was the result? The result was that when, after the short interregnum, the Meighen government quit office we were able out of the revenues of the country to pay \$30,000,000 of maturing loans to the United States without borrowing another dollar. If we can do that in a few months operation, under a system of governor general's warrants, why not adopt the same system when we are not availing ourselves of the governor general's warrants? There is an urgent demand throughout the length and breadth of Canada that our expenditure be cut down.

Mr. ROBB: Hear, hear.

Mr. GUTHRIE: There is a demand throughout the length and breadth of Canada that the national debt be materially reduced. I think the public of Canada were rather shocked within the last few days to learn that the net debt on November 30 last was still at the enormous total of \$2,344,436,755. When are we going to start paying off the debt? Do you know, Sir, that back in 1921 the national debt was only \$2,340,000,000 odd? Now I know it is always asked by

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government supporters, "What about the next year?" Because the financial year ends on March 31. I will take the next year; the debt was then \$2,422,000,000 odd, as there had been added to it during that year \$80,000,000 of railway deficits, shown in the public accounts. At present the government do not add railway deficits to the national debt. They go out and borrow the money on the strength of railway securities which Canada endorses and guarantees. In former days we put our hand in the treasury, took out the money, paid the railway deficit and charged it to the public debt.

We have now had five years of financing by the King government, since 1921, and we have been told on the public platform of tremendous reductions made to the national debt by this government; but according to the statement issued by the Finance department last week there has been no reduction whatever, and as between the debt of November 30 last and that of 1921 there has been a positive increase of \$4,000,000. I repeat, there is a demand throughout the Dominion that that debt be reduced. It will be reduced in only one way—by the practice in this House from now on of the strictest economy. When I state that we on this side of the House are willing to co-operate in every way to achieve that end, I am making a serious statement whereby this opposition intend to abide. We will give my hon. friend the Minister of Finance every opportunity to economize. Whether he will accept our assistance or not will be seen as the session develops.

Let me take another item in the Speech from the Throne. My hon. friend the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Forke) has disappeared; I am sorry for that, but I must go on nevertheless. He has been selected as the Minister of Immigration in the new government. I think we can say with all sincerity that if there is one department of the government to which we all wish success it is to the Department of Immigration. From one end of Canada to the other, in the speeches of the mover and seconder to-day, in the speeches of our great employers, in the speeches of the minister himself, but one opinion is expressed: Canada must have a large new immigration if she is to succeed. We wish him well in his efforts, and we will help him all we can. It is said that the figures of immigration for last year show some improvement. We hope they do. We trust that on examination we will find that the figures published are justified, that the people who have been entered as Canadian immigrants have remained here. There is no particular branch of the government which is