

"Hon. gentlemen opposite know that I am calling their attention to a simple truth when I say that in nine cases out of ten, when they rise to discuss some public expenditure it is for the purpose of asking that the Government do something on a more liberal scale than we have been doing in the past. We ask them, as we have done in the past, to point to anything that is wasteful or extravagant. They cannot do it. Usually the Public Accounts Committee is the body that investigates these things. I venture to say that never in the history of this Dominion was there such a farce as the meetings of the Public Accounts Committee during the present session. We could not get the hon. gentlemen (Opposition) to attend. They used to come and introduce a motion that somebody be summoned. They would give notice that they intended to move to enquire into something, but when the time came for them to make the motion, they would not be there, or they had not called the witness, or something else would happen, and really the thing became laughable in the end. The Public Accounts Committee adjourned, and there was practically no enquiry into the public accounts of the past year. Why? Not because hon. gentlemen opposite were not able, not because they were too generous to avoid an enquiry into the expenditures of the Government, but simply and solely because they found there was no ground for attacking the expenditures."

It might be justifiable to leave the Liberal case at that. The fact that the Opposition, who are in the best position to criticize, and whose duty indeed it is to criticize, the finances, have been unable to point to, or prove, any wrong doing, is pretty strong testimony in behalf of the Government. But, while the Conservatives have been unable to prove wrong doing or extravagance, they have indulged in their usual wild talk, and their press has been filled with the most extravagant statements on general lines, with the intention of misleading the people. As we previously stated, the Conservatives seem utterly unable, politically, to grasp the immense change that has come over the face of Canada in the last seven years, and all their statements respecting the finances are based upon Canada as it was in their time. They pile up totals of expenditure and say in their grandiose way, without stopping to scrutinize details, "Look at the extravagance of these Grits. Isn't it awful?"

It will, we think, be evident that to fully answer the question as to whether the money has been wisely spent would involve a scrutiny of the most minute details, and volumes would be necessary to explain the results. This, of course, would be too large a task to undertake, and in this article we can only explain and justify the expenditure in a very brief and summary way. Our object principally will be to point out the salient causes for the increase in the main without burdening the reader with too much detail.