

etc., were made higher so that if the farmer wants to reap the benefit he should go into the drug business."

MR. MEIGHEN then discussed Canada's financial position and the taxes. Before the war the debt was \$56 millions. The Borden government had reduced it in one year by 25 millions, but as a result of the war the debt had grown to two billion, three hundred million dollars. Eight hundred millions were spent since the war for purposes of soldiers' civil re-establishment.

The speaker warmly repudiated the charge that the Conservatives had squandered money during the war. There was less wasted than in any country engaged in war. The United States in the war, one third of its duration, wasted nearly as much as Canada spent on the war altogether. In the main, in view of the result in striking down German, Canada got full value for the money spent and the mistakes were trifling.

"There is no doubt that the charges of scandal made by the opponents of the Conservative government, at a time when the people were at a high tension had some effect in turning hundreds and thousands of votes. 'I wonder,' said Mr. Meighen, 'how thinking people regard the situation today. Canada's per capita debt today is less than any nation that went through the war.'

"For three years of the war the Liberals did not ask for investigation into waste or graft. It is true that the Public Accounts Committee held an investigation, but there has not been a sentence of evidence to prove charges of alleged waste, extravagance or graft, despite the tornado of innuendoes scattered throughout the last campaign."

MR. MEIGHEN then took up the statement made by the present Premier during the election regarding the piles of munitions, "four feet high," which he had seen in the Quebec docks. He referred also to the letter Mr. King had written him on the subject. High explosives had been brought from England. It was made to appear that a great scandal was unearthed, but it was wild and dishonest allegation. An investigation was held. Witnesses were brought from all over Canada. They all said the same thing as appeared in my letter of explanation," said Mr. Meighen. "These munitions were the overflow returned by Great Britain to Canada. This country had paid her share towards them. Sir Edward Kompt had sold a large amount of equipment, motor trucks, horses, in England, when the market was at its highest to much advantage and saved millions to Canada.

"A certain amount of munitions that Britain could not use were returned to this country, where they were needed for practice, and the country was saved the expense of manufacturing them."

Mr. Meighen maintained that the committee of investigation did not have the manliness to make a finding, because the former government would have been completely exonerated and it would have been shown that the transaction was fair and honorable, an amendment to this effect having been moved by the Progressives on the committee, but voted down by the Liberal majority. Hon. George P. Graham admitted this session that the munitions were needed in Canada and the present Government brought over another shipload last summer.

THE speaker also charged that, despite their pre-election de-

nunciation of increased debt, the Liberals had increased the debt their first year by fifty-seven millions, and this year Mr. Fielding estimated a deficit of seventy-two millions.

The cost-of-living curve, Mr. Meighen contended, was now higher than when the Conservatives were in power, due to additional taxation. The Liberals had collected twenty-eight millions less in profits and income taxes, but fifteen millions more in customs, and they had raised the sales tax by fifty per cent. By increasing the sales tax to six per cent and having the tax collected at the source—the manufacturer—the cost of living had been increased by ten to twelve per cent. "This is why so many of our people are leaving," he said. "There is no sales tax in the United States."

"There is business stagnation and lack of business expansion today owing to the vacillating and indefinite policy of the government. It is dog-rolling, day and night, in order to retain the support of the Progressives. The people are heavily taxed to buy the hotel in Paris, another high priced unnecessary hotel in Toronto, to repair breakwaters in Cape Breton, to win a bye-election, and build a bootlegging wharf in North Essex. There was twenty millions voted in the supplementary estimates for pure or rather impure politics; \$40,000 was spent on a wharf in Westmoreland county at which there has never been a boat or a steamer since."

TOUCHING on the purchase of the hotel for the C. N. R., Mr. Meighen said that Mr. Graham attempted to explain the charge that the government had made an illegal expenditure, by declaring that they had deposited two millions in the Bank of Toronto, and the latter had sent over to Paris two millions of its own money and the transaction was carried out in the name of an outside party. Whether legal or not, why spend millions for the hotel when money is needed for widening the railway in Prince Edward Island and building up the terminals in St. John and Halifax?

The allegation that the late Government was responsible for the railway deficits, because it nationalized the railways, was then taken up by Mr. Meighen. He said he would take the responsibility, if need be, for such nationalization; he would make no apology for his action. He told of the millions which his government had paid to keep certain of these railways from collapsing. When the notes which had been signed when the Liberals were in power became due were not paid, the Conservative government, finding the railways were unable to finance themselves, took possession of the roads. By taking over all the railways and securing a unity of control, one road was able to help the other, instead of diverting part of its traffic to the C. P. R. "If the Liberals think nationalization of the railways is all wrong why not sell them?" he asked. "Sir Lomer Gouin said he was going to sell them and in this way gained sixty seats in Quebec. If they have the courage to sell the road, let them do so, or let them denationalize them," said Mr. Meighen. "It will be a long time before they do it. If they want to have no deficits, let them close down railways built thirty years before their time, let the farmers starve and towns go to wreck and ruin."

MR. Meighen scored the government for making parliamentary reductions in rates going back to pre-war days, simply to please the Progressives. There was no need of re-establishing the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement, and thus preventing a reduction in rates in the Maritime Provinces.

"I come from the West," he said, "and it might be popular there to advocate reduction of rates for the West, but I represent the whole of

the country and view the interests of the country as a whole. The Railway Commission should be given a free hand with regard to rates so that they can be put on an equitable basis everywhere. Our rates are high, higher than they should be."

In closing, Mr. Meighen said that his party would face the next contest with joyful anticipation. He predicted the defeat of the present government that had nothing but a record of vacillation and failure, without capacity or spirit to get anywhere.

The speech, which lasted for over an hour, was confined entirely to Dominion politics.

Hon. J. D. Stewart, the new Conservative Premier-elect, was chairman of the meeting.

Tonight Mr. Meighen was banquetted at the Victoria Hotel by prominent Conservatives, including the newly elected members of the Provincial Legislature. This afternoon he spoke at the Rotary Club luncheon. He will remain on the Island over the week-end.