

# DEBATE IN THE SENATE

—ON THE—

## PUBLIC EXPENDITURE OF THE DOMINION.

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Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON, pursuant to notice, rose to call attention to the public expenditure of the Dominion, especially that portion of it which is largely within the control of the Administration, and enquire of the Government how it is proposed to restore the equilibrium between income and expenditure. He said: It is with a great deal of reluctance that I bring the subject of the finances of the country before the House, because I am aware that it is not an attractive one to many hon. gentlemen; but as I last Session and the Session before felt called upon to refer to what I considered the extravagance and wasteful expenditure of the Government, especially the more controllable portion of the expenditure, I feel it now my duty to submit to the House what I believe has been done by the Government since last Session, whether in the way of retrenchment or otherwise. It was my opinion (and is still,) that very great extravagance prevailed throughout the Administration; that it had its centre at Ottawa, in the Departments here, that the extravagance here has been most reckless and wasteful, and that the example set here has been followed in the administration of the affairs of the country to its remotest bounds. I complained last Session that it was stated, in the Speech from the Throne, that there had been such retrenchment effected as would aid in bringing about an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure. I stated, at the time, I was afraid that that was not the case. I think I was able to show, and will be able to show to-day, that such was not the case, but that, on the contrary, the expenditure was increased, and the revenue and expenditure are as far from meeting to-day as they were this day last year. I intend to-day to make my remarks as brief as I can. I

do not propose to extend my comparison of expenditures generally beyond those for the year 1877 with 1876, though I may occasionally extend them further. I established last Session that the present Government is responsible for the increase in controllable expenditures between 1873 and 1876, to the extent of \$1,800,000. That, as I always admitted, is necessarily an estimate,—nothing more than an estimate can be made as to the expenditure for which each Government is responsible; but I believe that in forming that estimate I was liberal and generous to the present Government, liberal beyond what the strict facts demand, and in proof of that view there is the fact that the expenditure of 1876 over 1875—two complete years of the present Administration—was \$717,060. One million eight hundred thousand dollars for three years would give an annual increase of \$600,000. And, as I have stated, the ascertained increase in one year was \$717,060.

Hon. Mr. BROWN — Between what years?

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—The expenditure of 1876 over that of 1875. I think this is very strong circumstantial proof of the liberality of my estimate. It is quite true the amount charged in 1877 against the consolidated revenue fund is less than the amount charged in the preceding year, and it would be very remarkable if it were not so. I shall proceed almost immediately to show wherein the difference arises. I fear it will not be found there has been what may fairly be considered retrenchment, and I fear it will not be found that there has been an earnest attempt to economize the expenditure, although it has been decreased, necessarily decreased.