

*The Budget—Mr. Finn*

pursuits akin thereto, as well as to the great industrial activities throughout Canada. The Acting Minister of Finance is to be congratulated on the lucidity of that presentation, and to be commended on the fact that so short a space of time sufficed him in which to make so important an announcement to this House; for within the four corners of his comprehensive budget there is spelt the future prosperity of this Dominion, or at all events, undoubtedly, the prosperity of the country in the coming year. I am sure that hon. gentlemen will congratulate the minister most heartily not only from this side of the House but from the ranks of those who represent the people of western Canada, the Progressives; and I am inclined to think that in the hearts even of hon. gentlemen of the official opposition there is a feeling of admiration for the acting minister. But because of party considerations those gentlemen are prevented from either congratulating the Acting Minister of Finance, or giving credit to the government led by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King).

I regret very much the absence of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) who, had he been able to be with us this year, would have delivered his eighteenth budget speech. I am sure that every hon. gentleman in this House, irrespective of party affiliations, will join me, as a fellow Nova Scotian with the Minister of Finance, when I say that there is no outstanding figure in Canada comparable with him to-day; nor is there any hon. gentleman in this House or outside of it, who excels him in sterling integrity and nobleness of character, and in those other fine attributes that make him the princely man that he is—the little gray man from the East. When I look back on the record of the Minister of Finance it is with a degree of pride and pleasure that I call him the son of Nova Scotia. Perhaps the first political thoughts I had I gathered from him as a young man in the city of Halifax; the political ideals I possess to-day I gleaned from him in my early life when he was the Premier of Nova Scotia. And later on in the parliament of Canada he and the late lamented chieftain of the Liberal party, the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, inspired me with political principles which I hope, with God's grace, to carry with me to the grave. I hope therefore that the day is not far distant when the Minister of Finance will again meet with us in this House, if not immediately to assume the onerous duties inseparable from the administration of his department, at least to take an active interest in the gov-

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ernment of the country. I trust that, so far as his health will permit, he will be able to give his wise counsels to the government, to this House and to a country which he helped to make grand and great. The fiscal policy known as the Laurier-Fielding tariff, of which he was primarily the author, was instrumental in bringing about that golden era of fifteen years; and Canada's position under the influence of that policy is a sufficient answer to the carping criticisms of hon. gentlemen opposite who would have the people believe that the administration of their affairs by the Liberal party seeks to cripple industry and to undermine the foundations of our national life. During the eighteen years that the Minister of Finance has been in office his administration of the Department of Finance has been such that no criticism of the kind we have been hearing can stand. But such criticisms, I am free to confess, I do not believe are shared by all those who happen to disagree with us; they come more from some hon. gentlemen whose views are well known to this House.

Now, Sir, it is very reassuring to the country that within three years of the government succeeding to power and after a period of acute financial depression and of pronounced industrial inactivity, due to post-war conditions, the Acting Minister of Finance is able to announce a surplus of \$30,000,000. Leaders in the financial and commercial world were of opinion that if we could balance our budget this year the government would be doing its full duty to the people. In a word, the budget is an indication that Canada is getting on her feet again and coming back into her stride of 1896 to 1911—a stride that would have been quickened and sustained had the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier been returned to power to put into force the reciprocity pact, which would have given to all parts of the Dominion, but particularly to its extremities, that prosperity for which we have been waiting since 1911, that prosperity which the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Black) has promised the constituency that I have the honor to represent.

When the Liberal party came into power in 1896 the total revenue of the country was only \$37,000,000 and there was a deficit of \$300,000. Contrast that condition with what we find to-day, an estimated revenue of \$396,000,000, and an estimated expenditure—after the pruning knife has been used by the Acting Minister of Finance on the estimates and the supplementaries to be brought down—of \$328,000,000. When the real significance of this is brought home to the people they