

see him give his endorsement to the policy which hon. gentlemen opposite have enunciated from time to time. No; the hon. member who has just sat down, in saying that anyone who undertakes to criticize this administration is a pessimist, is very far from the mark. In my opinion the hon. member who criticizes is a great optimist. He sees that this country is not going in the right direction and so, optimist that he is, he first offers some criticism to the government and then advances something constructive by way of telling them what they ought to do to bring Canada out of the condition that she is in at the present time. I would ask my hon. friend how he or any Canadian with any degree of intelligence could be other than confident in the country itself—not in this government—when he considers the great possibilities of this Dominion. Look at the Maritime provinces and think of the possibilities that are latent there; look at Quebec with her great resources; and consider for a moment the fact that we have in this country just four per cent of the world's population. And you all know the rest of the story. You all know that Quebec has the world's supply of asbestos; Ontario has the world's supply of nickel; and in the western provinces we have the great granary of the whole empire. The hon. member spoke also about the wonderful things there are in British Columbia. Well, to hear the views of some people, one would think that there was nothing there but a few Japs, a few Chinese and a few saw logs. But the hon. member has told us about the mining industry in that province. And then think of the Okanagan valley with the fruit it produces, and consider the province of Alberta from the mineral point of view with her fifteen per cent of the world's coal supply. Think of all these things and tell us where there is room for pessimism in Canada. There is absolutely none. I do not take second place to any man in this Dominion in my optimistic outlook on the future of Canada; and when I criticize this administration I do not bow to the dictum laid down by this hon. gentleman, nor yet to that laid down by the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb), that such criticism tends to embarrass the nation's credit. No, sir! I do not for a moment bow to any such opinion.

The balance sheet as brought down by the Acting Minister of Finance is not in my opinion a credit to him; it is not a credit to the great Liberal party; it would not be a credit to any business organization to tell its shareholders—in this case the people of Canada—that it gives an auditor's certificate in verification of the accounts when in fact

[Mr. Harris.]

that certificate is not in the true sense of the term a certificate at all; certainly it is not an auditor's certificate as understood by the man in the street. There is something radically wrong when the government has to put a blanket over its balance sheet in the form of a so-called auditor's certificate in order to restore to the minds of the people confidence in that balance sheet. In my opinion the results of the year's operations ought to flow from the balance sheet in a uniform way so that the average citizen can understand its contents; there should be no necessity for page after page of explanation as to how the balance is arrived at. It is almost an insult to the intelligence of Canadians when the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) attempts to show in the second paragraph of his budget speech how the national debt has been reduced. Why should it be necessary to give such explanations? Are we not fifty or sixty years old as a nation? Do not the people know how the national accounts are made up and the balance arrived at? I repeat, there must be something radically wrong when the government resorts to these methods. I like to think of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) himself reviewing his balance sheet. His budget was an honest, frank expression of where we stood. He did not hesitate to say that there was \$31,000,000 added to the national debt, he did not hesitate to put his railway deficit in the place where it belonged. To-day in order to cover up the fact that through trade depression throughout the country we are slipping in revenues, the Acting Minister of Finance finds it necessary to take \$50,000,000 in 1923-24 and loaned to the National railways on bonds guaranteed by the government and put this loan in the category of Canadian National Railway finance. As a matter of fact where does it belong? We all know it should be included in the national debt. Then in the face of that to declare that the national debt has been reduced by \$35,000,000 is not, in my opinion, an honest, frank statement by the government.

But let me return to the auditor's certificate which, the Acting Minister of Finance told us, has been printed on the balance sheet on page 3 of the Public Accounts for 1923-24. I have no doubt, Sir, that you and every other hon. member have read auditors' certificates from time to time. This certificate says:

We have examined the balance sheet of the Dominion of Canada as at March 31, 1924, and we certify that the balance sheet conforms to the balance sheets of previous years in not including in the net debt of the Dominion issues of the Canadian