

from Toronto to Halifax. My second conclusion is that it will take much water to wash the linen of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, although perhaps I should not include New Brunswick in that statement. There is still another thought suggested by his speech, and that is if the hon. member had a real province to talk about, how long would he talk?

Perhaps it is not too late—I do not refer to the time of day—for me at this stage to offer my congratulations to the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb). He certainly set a wonderful example of brevity in presenting his budget to the House, and by the way the lesson presented by the Acting Minister of Finance has been totally lost on the “minister for Halifax”.

Let me likewise express the hope that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) will speedily be restored to health, and that he will in the immediate future be able to take his place on the government benches in this House.

I wish to say at the outset that in the remarks I have to make, and I am going to be as brief as I can, which will probably be good news, I am going to speak entirely for the constituency which I represent. I am dissociating myself with any party in this House, and that, by the way, is becoming quite a common practice. The hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Hoey) made it quite clear to the House that he was as free as the winds that blew over the western prairies, and much to my surprise the hon. member for East Elgin (Mr. Stansell), I think, arose in the House and proclaimed almost the same sentiments. I shall claim the same liberty in the remarks I am going to make. I feel that some things I am going to say will perhaps not be acceptable to all members of this House, but what I wish to do is to express the opinion of the constituency I represent, and express it just as clearly as I possibly can.

Before, however, beginning on that I wish to say that I am sure this country is pleased to find that we have already reached the stage where the finances of this country are at least balanced. The Acting Minister of Finance in his presentation showed not only a balanced budget, but a surplus. That to my mind is one of the things which this country has been looking for and expecting for many years, and I am sure the country owes a debt of gratitude to the government in that regard.

One or two other matters have occurred to me in connection with this budget. First, I would say that the sales tax reduction on a great many articles, and on the necessities of life, does not go far enough. We have one article which enters into the construction of the homes we live in—that is lumber—from

[Mr. W. Elliott.]

which the sales tax has not yet been eliminated. It seems to me that this is a very important matter. Lumber is a very necessary article. The cost of building our homes has reached a tremendous figure, so much so that we are finding it very difficult year by year to engage in such work, and any reduction which could be brought, through the abolition of the sales tax as it applies to lumber, would be very acceptable, I am sure, to the great mass of the people of Canada. The constituency which I represent contains, perhaps, one of the greatest combinations of agriculture and industry in the Dominion. We have a population that is very dense, although the constituency is very small; its dimensions are only about twelve miles by twenty-four so hon. members will see it is very compact in character. In the county of Waterloo we have two cities, the county is the only one in the Dominion to enjoy that distinction. As well as these two cities there are a great many small towns and villages, all of which are large industrial centres. Coming back to the agricultural situation again we find that those engaged in agriculture there are perhaps in a little better position than they are in most other parts of the Dominion. There is not a spot in the riding from which we cannot, in one hour's ride, reach three or four large cities, as well as a great many small towns. Galt, Kitchener, Guelph, Brantford, Hamilton, and Stratford, all cities with a large population, can be reached from any part of the riding in just about an hour's trip by car. This means that the farmers in that part of Ontario are engaged in what we call diversified farming—the true type of mixed farming. About 80 per cent or four fifths of the products of these farmers are all disposed of in the towns and cities that surround the district. Now, when you go out and tell those farmers that their home market is no good you have got a job on your hands. Speaking of those farmers I want to say that their home market is a real market, and I cannot stress that point too strongly here to-night. Of course that is a special condition. I know that situation does not exist in the West, nor does it exist in a great many other parts of Ontario, nevertheless in the riding for which I am speaking to-night it is a real factor and a factor of which we are particularly proud. So I have come to this conclusion, as I am sure a great many others have, that you cannot injure agriculture, you cannot do anything that will lessen the buying powers of the farmer, without injuring the industries in the towns and cities. On the other hand you cannot do anything to injure industry with-