

have another editorial here dated April 6, from the same paper, headed: *The Wobbling Mr. King*.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The editorial my right hon. friend directs my attention to opens in this vein:

Just where Mackenzie King is going to land finally in matters of tariff policy will not be known until the budget is brought down the middle of this month.

That was April 5. The editorial I read appeared on April 12.

Mr. MEIGHEN: This is April 5—several days after the budget was brought down.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The budget was not brought down till April 10th. My right hon. friend, when it comes to a recital of matters on which he wishes to score a point, has a genius for a sort of political thimble-rigging. I do not think the country could have a better example of his method of procedure in public affairs than that which he has exhibited at the moment. The truth is he cannot get over the fact that "this government"—as he continually says—"this government" has succeeded in bringing about a condition of greater national prosperity, has succeeded in having a surplus instead of a deficit, has placed on the records of this country in its statistical tables figures which cannot be questioned as to the expansion of trade, and has reduced taxation; these are things, that irritate his feelings and cause him very often to lose his better judgment and in his one desire to discredit the ministry, to indulge in extreme language and misrepresent the condition of the country.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that while the constitution fixes five years as the term of parliament, although half of that term has not yet elapsed, the country has had presented to it the third budget of this administration, and each budget has shown a progressively improved condition not only as respects reduction of the public debt but also as respects reduction of expenditure, reduction of taxation and increase of revenue and expanding trade. In short, in all the essential features of our national economy there has been steady and marked improvement. That is the most convincing and gratifying evidence the country can have as to how its affairs are being administered by the present government.

Let me take first of all the public debt. During the period of the war and demobilization there had been, year by year, gigantic increases to our public debt. They did not cease even with the period of demobilization. The war ended November, 1918. I shall say nothing of the additions of the fiscal year

1918-19, nor of the fiscal year 1919-20. It might have been expected, however, that the fiscal years 1920-21 and 1921-22 would have seen an end to the additions to our public debt. On the contrary, however, the public debt continued to increase. In the fiscal year 1920-21, the debt increased by the sum of \$92,010,360. The next year, 1921-22, which represented nine months of office of my hon. friend and his friends, indicated an addition to the public debt of \$81,000,000 or over. As I said, speaking on this matter in the debate on the Address, had it not been for the fact that the present administration was in office three months of that fiscal year the chances are the increase in the public debt for 1921-22 would have been as high as the previous year—\$91,000,000 instead of \$81,000,000. The year following, this government had to meet a vast number of obligations which had been left by the previous administration. In the matter of preparing our budget we were not free. We had to meet these obligations, many of which were uncontrollable in their character, and as a result we were unable at the end of the first year of office to do more than show a very material reduction in the increase which had been made to the public debt in the previous years. Instead of the public debt showing an increase of \$91,000,000 as in 1920-21, or \$81,000,000 as in 1921-22, the increase had fallen to something like \$30,000,000, odd, a decrease of \$50,000,000 as against the preceding year.

Coming now to this year, which is the first in which the government has really had some show in the matter, we find that instead of adding to the public debt \$30,000,000, as was the case at the end of the last fiscal year, we are now able to speak, and speak honestly, of a surplus amounting to over \$30,000,000 on the last year's business.

My right hon. friend has tried to make out that in some way that surplus is not genuine, that because the government guaranteed loans for the National Railways, to the extent of \$50,000,000 that amount should have been included in the public debt. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is this, that in this matter, as in most matters of administration, the government had the officers of the Finance department follow precisely the same methods as had been followed by the previous administration. My hon. friend the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) when he brought to the cabinet the statement which he brought to parliament, intimated to his colleagues that these were the figures which had been given to him by the officers of the Finance department, that they were taken from the