

son, amounting to \$1,547,623.74. These capital and special expenses for the year amounted to \$9,742,187.33. Now, with these large expenditures for the liberal maintenance of the public services, with large expenditures for railways and public works, and with special expenditures in connection with the South African war, it would not have been a matter of surprise if it had been necessary to increase the public debt.

DECREASE OF DEBT, 1899-1900.

Yet, we have the gratifying statement that we have provided for all these large expenditures, and that we have been able not only to avoid increasing the public debt, but actually to reduce the public debt to the extent of \$779,639.71. The net debt on June 30, 1899, was \$266,273.446.60; the net debt at the same date in 1900 was \$265,493,806.89, showing a decrease of \$779,639.71, as already stated.

Now, that is a very gratifying statement, but it is one which it is only possible to make in very prosperous times. In only two years prior to this, in the history of the Dominion of Canada, was the Finance Minister able to make the statement that there had been a reduction in the public debt. This occurred in the year 1871, when my predecessor in office was Sir Francis Hincks, and it also occurred in 1882, when Sir Leonard Tilley was Minister of Finance, and when there was a reduction in the public debt of a very considerable sum. It is not therefore reasonable to expect that this reduction in the public debt can frequently occur. In a country like Canada, which after all is a comparatively new country, in which there will always be demands for public works, and in which there will be expenditures outside of what may be called the ordinary expenses of government, it is only reasonable to suppose that we shall incur obligations which will necessitate occasionally some addition to the public debt. I think that if the addition to the public debt should only be a moderate one we shall have no reason to complain.

ESTIMATED REVENUE, 1900-1901.

Turning now to the affairs of the current year, which is to close on the 30th June

next, I find that our revenue up to the 10th March was \$34,942,177.95, an increase over the corresponding date last year of \$1,227,693.01.

The customs revenue, which is always an item of chief importance, remains up to date substantially the same as it was a year ago, and I do not expect that from this time forward we can expect any material increase in that item. In railways and post office and excise there has been a considerable increase, and we anticipate that there will be some further increase before the year closes.

Mr. WALLACE. How much increase in the excise?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I have not the figures at hand, but I will give them to the hon. gentleman later. I estimate that the total revenue for the current year, to end on June 30 next, will be \$52,750,000, or an increase of \$1,720,000 over the revenue of the previous year.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE AND SURPLUS, 1900-1901.

Coming now to the expenditure account for the current year, the expenditure up to March 10, on consolidated fund, was \$27,731,602.04, so that, if we had an increased revenue, we have also had some increase in expenditure as well. We have some supplementary estimates yet to bring down for the current year which will, of course, swell our existing appropriations. I estimate that when the year's affairs are closed, including these supplementary appropriations, we shall find the expenditure chargeable to consolidated fund amounting as near as may be to \$46,400,000. With an estimated revenue of \$52,750,000, and a probable expenditure of \$46,400,000, I reach the conclusion that at the close of the present year we shall be able to show another surplus amounting to \$6,350,000.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. This, Sir, is not so large a surplus as that of the past year, but I think we shall all agree that if the accounts when closed will show a surplus as large as that, it may be regarded as very satisfactory.