

overseas dominions, by reciprocal arrangement, so to help one another that the great British Empire will be stronger than it ever has been. So I was glad to-day when the Finance Minister, in making his Budget statement, did not deal with any further alterations of the tariff. When the question of free wheat was raised, I could not help feeling that our friends opposite were not altogether justified in considering that the action taken by the Government in this regard was a capitulation of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House so far as their views regarding reciprocity were concerned. It must be remembered that had the reciprocity pact gone through we Canadians would have lost control of our tariff; our tariff would have been regulated from Washington. As it is, we still keep control of the wheat and flour situation, inasmuch as we are taking advantage of a clause in standing legislation of the United States, and at any moment we can declare that wheat and flour shall again be placed on the protected list. We are in no way implicated in any arrangement that we cannot alter. Inasmuch as great events are probably pending; inasmuch as when this war shall be over new reciprocal trade arrangements may possibly be made throughout all parts of the British Empire, is it not desirable that Canada should not be tangled up with any other nation in such manner as to lose control of her own fiscal arrangements?

I rose not to discuss the remarks of the hon. member for Red Deer, but rather to say a few words in respect to what was advanced by the hon. junior member for Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean) this afternoon. I did not intend to take part in this debate, but I could not quite allow all that he said in criticism of the Finance Minister and the Government and members on this side of the House to pass without challenge. He endeavoured to create the impression here and throughout the country that the present Government was not in any way endeavouring to exercise economy in order to hold the ordinary expenditure on capital and consolidated account within reasonable bounds. Now, those of us on this side of the House who since the war began have had occasion from time to time to make representations to our ministers urging that certain things be done in our constituencies have all certainly come to know that the war is on and that every ordinary expenditure that could be avoided is avoided by the Govern-

ment. We have come to know also that the appointment of additional employees is discouraged. We have come to know also that the advancing of salaries is not frequent. We certainly, if the members on the other side of the House have not, have had brought to our attention daily instances of the economy practised by the Government. We have received the almost stereotyped form from our ministers: "Inasmuch as the war is on, it is not advisable to make any new expenditures, advances in salaries or things of that kind." We have only to take the figures as they are published to see that these professions are borne out by the facts. If the junior member for Halifax had presented to the House the comparative summary statement in the Estimates of the figures for last year and this year he would have been compelled in all fairness to admit that the Estimates for this coming year are by no means inflated. We find that even under very adverse circumstances the amount that this House is to be asked to vote this year out of the consolidated fund is less than it was asked to vote last year. That is not so outside. Every industry is increasing its staff; expenses are running up in every other walk of life; the expenses of railway companies are increasing. Every enterprise and industry throughout Canada is complaining that its expenditures in the way of salaries, supplies, and so on, are greatly increased. Yet we find that the Government on consolidated account purposes spending even less in the coming year than was spent last year. If we look over these figures more closely we find that there is still further reason for congratulating the Government on the evidences of economy that are to be found. If you turn to the summary of the Estimates you will find that an estimated expenditure of \$182,359,000 is to be made on consolidated fund account in 1917-18 as against \$183,956,000 in 1916-17.

First of all, it is necessary to notice that there is a great difference in the charges for interest, and you cannot blame the Government if the interest charges have advanced. We have borrowed money in order to carry on the war and the interest must be paid; that is something over which we have no control. In 1916-17, the interest charge was \$39,649,000; while in 1917-18, the interest charge is \$57,720,000, so, in order to make a fair comparison, we would have to deduct from those figures the amount