

We would then have a chance to look over these men, and if they measured up, we might do something about it. But as long as hon. gentlemen opposite keep their seats and advise us to resign, they can hardly expect that we will take their advice very seriously.

The hon. member for Broadview suggested that something should be done in connection with the amalgamation of our railroads. Evidently the hon. member has not yet discovered that the only reason put forward in the past for amalgamation is no longer true. This year our national railway will operate for the first time without a nominal deficit. It has not had a real deficit for years, but this year—

An hon. MEMBER: What?

Mr. ROEBUCK: Some hon. member says "what?" Our national railway has not had a deficit for some considerable time. It has paid its operating expenses and has had a balance year after year for many years. The deficit which my hon. friends opposite talk about is caused by its inability to pay the interest on the accumulated debts of the privately-owned railroads which were combined into the national system, debts which had accumulated since confederation. At the present moment the Canadian National Railways is actually paying the interest on these debts, as well as its operating expenses.

I submit that our railways are of great advantage to this country. Canada would not be the country she is were it not for our railways. Amalgamation should be carried out only on the basis of necessity, and that necessity has now passed. There should be no further proposals to amalgamate.

We are here this afternoon to discuss the important proposals made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley). Mark Twain, the famous humorist, in his book *The Innocents Abroad*, gives a list of adjectives which should be used when polite people are looking at a great picture, and suggests that a knowledge of these adjectives should be considered as part of a gentleman's educational equipment. There are fashions in phrases—very much so. There has developed in this house, and from the newspapers it would seem that there has developed also in the country, the fashion of talking about this war appropriation in extravagant terms. I have heard with regard to it such adjectives as "staggering," "stupendous," "astronomical," and so forth. A billion dollars is quite a sizeable amount, even if one disregards the \$300,000,000 annex. It is more than the people of Canada have ever before been asked to advance. It dwarfs the figures of the last war. Yesterday the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr.

[Mr. Roebuck.]

Hanson) figured out that it meant \$250 per head for the population of Canada. He said that we were prepared to carry through even if it took our last dollar. That is heroic, and I am glad to see that kind of resolution being shown by hon. members opposite and on this side of the house, but it will not take our last dollar. I am inclined to deprecate the extravagance of language which is being applied to this appropriation. It will not take our last dollar, and I do not like to see phrases used which seem to suggest the possibility of failure on our part.

The amount mentioned in the resolution is a very large sum, but it is not a sum beyond the capacity of the people of Canada to pay. With all due respect to those who seem to be nervous at the moment, in my judgment it is not a sum which should strike terror into the hearts of our financial leaders. It seems to me that the nervousness over this proposed appropriation arises from the fact that we are talking in terms of money instead of in terms of goods produced. That is why fear grips the hearts of many people and why we are wondering whether this effort will be successful.

Nearly all of us in this house lived through the last war and have vivid memories of the conditions which prevailed then. Most members will recall how Canada during that war emerged out of a period of severe depression into one of very great activity. The depression of 1914 lasted for some time into the war; then it mysteriously disappeared and Canada went to work. Yes, we did go to work. Hon. gentlemen will remember how we shipped goods across the sea to the utmost capacity of the ships that sailed the oceans. The bottleneck was not the producing power of our factories in Canada and the United States; it was the capacity of available shipping to carry the goods across the sea. We are talking now about borrowing money, but we did not borrow the things that we shipped to France to be boiled down in the cauldron of war in the struggle of 1914-18. We made them. We brought forward from the past scarcely a pound of food or a pound of wool. We certainly borrowed not one pound of powder from the future. We made these things from hand to mouth at the time and shipped them across the sea in greater quantities than Canada had ever produced or shipped them before. And this point I would like hon. gentlemen to note that while we were producing more than ever before and destroying at a rate that would have astonished us in years gone by, our working people were better fed, better clothed, better housed, and had more loose change in their pockets, than they ever had had in the years before or have had since. What is the explanation