

night; and in view of the prominent position he occupies in this House, I shall at least attempt an answer to what he has said. He opened his speech by congratulating the hon. Finance Minister upon his attitude and mode of delivery. I myself beg leave to tender to the hon. Minister—if they are of any value and he will appreciate them—my own congratulations on the manner and on a great deal of the matter of his speech. I congratulate him especially on the omission of much of what might be termed the gush and bounce that has characterized, not only some of his own previous speeches, but those of his predecessors; and it is not because I wish to detract from this compliment that I say I wondered whether that was due wholly to the good sense of the hon. Finance Minister, or in part because of an inward consciousness that in whatever glowing terms he might depict the prosperity of this country, it was not really as prosperous as he and I fain would have it to be. However, let that be as it may, it was an improvement on many of the Budget speeches we have heard in the past. I can congratulate him, too, as did the hon. gentleman who has preceded me, upon his declaration, that the Government had determined upon a policy of economy. Sir, that announcement was welcomed on this side of the House, and we only hope that the fulfilment of the promise may be witnessed by us in reductions in the estimates that will be submitted to the House. But while I applaud the hon. Finance Minister in his determination to enter upon a course of economy, I wish him to remember that I do not consider it to be economy in the true sense of the word that great public works which are in the interest of Canada, which are becoming almost annihilated in some cases, if we may judge by expressions which we hear from some of the members of this House, that wharves and piers and harbours which have been constructed in the public interest shall be allowed to fall into decay for the want of necessary repairs upon the plea of economy, when we cannot but feel that it is not a principle of economy that is operating, but a lower and baser principle, the principle of a small mind that will withhold a public grant due to a province or a municipality simply because the inhabitants of that province or that municipality have exercised their rights in the true spirit of manhood, and have returned to this House members who are not in accord with the Government policy. Sir, I hold that true economy demands that those necessary works shall be constructed, that they shall be maintained, and that it is the bounden duty of a gentleman entrusted with the administration of the public money—not the money of any Finance Minister or any Government, but the money of the people of this country—to expend it in those works which are demanded on grounds of public interest and public necessity. But, Sir, is economy not to be practised by abstaining from entering upon public works which have no merit in themselves and cannot be defended on purely commercial grounds, or on the ground that they are solely in the interest of this Dominion? Sir, I would like to have some evidence of a better desire for economy on the part of the Government; because I doubt very much whether there is any such desire, and would be glad to have that doubt removed. But the Finance Minister must have resolved on that new departure in economy some time before he announced it in his Budget speech;

Mr. PATERSON (Brant).

and if he was honest in that desire, why did he not use his influence in saving to the country something like \$250,000 a year in the revision of the voters' lists. Why does he go on spending that money, when he knows that, if properly expended on public works along our sea coast, it would remove just grievances, by enabling the necessary repairs to be made to harbours and breakwaters which naturally become damaged through the course of time? Sir, we will look for the exercise of this economy promised by the hon. gentleman, in his withholding assent from projects that cannot be justified on their merits or the public interest; but we cannot regard as economy the refusal of the necessary grants to maintain in proper condition the public works of the country, even though they should happen to be situated within the ridings of those who may not at present be in accord with the Government. My hon. friend next congratulated the Finance Minister upon the great reduction which he had announced in the taxation of the people. To the extent to which there has been a reduction in taxation made by the Finance Minister, I join in my hon. friend's congratulations; but I could not help being amused at the manner in which that announcement was hailed by hon. gentlemen opposite. For the first time, in many years, there has been the announcement of a reduction in taxation by the Finance Minister; but I remember that for years past, instead of announcements of reduction in taxation, we have had the Finance Minister declaring increases in taxation of 10, 15 and 20 per cent.; and every time the taxation was increased it was increased amid the plaudits of those hon. gentlemen who now equally applaud the announcement of a decrease. That is a marvellous change. Let us hope that hon. gentlemen opposite have changed. Let us hope that the policy which has been advocated by the Opposition during many years, and to which they would not give heed, has at last impressed itself upon their mind as the policy necessary in the interest of the country. The hon. gentleman congratulated the Government on the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I rejoice in the completion of that great national undertaking, but I cannot congratulate the Finance Minister as heartily as I would have desired, for we were given to understand by the hon. gentleman's predecessor, and he pledged the faith of the Government to it, that the completion of that railway would not add, as it has done, \$100,000,000 to the public debt, but that this very year—aye, even a year ago—the treasury of Canada would be recouped to the extent of \$70,000,000 by virtue of the sales of North-West lands. Yet, to-day, not one dollar of these \$70,000,000 is to be found, but, on the contrary, we have millions of deficit caused by the mismanagement of the Government. While we rejoice in the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, we cannot rejoice in the fact that every prediction of the Government has been proved to be fallacious, and that they have been shown utterly incapable to estimate the possibilities of the future. Their whole calculation has been proved utterly unfounded and fallacious in every respect, as cannot fail to be recognized in the fact of the great increase of the public debt. The hon. gentleman congratulated the Finance Minister that we had arrived at a period when the increase of our public debt would cease. Let me ask what credit he is entitled to for