

that he has on the whole made a retrograde movement to that which was being followed for some years prior to his advent as Premier.

THE PRETENDED DEFICIT.

The *pièce de résistance* of the Honorable Treasurer throughout the whole of his financial statement this year as well as last, has been the so-called enormous deficit which his predecessors left for the fiscal year which ended on the 1st June, 1897.

But for that deficit, he would appear to have little to complain of in the administration of the Province under a Conservative Government, and but for that deficit he would be unable certainly to draw any conclusions by which he could at all favorably compare his own administration with that of preceding Governments since 1892. If then, this deficit was explained or accounted for in any manner which would commend itself to thinking and intelligent people, the fabric of his criticism must necessarily fall to the ground. I quote the honorable gentleman's own words which he used in opening his speech that he delivered yesterday in which he says that "budgetary forecasts can never be made in a precise and infallible manner. They are subject to accidental circumstances which cause them in spite of the efforts of a government to undergo unexpected changes in certain services. It might easily happen that dullness in the lumber trade or a falling off in the number of licences granted during the year would cause a perceptible lowering of the receipts from these two important sources of revenue. It might likewise happen that an increase in the uncontrollable expenditure might in certain proportion add to the amount of the estimated expenditure." In this statement I entirely agree with the Honorable Premier and I only regret that he has not applied these remarks to the deficit for the year ended on the 30th June, 1897, out of which he has endeavored to make so much capital, as they are in every way applicable to it. Had the deficit of that year been due to normal expenditure as compared with normal receipts, or had the result been arrived at by comparing the revenue properly attributable to that year, with the expenditure, we might perhaps have admitted its accuracy.