

BUDGET SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

HON. WILLIAM S. FIELDING, M.P.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 22nd APRIL, 1897

WAYS AND MEANS—THE BUDGET.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding) moved :

That the House resolve itself into committee to consider the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

He said : Mr. Speaker, I avail myself of this motion to address to the House such observations as may seem to be necessary at the present time in explaining the financial position of the Dominion ; and also to submit to the House the details of the tariff policy which, in the judgment of the Government, is best calculated to promote the welfare of the people of Canada. I feel sure that, as I proceed, I shall have abundant reason to ask the generous indulgence which the House is always ready to accord to one who, for the first time, undertakes a task of so great magnitude, a task which to me, I confess, is all the greater when I remember the long line of able and distinguished men who have preceded me in the office of Minister of Finance.

THE FISCAL YEAR 1895-96.—REVENUE.

My first duty will be to deal with the affairs of the fiscal year which ended on the 30th of June, 1896 ; and this portion of my speech must of necessity be of a statistical character. It will not be necessary for me to occupy the time of the House at great length in regard to the year 1895-96, because the House has already been placed in possession of

the principal points of interest through the public accounts and the appropriation accounts which have already been laid on the Table. In each of the three classes into which our revenue is usually divided, namely, customs, excise and miscellaneous, there is a marked increase over the year of 1894-95. The amount of that betterment I will give in detail :

Service.	1895-96.	1894-95.	Increase.
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Customs.....	19,833,279 48	17,640,466 00	2,192,813 48
Excise.....	7,926,005 94	7,805,732 71	120,273 23
Miscellaneous....	9,859,305 30	8,531,930 76	1,327,374 54
Total.....	36,618,590 72	33,978,129 47	2,640,461 25

The total revenue of \$36,618,590 fell short of the estimate made by my predecessor in his financial statement of 31st January, 1896, to the extent of some \$370,000. Now, taking the report of my hon. friend the Controller of Customs as my authority, it will be found that on nearly all the general lines of imports we have received increased revenue over the year 1894-95. The following, however, are the main items of increase, sugar, of course, being the principal :—

Grain of all kinds.....	\$ 42,902
Flour and meal of all kinds.....	38,361
Carriages	211,737
Coal and coke.....	56,222
Cotton, manufactures of.....	111,794
Drugs, dyes, chemicals and medicines...	21,786
Flax, hemp and jute, manufactures of...	41,297
Fruits and nuts, dried.....	17,915