

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The government is alive to the situation which exists in the Northwest and it only regrets that it has not more power to deal with it. The Department of Labour, which is the only department which can deal with the matter, has sent Mr. Mackenzie King to try if possible to bring about a settlement of the strike.

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the government if they can state at what date the public accounts and the Auditor General's Report will be brought down. I understand, of course, that we are meeting after a considerably less delay than that which usually intervenes, and there may be some difficulty in having the reports as soon as we could desire. At the same time, I would like to know what we may expect.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance). When the change in the fiscal year was made we hardly anticipated that at this early stage of the session we should be able to bring down any of the reports. However, knowing that hon. gentlemen are very desirous of having them as early as possible, we have made extra efforts to have them put into shape, and we expect to have them much earlier than we anticipated. The public accounts are ready, and the Auditor General's Report will be brought down at a very early date.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Could it be brought down in sections?

Mr. FIELDING. If that is necessary to facilitate the business of the House; but I fully expect that it will be brought down at a much earlier date than was anticipated last session.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

The House proceeded to the consideration of His Excellency's speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. F. F. PARDEE (West Lambton). Mr. Speaker, in reading over the speech from the Throne, one cannot of course fail to be gratified at the fact that the prosperity of the Dominion of Canada continues to be as great as it was before, that the harvest has been bountiful, that times are good, that in every way the Dominion of Canada is perhaps more prosperous to-day than she ever was before. That is a subject for mutual congratulation on the part of all the members of this House and all the people of Canada, for none of us can wish anything but prosperity for this fair Canada of ours. I cannot help associating in my mind the prosperity which Canada enjoys to-day with the fact—although in this no doubt the

whole House will not agree—that the prosperity now enjoyed by Canada is partly due to the wise expenditure of the present government. It has been said and reiterated time and again, both in the House and in the country, that because we are spending many times more dollars to-day than we did in 1895, therefore the Liberal party is recreant to its principles and is not carrying out the programme which it promised to carry out prior to the time it was returned to power. There can be no gain-saying the fact the expenditure of to-day amounts to many million dollars more than it did in 1895. As a matter of fact, the government is expending to-day about 83½ per cent more than was expended in 1895. But I wish to call the attention of the House to this fact, that although the expenditure is that much larger, the business of the country is in every way greater than it was at that time. Although the expenditure in 1895 amounted to \$42,000,000, whereas in 1905 it amounted to \$78,000,000, yet the net debt per head is \$3 per head less to-day than it was prior to 1896. During the years the Conservative government were in power, the annual surplus averaged about \$500,000. Since the Reform party has been in power it has averaged about \$7,500,000. This shows that although we are expending more money, yet the people are not subjected to greater debt than they had before. In comparing the progress of the Dominion of Canada with the percentage of increase in the debt since 1895, I may invite the attention of the House to a few figures, but very few. I said in the beginning that we were now spending 83½ per cent more money than we spent in 1895; but although we are spending more money, our trade is increasing in every way. Our total imports in 1895 were \$110,000,000, as against \$266,000,000 in 1905; our total exports were \$113,000,000 in 1895 as against \$203,000,000 in 1905; our total trade was \$224,000,000 in 1895 as against \$470,000,000 in 1905; our deposits in chartered banks in 1895 were \$182,000,000 as against \$468,000,000 in 1905; the miles of railway in operation in 1895 were 15,000 miles as against 20,000 miles in 1906; the railway tons carried—and this I think is a fair criterion of the progress of the country—in 1895 was 21,500,000 tons as against 50,800,000 tons in 1906. If these figures bear any relation to the progress of the country, then I say the country has been amply repaid for the expenditures which this government has made. As against the percentage of increase in the expenditure since 1895, I would say that since that time the total trade of the country has increased 109½ per cent, the consolidated revenue fund 109½ per cent, the deposits in chartered banks 156 per cent, the discounts in chartered banks 114 per cent, the tons of traffic carried by railways 136 per cent. In view of the growth of the country which these