

# J.J. HUGHES M.P. ON THE BUDGET

(From Hansard.)  
Continued

Now, I come to the expenditure. If the expenditure is large, if it has increased under this government, it is because the government has provided liberally for the public service, whereas the public service was starved under the late administration. But let the people bear this well in mind—it is a fact familiar to every member of this House but not known to all the electors—that not a dollar of that expenditure can be made until it has been voted by a committee of the Whole House at which every member of parliament is or ought to be present; and every member has the right to object to any item in that appropriation and to move that it should be struck out if he thinks it should not be there. And, during the twelve years that hon. gentlemen opposite have been in opposition, they have not moved to strike out one item in the appropriation Bill with the exception that one year they believed they moved to strike out some \$50,000. But, on the other hand, these hon. gentlemen have risen in their places time after time and year after year and declared that the appropriations are not large enough. Only a few days ago, when the estimates for the militia Department were going through the House, members after members of the opposition rose and said that the appropriations should be larger, that drill sheds and armories should be built here and there all over the country. But even that is not all: A few days ago when the hon. member for North Toronto was speaking on this subject he addressed himself to the enormous development in our foreign trade under the present administration. He said that, comparing the records of this year with those of 1896, inasmuch as these returns are kept in dollars and cents and not in pounds, bushels, tons and yards, and as there had been a great advance in the prices of all commodities during the last decade, it was not fair to take the returns as made up in dollars and cents and compare them with the returns of 1896 without allowing for the increased value in the products of the country. I thought there was something reasonable in that statement—and I want to give hon. gentlemen opposite credit for every statement they make that is reasonable. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) made calculations to show that there had been an increase in the value of commodities to the extent of 28 per cent. So he deducted 28 per cent from the total returns, and said that the balance was what should be fairly compared with the trade returns for 1896 in order to make the comparison a fair one. Well, there was enough left even then to show an increase, a larger increase than at any other period in our national history—there was enough left to satisfy any Liberal. And I notice that some of the hon. gentlemen who sit behind the hon. member for North Toronto took their cue from him and said that our trade was not as large as it appeared to be from the returns. But they did not consider that, if this argument be sound, it completely cuts the ground from under their feet when they charge the present government with extravagance in its expenditure. For, if it is fair to make the deduction on one side, it is equally fair to make the deduction on the other side. Then, let us take the estimated expenditure for this year, the largest in our history. The estimated expenditure is \$77,500,000. Deduct 28 per cent, and you bring the expenditure down to \$55,800,000. Is this the only deduction that should be made in order to make a fair comparison? No. The present government is called upon to make expenses that the previous government had not to provide for, and in fairness, these should be deducted. I will not go over all these, I will take only two items. The subsidies to the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and the increase of subsidies to all the provinces means an increase of expenditure of \$4,500,000. There is also the expense of keeping up the garrisons at Halifax and Esquimaux—about \$2,000,000 more.

An hon. MEMBER. And the Yukon?

Mr. J. J. HUGHES. Yes, there is the Yukon, which is a new field of expenditure since this government came into power, but I will leave that and many other items aside. The two items I have already given make a total of about \$6,800,000. If these be allowed for, the expenditure is brought down to \$49,000,000. Is that an extravagant expenditure, considering the growth of the country? If that is extravagant, then the late government, which expended \$77,000,000 or \$78,000,000 on consolidated fund account must not only have been guilty of gross extravagance, gross waste, gross prodigality, but even of gross dishonesty, for the public service at that time was starved and the government had to provide for comparatively little.

Why, Sir, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the present expenditure of the country should be double or treble what it was in 1896. Take my own province for instance, with the conditions of which I am most familiar. We find the present government providing for a public service requiring twice the expenditure of the late government. For instance, we have two ice-breaking steamers now where we had one before; it would be only fair therefore to expect that the expenditure under that head would be twice as great as it was. We have two dredges now where we had one before, dredging our harbours and rivers, a service that was greatly needed, and the new dredge is larger, more powerful and does better work than the old one. It would be only fair therefore to expect that the expenditure under that head should be twice as much as under the late administration. Take aids to navigation, lightships, buoys and all that kind of thing have

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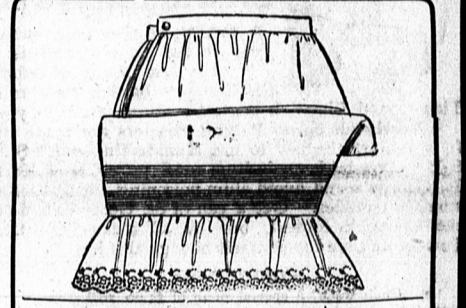
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