

stalwart Liberal of the old school might say, coming to this parliament or coming into this House to-day, having regard to the pledges and to the declarations of principle which he had heard on so many public platforms before 1896, when he learned that in ten years \$321,500,000 had been collected by this government in excess of what the people had paid to the Conservative administration during a similar period before 1896. Well, he would say in the first place that he was glad the revenue had been so abundant, but he would say also, 'When our friends went into power, when we assumed the reins of office in 1896, there were \$258,000,000 of public debt in this country. We had complained of the growth of that public debt, we had deprecated it, and I have not any doubt but that out of the \$321,500,000 of surplus excess of revenue which the Liberal ministry has received from the people of Canada in the last ten years, the whole of that public debt has been wiped out.' Well, then, he would be told: 'No, it has not been all wiped out.' He would say: 'At least \$200,000,000 must have been wiped out, because that would leave \$121,500,000 excess of revenue to supply all the growing needs of this developing country.' He would be told: 'No, \$200,000,000 have not been wiped out.' 'Well, then,' he would say, 'surely \$100,000,000 of the public debt must have been wiped out, because that would leave to the Liberal leaders who are in power to-day \$221,500,000 to supply the needs of the rapid growth and development of this country. He would be told: 'No, the public debt of this country has not been decreased as much as that;' and if he seemed to be a man of robust health, capable of standing the shock, he would be told that the public debt of this country has been increased by nearly \$66,000,000. I did not observe any allusion to this somewhat rapid and remarkable growth in the speech of either the mover or seconder of the address.

But, it does seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that these are figures which call for some comment, and they are figures which have already evoked some expression of opinion from great financial authorities outside of Canada. I may be told, perhaps, that the National Transcontinental railway undertaking has absorbed a very large amount of this. I have taken the trouble to look into that and I find that, excluding the Quebec bridge, about \$52,000,000 was expended up to the 31st March last in connection with the National Transcontinental railway, and that, including the Quebec bridge, a little more than \$58,000,000 has been expended in connection with that undertaking. So you can put the National Transcontinental railway out of the matter alto-

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

gether by deducting the amount expended upon it from the increase in the debt, and you will find, after balancing the accounts in that way, allowing \$58,000,000 of debt for expenditure upon the National Transcontinental railway, that you have \$321,500,000 of excess revenue beyond that which was received from the people of this country in the period of ten years before 1896, and you still find that the gentlemen who occupy the treasury benches to-day have spent the whole of that enormous sum and have also increased the public debt by \$7,000,000. Not only that, but \$46,000,000 in the increase of the public debt to which I have alluded took place, in the past year, and inasmuch as we have spent only \$52,000,000 up to date upon the National Transcontinental railway we can foresee from the figures brought down by the government themselves that between \$100,000,000 and \$150,000,000 still remain to be expended upon that gigantic undertaking before it shall have been completed.

Passing from this question of the expenditure upon the Transcontinental railway itself, I do not observe a reference in the speech from the Throne to the probable date of the completion of the undertaking; nor do I observe, in the speech from the Throne, any reference, or any information whatever, as to the date at which the Quebec bridge will be completed. I think that these are matters upon which we might well be enlightened by the Prime Minister when he comes to address the House. We know that very severe comments have been made by the late president of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, who has spoken in very indignant tones and in very severe language as to the extraordinary delay which has taken place in the work of construction between Winnipeg and Quebec. I would like to know, if possible, at what date the government expect that the road will be completed, and at what date they expect the Quebec bridge will be completed. Have they any reasonable idea, which they can vouchsafe to the House as measurably correct, as to when either of these events will take place; and if, as we assume the event will be, the Transcontinental railway from Winnipeg to Quebec and the remaining portion of the line from Quebec to Moncton will be first completed, what do they propose to do with these portions of the road during the period when the Quebec bridge will be still in process of construction? We are all aware in this country that traffic, once routed in a particular direction, is very difficult to move, and we are all aware that the traffic coming over the National Transcontinental railway may get routed in directions which are not thoroughly in the