

reorganization of departments. It undertook the reorganization of the Printing Bureau in Ottawa, of the Post Office department, and what savings we have to-day in that department in the matter of expenditure are the direct result of that reorganization, and if any hon. gentleman opposite wants any proof I refer him to the words of the Postmaster General (Mr. Murphy), extracted from him last session, frankly indeed, given by him in this House. That department was reorganized. The Customs department and Inland Revenue were reorganized and millions were saved to this country in the process. Let this government pursue such work department by department, and they will save the people of Canada millions that are to-day going in waste services all over the country. Now, there is no question of this at all. The government takes great credit for reducing the hours the civil servants had to work last year, for increasing the holidays, as they say they have done. By this means I suppose they hope that votes will be attracted to their standard. The country looks in vain for substantial contraction in the expenditures of the Dominion. That contraction has taken place this year in very marked degree in other countries of the world. They talk in the Dominion about not being able to do anything in the way of meeting our honest share of Empire obligations, in the way of paying for what we enjoy in this country. We can do nothing, they say, because of the great debt of the Dominion. The government of Great Britain in the year that has gone was under the necessity of paying two-thirds of its entire revenue in the interest on obligations which that country incurred, that the liberty of the world might be saved. The interest on the obligations of this country, obligations that I know were great, obligations that I know were honourable and creditable—the interest on the obligations that were incurred in the war—is not more than about one-third of the revenue of this country to-day. The government have the other two-thirds. The government of Great Britain, with one-third of their revenue, are able to pay off a portion of their national debt; this government with two-thirds of our revenue available, none of which is applicable in interest upon the war debt, is not able to reduce any of its national debt, but rather adds to the national debt by forty-five millions in one year. Such is the comparison between this administration and other administrations that have been in power. So I say that the effort of this House should be directed this session to one end more than all others, namely, to the end of bringing to the government a

[Mr. Meighen.]

realization of its duties in this matter of expenditure and taxation.

Considerable is stated in the Speech from the Throne about improved conditions in the Dominion. I have not observed those improved conditions myself. I do not come to parliament animated by a desire to paint in colours that are darker than the truth the actual condition of our country. So far from despairing, there is none of higher hope for this Dominion among its citizens than myself. We are in a good position yet, relatively to other countries, in the matter of national obligations. By the conduct of our finances through those years of war by procuring for this country a large share of the work of producing all kinds of goods necessary in the conflict, we were able to hold the debt of this Dominion pretty largely within the four corners of the Dominion itself. We were able in that time to add to our savings deposits in this country a sum no less than \$550,000,000. We were able at the same time to provide, from the pockets of our people, a sum no less than \$1,700,000,000 of the national debt of this country, so that of the interest on that sum, four dollars out of every five come into the pockets of the people of our country themselves. While that was going on our people purchased and paid for at least \$600,000,000 worth of automobiles. That was the condition, the prosperity that prevailed prior to the end of the year 1921, and that was a fundamentally healthful and sound position. That process has not continued. The government, starting with the country in that position, with the necessities of the war and all that the war entailed contracting day by day, should have been able to show a splendid reduction of our national debt to-day; it should have been able also to show a reduction of our obligations owing to the citizens of countries abroad. The contrary is the case. We owe more abroad; we have a national debt bigger than ever; all the obligations and duties of government in this regard have been passed over and ignored.

In western Canada, it is true, our farmers reaped the largest harvest that that country has ever known. I would not say that this was true of every portion of the Dominion. Of the three western provinces, it is unquestionably true; of the Dominion, in the aggregate, it also is unquestionably true; but I believe it must be said—and it is only right that this should be brought home to the administration—that the condition of the individual farmer in western Canada, after the enjoyment of a year of government under the