

EXTRAVAGANCE—DEFICIT—TAXES.

Liberal "Extravagance" and the Tory Record.

IT was the Honorable W. T. White, Minister of Finance, endeavoring during the last session of parliament to justify his \$330,000,000 budget for the fiscal year 1915-16, who declared with florid oratory:

"I say Mr. Speaker that the late Government were the inventors, the originators, the parents, progenitors and propagators of the most inordinate, reckless, purblind and wilful extravagance that this country or any other British country has ever known."

And yet it has been under the administration of the same Hon. W. T. White, that the total disbursements of the Dominion for three years ending March 31, 1915, since he became Minister of Finance in the Borden Nationalist-Conservative Government, amounted to the record total of \$512,859,957, (exclusive of war expenditure), as compared with a total of \$375,399,105 for the last three years of the administration of the Laurier Government.

The total expenditure in the first three years of Nationalist-Conservative management was just \$137,460,852 more than for the preceding three years for which the late Liberal administration could be held responsible.

Foster's Protest in 1908.

It was Sir George Foster, then just plain Hon. George E. Foster, who declared in 1908:

"The rapid pace which has been set and the recklessness of the expenditures that have been undertaken have obliterated all the old rules, all the old lines in reference to expenditure. Whither are we rushing?"

But Sir George Foster has been a member of the Borden Nationalist-Conservative cabinet since 1911; no one knows better than does Sir George that the highest records of expenditure under the late Liberal government have been so far exceeded as to be placed utterly in the shade by the expenditures of the present government of which he is a member; no one knows better than Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, that the trade and commerce of Canada have declined to such an extent as to make it the plain duty of a prudent administration to curtail expenditures. And yet Sir George, who knows all these things, and who "viewed with alarm" the expenditures of the late Liberal government, remains silent when he sees expenditures exceeding revenue by so great a margin that nothing but accumulating debt and increasing taxes face the people of Canada.

Premier Borden also Protested.

It was Sir Robert Borden himself, who on the eve of the elections of 1911, in his public manifesto as leader of the Conservative party, declared:

"The increase in what is known as ordinary controllable expenditures of from 36 millions in 1896 to 79 millions in 1911 is proof of extravagance beyond any possible defence and establishes a prima facie case of corruption."

But no one knows better than does Sir Robert Borden that the increase in that same "ordinary controllable expenditure" in the three years of his own government has amounted to over eighty millions, or over twenty-six millions a year, while during the regime of the late Liberal government the increase amounted to less than four millions a year.

Does Sir Robert Protest To-day?

The official figures show that in 1912, ordinary controllable expenditure totalled \$98,161,440. In 1913 it rose to \$112,059,537, an increase of \$13,898,097; in 1914 it rose to \$127,384,472, an increase for that year alone of \$29,223,632; in 1915 it had risen to the enormous total of \$135,523,206, an increase for that year of just \$37,361,866. The total increase in the three years of Conservative administration, in the face of falling revenues, was just \$80,483,595, over \$26,000,000 a year. No one has seen or heard any evidence that Sir Robert Borden has made any effort to curb or stop this reckless squandering of public money, although it is presumably in his power as prime minister and master of the administration.

If Sir Robert Borden in 1911, looked upon an increase of \$43,000,000 in "controllable expenditure in fifteen years of Liberal rule as establishing "a prima facie case of corruption," what might Sir Robert Borden be expected to say of an increase of \$80,000,000 in three years under his own Nationalist-Conservative administration?

At the present time, when it has become plain that a heavy new burden must be borne in the shape of interest on our borrowings for war, would it not be a reasonable and logical thing for the people of Canada to demand that the Government curtail its other controllable expenditures? Are they not justified in asking the Government to save much added borrowing at high rates of interest and much added taxation? It could be done if the Government got back to the standard of expenditure in the last few years of the late Liberal Government. And always it must be borne in mind that never before in the history of Canada was there more need for retrenchment and economy. The expenditures under Liberal rule were made in years of unexampled business prosperity; with conditions sadly reversed and every sign pointing to a continued diminishing of trade and revenue, expenditures by the present Government have grown by leaps and bounds.

Liberal Expenditures Justified by Revenues.

The only possible excuse the present administration could have had for increased expenditure would be a compensating increase in the business of the country. Such an excuse is absolutely lacking. In view of the criticisms of Liberal expenditures quoted, it is worth recalling just what development occurred in Canada during the fifteen years of Liberal administration from 1896 to 1911. In that