

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1932-33

REFERENCE TO SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
RAILWAYS AND SHIPPING

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): I should like to move that the house revert to the order of motions in order that I may move that certain estimates that were tabled a few days ago may be referred to the select committee on railways and shipping. The motion was in the hands of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes), but he is confined to the house and it would expedite business if we could revert to the order of motions in order that I may make the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the consent of the house we shall revert to motions.

Mr. BENNETT moved:

That the estimates tabled Friday, April 22, 1932, being resolutions Nos. 314, 315, 316 and 317, be referred to the select standing committee on railways and shipping owned, operated and controlled by the government.

Motion agreed to.

RELIEF WAGES—INCOME TAXATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. W. NEILL (Comox-Alberni): May I call the attention of the Minister of Labour to a statement that appears in the western papers to the effect that the province of British Columbia is to collect income tax on relief wages? As this government pays a portion of the money, surely the minister will not be a party to such a ridiculous course.

THE BUDGET

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON THE ANNUAL
FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER
OF FINANCE

The house resumed from Monday, April 25, consideration of the motion of Hon. E. N. Rhodes (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, the proposed amendment thereto of Mr. Ralston, and the proposed amendment to the amendment of Mr. Gardiner.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes), on account of an indisposition which I trust may be brief, is prevented from occupying his seat in the house this afternoon. I should like to join with others who have spoken, in congratulating him upon the method of presentation of the first speech which, as

Minister of Finance, he has delivered in this parliament. We all expected that with his large parliamentary experience, he having filled the position of Speaker of the House of Commons as well as that of Premier of his own province, he would, in the presentation of his budget, give us a statement that at least in form and method would be exemplary. I think in that regard none of us has been disappointed.

I should also like to congratulate very warmly the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston) upon the most effective reply which he made to the address of the Minister of Finance. I doubt whether it would have been possible for anyone to have made a more incisive or penetrating analysis of the speech of the minister, or to reveal in more complete fashion the consequences which have followed in large part from policies of hon. gentlemen opposite, and which have been so greatly deplored by the Minister of Finance himself though attributed by him as being due in greatest measure to world conditions.

The speech delivered by the Minister of Finance has the distinction, if such it may be called, of being the most depressing and gloomiest picture that has ever been given to the House of Commons, of conditions in the Dominion of Canada. I say that regretfully, realizing that this is due in part to a condition which exists throughout the world, but also in part to policies of hon. gentlemen opposite which have been put into force since they have come into office. In almost every particular the facts as presented by the minister were the direct opposite of what all of us, irrespective of the political parties to which we belong, would have wished them to be. Where we should have liked to see increases, there were figures representing decreases and where we should have wished to see decreases, the statistics given represented increases. There were increases in the public debt, bringing the public debt to a point higher than it has reached at any previous time in Canada. There were increases in taxation, making the tax burden heavier than it has been at any former period. The total figures as regards both indirect and direct taxation stand higher than they have been at any time of our history. The figures with regard to increases of borrowings indicated larger borrowings on the part of the administration than has ever before been the case except during the period of the war in reference to war matters, and I should also except those borrowings which have been for purely productive purposes as for example