The Weekly Mail.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

THE ESTIMATES.

A STARTLING EXHIBIT!

MR. CROOKS brought down the Estimates at three o'clock Friday and immediately proceeded with his financial statement. It has been the practice for the Treasurer to lay the Estimates on the table at least a week before making his budget speech, that the House might in the interim fully comprehend the figures and understand the subject. But in this case the Treasurer had strong cause for jumbling estimates and speech into an hour and a half. A more startling proof of the recklessness of the men now in power than that contained in every page of the estimates, has never been furnished. We content ourselves to-day with giving the mere outline and aggregates of Mr. CROOKS' budget, in which, we may remark, he has most disingenuously compared the estimated expenditure of 1873 with the estimated, instead of with the *actual*, expenditure of 1872.

The following is the summary of the various sums estimated:—

Civil Government	151,049 00
Legislation	161,400 00
Colonization Roads	146,300 00
Administration of Justice	232,490 00
Public Buildings	468,411 00
Public Works	132,977 42
Asylums and Public Institutions, Maintenance	276,662 00
Education	470,313 00
Agriculture and Arts	87,100 00
Immigration	135,324 00
Hospitals and Charities	43,020 00
Literary and Scientific Institutions	1,850 00
School of Practical Science Maintenance	8,800 00
Unforeseen and Unprovided	50,000 00
Municipalities' Fund	115,207 22
Land Improvement Fund and Common School Fund	69,539 02
Crown Lands Expenditure	202,100 00
To cover Expenditure under Interest and Unprovided Accounts of 1872	80,074 33
Total	$3,771,028 51

This is a contemptuous increase of no less than $923,072, or fifty per cent. over the actual expenditure of 1872! Compared with the actual expenditure of previous years we find it to be an advance of 135 per cent. upon 1868, 92 per cent. upon 1869, 75 per cent. upon 1870, and 59 per cent. upon 1871, as will be seen by the following figures:—

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Actual expenditure in 1869	1,444,608
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There is an alarming increase in the cost of almost every department of the Service. Messrs. MCKELLAR and SCOTT have two lions' shares, the former asking for $135,000 for expenditure upon public works as against $67,000 in 1872 and $25,000 in 1871, and the latter adding $84,000 to the expenditure of last year.

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	Acres.
Adam Oliver and Jos. Davidson	300
Davidson and McDonald	437
Adam Oliver and McDonald	80
Do. do.	765
McDonald, Oliver & Davidson	2,713
Do. do. do.	1,088
Do. do. do.	2,000
Adam Oliver	160
Do.	472
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Do. do.	2,142
Total	13,649

At $1 per acre for the land, and 50 cents per acre for the mineral rights, we will be seen 135 per cent. upon 1868, 92 per cent. upon 1869, 75 per cent. upon 1870, and 59 per cent. upon 1871, as will be seen by the following figures:—

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REDUCTIONS IN THE PRICE OF LANDS.

AFTER the arbitration had been made in the Ontario and Quebec arbitration, the SANDFIELD MACDONALD Government felt themselves justified, in a financial point of view, in legislating for the relief of settlers burdened with arrears of debt, or benefited by reason of the poverty of their land. It was intended that the Government should exercise wise discretion in dealing with cases where reduction was absolutely necessary to the very existence of the settler. Their object was to help the heavy laden, not to succour the well-to-do. In many townships, east and west, speculation had raised the land to such an advanced price that the friends of the Crown Lands Department were unbearable. In others, settlers had purchased wet, swampy and for years than its true value, and, to make bad worse, the early frosts destroyed a moiety of their poor crops. Under these circumstances equity and fair play prompted upon the Province with its full treasury the necessity of alleviating the lot of actual sufferers. The SANDFIELD MACDONALD Government, therefore, adopted the valuation system. Having in their possession the original price of the lands, they obtained a valuation from experienced men, and at the same time asked the settler, if a private purchaser, what he was prepared to give for his farm. With these data, they were in a position to afford relief to the deserving without an undue sacrifice of the public interests.

Mr. Scott—for in the management of the Crown Lands Department it is a fallacy to speak of the Government as a large, collective entity—thinks that relief to the most extraordinary lengths. He has acted on the idea that reduction should be made in favour of all applicants, irrespective of their position, and without regard to their circumstances. Immigrants, who, in Canada, have been crushed down by heavy arrears to the Department owing to the impossibility of paying our land with profit, and of gathering fair from thorns, was relieved by the SANDFIELD MACDONALD Government of a portion of their indebtedness, the present Commissioner is of opinion that Settler D in Enchiloche should also be relieved unconditionally, although his land is excellent and its price reasonable. In short, Mr. Scott declares that any man who whole sector the physician just as much as they who are sick. He puts a premium on greed and cupidity and a reward on covetousness. The effect of this demoralizing policy is being diagraceffully exemplified. Drive samson see why a portion of his purchase money should not be refunded, in view of the fact that his neighbour LAZARUS has been saved from utter ruin at the public expense. Applications for "relief" of this kind are pouring into the Department from farmers who, with good land at a reasonable figure, were able to bear the heat and burthens of the day without the aid of convenience, and who are now money-lenders and mortgagees. The narrowness of their souls is shown by their cupidity. They virtually demand a gratuity for having been charitable enough to allow their poor sister to drive a mile from the Treasury, when the wolf was at his door. Members of the House who are afraid to say nay to a constituent, support these extortionate demands; and to secure influence in the Legislature and popularity among the lazy and the class of agricultural sharks, Mr. Scott announces that they have but to ask to receive. The sooner the Government bids to face an annual deficit the better for public morality. At the present time everybody is intent on studying the rule of three, viz: if the surplus amounts to $5,000,000 and my neighbour's wants are relieved to the extent of $100 out of it, how much have I a right to expect?—and the Government are corrupt enough to surrender their stewardship to Democracy. Mr. SCOTT has strong reasons, we have no doubt, for refusing to grant Mr. RYKERT's motion for information relative to the reduction in the sale of lands. But we fancy that his absolute reign over the Crown Lands Department will have an end. He has undertaken in this matter, as in the matter of land sales, to dispose of the public wealth without the people's consent—and although he may be defied by hayrics, his condemnation by the honest masses must inevitably follow.

LOW PRICES OF PRODUCE IN THE WEST.

In the North-western States, the present great bread producing region on this continent, the subject which most of all engages public interest is, why farming does not pay! The farmers in the North-west have been, as a class, in a very bad way for some time back; a fact which should not be lost sight of by the people who may contemplate going there, and which, besides, has its lesson for us with respect to the policy we should pursue in the opening up and settlement of the immense tracts of land in the Dominion. Corn, which is worth 32 cents in London, and 67 cents in New York, brings only 18 cents per bushel to the producer in Central Illinois. The cost of transport across that State is so much less than in Canada, but that it should cost 49 cents to carry from Illinois to New York a bushel of corn, for which the producer gets only 18 cents, is simply outrageous. Taking the average of the North-western States, the price realized for the farmer for three bushels of grain have to be given for carrying one bushel to market, and the farmer gets for four bushels something less than what one bushel is worth at the seaboard. The causes which have brought about this state of things are easily explained. Before the war, the North-west found a market for much of its produce in the Southern States; but since the abolition of slavery the Southern people have taken to the production of food crops more than before, and now buy comparatively little from the North-west, which in consequence has to look more to the Eastern States and to Europe for a market. While this change, no doubt, has had its effect in swelling the proportion of produce seeking an outlet by exportation, it has also increased the volume of western produce for exportation has vastly increased, and that far beyond the increase in capacity for means of transportation. During the war, again, and for some years afterwards, high prices prevailed, and the farmer, in those times, if he paid dearly for all he had to buy, had his compensation in good prices for all he had to sell. But the inflation of values due to the war could not last for ever, and during two or three years back the price of grain in the west has greatly declined. During this time, too, gigantic railway combinations have been developed, and, though the semblance of competition is still kept up, the reality scarcely exists any longer. It is easy to see, therefore, how the present miserable position of the western farmer, for such is really it, has been brought about. The cost of transportation is, or ought to be, very nearly a constant quantity; something like fifty cents may be said to be the average cost, one year with another, of carrying a bushel of grain from the prairie farms of the North-west to the seaboard. Supposing the price to be 81 per bushel at the seaboard, the western farmer would get fifty cents. Supposing the price at the seaboard to fall one-fourth, or twenty-five per cent, the producer near to this market would suffer only in that proportion, or probably a little more, say thirty per cent. But to the western producer a fall of one-fourth at the seaboard would be a reduction of fifty per cent. on the price received. Let the price go yet lower, and bring only half of what it brought before. With a fall of forty per cent. at the seaboard, leaving the price equal to 49 cents, to 60 cents, his proceeds of sales from the farm would be cut down 80 per cent, and he would find that Mr. McKELLAR has the friends denounced the SANDFIELD MACDONALD Government for having sent one Emigration Commissioner to Great Britain, and spent $25,000, and that they have themselves a dozen or so of the same kind of agents, though none of so inferior character, out, and want nearly six times as much money as that Government spent for the same service. We mention the cost of the Emigration Commissioner, but we do not against the paltry nature of the reason trumped up to justify Mr. McKELLAR's extravagance and to conceal his incompetency for the position which he now holds.

THE SENATE.

HON. P. J. O. CHAUVEAU has been summoned to the Senate for the Electoral Division of Stadacona, in the place of Hon. JOSEPH CAUCHON, resigned, and has also been appointed Speaker of the Senate, a position held throughout the last Parliament by Mr. CAUCHON. Mr. CHAUVEAU, as our readers know, entered public life in 1867, in that year having been elected to both the Legislature of Quebec and the House of Commons. Ever since then he has been the leader of the Quebec Government, which he has directed with energy, tact and ability. He will be an accession to the Senate, and will bring to the discharge of the duties of Speaker decision, good temper and a thorough acquaintance with parliamentary practice.

"We do not hesitate to urge that the action of the Government in respect of emigration should be a bold and liberal one. It would be a low estimate if we put down every emigrant as worth to the country one hundred dollars. So that if the right and most effective course of action be pursued, and substantial results obtained, no one need begrudge any reasonable amount of expenditure for the object."

It is in this way that the organ of the Ontario Government seeks to justify Mr. McKELLAR's demand for $135,000 for emigration purposes. "To one need "begrudge any reasonable amount of ex-"penditure for this object." Of course not, so long as Mr. McKELLAR has the handling of the funds! But the Grits, when they were in opposition, begrudged Mr. CARLING even $20,000, although this sum he brought as many emigrants into the Province as Mr. McKELLAR brought with twice the money. We have not a word to say against the most efficient means of encouraging emigration; but when we find that Mr. McKELLAR has the friends denounced the SANDFIELD MACDONALD Government for having sent one Emigration Commissioner to Great Britain, and spent $25,000, and that they have themselves a dozen or so of the same kind of agents, though none of so inferior character, out, and want nearly six times as much money as that Government spent for the same service, we mention the cost of the Emigration Commissioner, but we do not against the paltry nature of the reason trumped up to justify Mr. McKELLAR's extravagance and to conceal his incompetency for the position which he now holds.

THE TIMBER QUESTION.

The debate on the Government's timber policy having been brought to a close, the Omega of the matter was in keeping with the Alpha. There were three separate and distinct questions involved; first, of expediency; second, of fact; third, of principle—of expediency, as to the necessity of the sale at the time; of fact, as to the existence of a monopoly; of principle, as to the doctrine that the people's representatives should on all occasions be consulted before the policy of the country is materially changed or the public interests affected. Although *The Mail* has already dealt with this subject as becomes its importance, we propose to examine these three questions in the light of the votes recorded:

THE QUESTION OF EXPEDIENCY.

The Government maintain that the sale was necessary and expedient, and the Opposition take issue with them.

It was not necessary because the Treasury needed money. A private individual seldom disposes of stock which is temporarily depressed in value unless he stands in want of ready cash. In this case, the Government had no much cash. They were pressed, so to the best means of disposing of a Surplus of nearly $4,000,000. So far as they were concerned, the money market was glutted and investment difficult—they were therefore only adding to the difficulty by auctioning the public estate and swelling the gigantic proportions of a swollen and idle bank account.

The sale was not necessary because the territory was required for settlement. About 13,000 square miles of timber land were already under license, and 5,000,000 acres open for free grant settlement. Estimating that one-fifth of the licensed territory was fit for settlement, there were no less than 6,000,000 acres waiting the incoming of those "countless "thousands in the Mother Land who "are sighing for Canadian soil," as Mr. FARWELL says in his heroics. In 1872, Mr. MCKELLAR spent $57,000 in emigration, and did not doubtless look up land to the extent of 115,000 acres. Giving the Commissioner of Agriculture thrice that appropriation annually, and supposing the number of locatees to increase in similar proportion, he would not be able to find tenants for the 6,000,000 acres in less than fifteen years. The figures are indisputable. If the Huron region had been open, the Lake Huron timber would have been licensed or open for settlement was fairly occupied, it is not too much to say that, with proper exploration, it would have brought $1,500,000 or $2,000,000 in the shape of bonuses alone. It is impossible to know exactly what proportion of the Huron territory is fit for settlement. Mr. Bryce at one time described it as "a bleak and barren waste;" and others have stated that about one-tenth of its area is arable, and the remainder suitable for lumbering purposes only—in other words, 500 square miles of which would be capable of being made to yield a home for himself, have been put under license "in the interests of settlement," and about fifteen years before the more accessible 6,600,000 acres are likely to be exhausted; and an area of 4,000 square miles, valuable only for its lumber, has been transferred to the lumberman at a cost of about 50 cents per acre, instead of the two dollars per acre, which the Government paid for it, and which it could have realized if it had waited a few years longer. The Government have actually given away the timber in the Huron territory for a mere nominal consideration, and, if the sale be not confirmed, the Province will be fresh in the minds of our readers how, when there seemed to be a very general impression that the timber "nuisance" could not be got rid of, and more than one Minister of Finance was found to say, in effect, it, Sir FRANCIS HINCKS tackled the difficulty, and removed it utterly. Every man in Canada knows how great a boon this was. Our business men are equally well acquainted with the great amount of the Government's generosity. Left to him as an unpleasant legacy by his predecessor, he settled the question in a single session; without interfering with that elasticity which was a marked feature of the Land Regulations, he made what was generally looked upon as of the highest consequence to a young country—the Lands, he provided that they permanent advantages for the Government. His Act, while satisfying the public, put a few thousand more dollars a year into the public coffers. It is matter of notoriety, too, that, greatly indebted as the Province had been, owing to the Bank of Montreal, Sir FR