

THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1909

The Budget Speech.

Premier Haszard delivered his budget speech in the Legislature, last Friday evening. This was his second deliverance of that nature and it must be admitted, even by the most optimistic that it was a "stale, flat and unprofitable" pronouncement. Last year's budget was a wretched affair, and it must be confessed that this year's was not much of an improvement. Indeed, so far as the financial outlook for the current year is concerned, Mr Haszard's forecast of last Friday evening is much more discouraging than his deliverance of a year ago. Last year, the Premier admitted an anticipated deficit of \$7,000 on the year's financial transactions; but the actual shortage at the end of the fiscal year was upwards of \$55,000. This year he estimates the expenditure at \$393,309, and the revenue at \$370,195. These figures show a deficit of \$23,114 on the year's business. But the Premier's estimates of last year left a shortage of over \$55,000 on the year's transactions, and if his predictions of this year come out in about the same proportion, the deficit on the 30th. Sept. next will not be \$23,000; but upwards of \$75,000.

The Premier boldly proclaims his policy of adding to the debt of the Province, for the construction of bridges and other public works. It requires no little temerity for the Leader of the party, whose shibboleth has all along been to make revenue and expenditure meet, to come out now flatfooted in favor of increasing our Provincial debt. Of course, we know that piling up the debt of the Province has been the principal achievement of our Liberal Provincial Government, for the last eighteen years; but hitherto they have been a little shy of exhibiting themselves in their true light. Now, however, the people know what they may expect; the Leader of the Government has proclaimed a deficit to start with, and lays it down as his policy that the debt of the Province must be augmented. It is well to have the mask thus removed and the actual intentions of the Government proclaimed by the Leader. The policy of political deception has stood the Government in such good stead that the Leader, grown bold, makes a clean breast of the whole game. If the people are deceived any longer it will be with their eyes open.

The Premier was very bold in the attitude he assumed while delivering the budget; but behind a defiant tone, reckless declarations and untenable assumptions, his financial pronouncement had all the disintegrating qualities of a whitened sepulchre. He appeared to try to shield himself behind the Lieutenant Governor, regarding the contribution of \$2,500 to the Quebec celebration without the consent of the people's representatives. To borrow \$2,500 to give away as a present, without leave, was surely a bold stroke.

Take it, for all in all, Mr. Haszard's second budget speech may be pronounced a dismal failure. Instead of any encouragement that revenue and expenditure may meet, the very opposite is proclaimed without hesitation. The increase of \$70,000 to our subsidy only whets the appetite of the Government to go further and further in debt. If the hand of the Government is not stayed and a check placed upon their recklessness, nothing but financial ruin need be looked for.

Mr. Mathieson's Speech.

Mr. Mathieson, Leader of the Opposition, commenced speaking in answer to the Premier's budget, about 10.30. It did not take him long to tear to shreds the flimsy verbose fabric erected by the Leader of the Government. He showed that, last year, Mr Haszard after announcing the addition of \$40,000 to the Provincial debt by the issue of debentures, immediately improperly proclaimed an anticipated surplus of \$33,000. But instead of this he succeeded, after receiving the full \$70,000 subsidy, in creating over \$50,000 of a deficit. The Leader of the Government erred in his figures last year, to the extent of \$47,000. In view of these facts, what may we expect him this year?

During the election campaign, the Premier would not tell anyone what our financial condition was. If, instead of deceiving the electorate by dangling before them, the bogus \$33,000 surplus the Leader of the Government had told the truth and informed them that the expenditure of the last fiscal year was over \$51,000 in excess of the receipts, where would he be now? Not all the gravel pits in the Belfast district would have bought votes enough to bring him into the Legislature. Perhaps after all, the Premier was no more the representative of the gravel pits than Hon. Capt. Read was of the sheriff of Prince County.

The Premier, said Mr. Mathieson, has openly proclaimed the policy of increasing the debt for capital expenditure. The Leader of the Government had instituted a comparison between our per capita debt and that of other Provinces of the Dominion. What nonsense! The capital debt of other Provinces is represented by revenue producing assets, such as railways, mining investments and other great sources of income. What have we? A poor house; not much could be expected from that; some old road machines; a few bridges and some rights of way. Valuable revenue producing investments, to be sure!

The Governments financial operations of last year afford no hope or promise of economy. As a matter of fact the pretense of making revenue and expenditure meet, so frequently intimated in the past, appears now to be openly abandoned. The expenditure last year was \$125,000 greater than the highest expenditure of Conservative times, and \$145,000 more than the average annual expenditure of the Conservative period. The Leader of the Government has afforded no evidence that our debt at the present time is not a million dollars. In his speech the Premier said nothing about his refusal to allow his officials to give evidence before the public accounts committee. This was a grave offence. When the peoples representatives are refused this information, the people themselves are refused it. Does the Premier take the ground that the Government are masters; that they can give or refuse information which of right belongs to the peoples representatives? In this connection, Mr. Mathieson called attention to the conduct of the Government in the matter of the public accounts committee this session. Five weeks had passed and the chairman of that committee had refused to call the committee together. This is how the Government treat the people, through their representatives.

Last year over \$40,000 were spent without authority of the Legislature. It was

only in cases of extreme urgency that public money should be spent without a previous vote of the Legislature. What urgency had called for this expenditure last year? The Leader of the Government, said Mr Mathieson, had said nothing about the \$2,500 given to the Quebec battlefields. He (Mr Mathieson), was not opposed to the cause, or the expenditure if we had the money, and it had been voted by the Legislature. The Premier has no right, said the Leader of the Opposition, to make the statement that the money was paid at the urgent request of the Governor. The money was borrowed and given away without a vote of the Legislature. What authority had the Government to do this? Pride impelled the Premier to take this course; and poverty forced him to borrow the money. The transaction was not even covered by the Governor's warrant. It was not customary, he said, for a Premier to seek to put the responsibility on the Governor. It was a principle of responsible Government, the very essence indeed, that those who pay the taxes should control the taxes. But in our present position this principle is trampled under foot. Over \$40,000 was spent last year, above what was appropriated. Was that not a travesty on responsible government; was it not a farce? It simply means taking the money and spending it as you please. Is that the way the government of a free people should be carried on; are we willing to give up all our rights and accept tyranny? (This review will be continued in our next issue.)

SESSIONAL NOTES.

When the House met on Wednesday afternoon last, a message from his Honour the Lieutenant Governor, formally announcing the death of Speaker Smith was read by the Clerk. Premier Haszard then moved that Mr John Agnew, one of the members for the first district of Prince County, be Speaker. The motion was seconded by Mr Cummiskey and carried. Mr Agnew there upon was conducted to the Speaker's room, where he was arrayed in his robes of office and then took his seat in the Speaker's chair. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was then ushered into the Assembly chamber, took his seat on the throne and approved of the new Speaker and granted him all the usual privileges of the office. His Honour then withdrew and the business of the session was resumed.

Before going into the orders of the day a number of questions were asked, and other routine business was disposed of. Mr Haszard made the usual motion for the granting of supply. Mr Mathieson pointed out that the motion of the Leader of the Government seemed quite irregular. The resolution asking for supply had been placed on members desks for the first time, just then, although it was dated on Saturday, stating that supply would be asked for on Tuesday, now past. The Leader of the Opposition showed that the Government had failed to properly account for the supply granted last year. The information asked for by the people's representatives had not been given. Last year, the Government had spent \$40,000 more than had been voted by the Legislature. This money had been spent without authority and contrary to the principles of representative government. This was going back to the condition of things that existed prior to the advent of responsible government. The Government contributed \$2,500 to the Quebec battlefields fund, without any authority but their own, and had to borrow every dollar of the amount. It's going a little too far, to borrow money to lavish it in this way. Taking money, for which they had no authority from the peoples representatives was deliberately breaking the law. This was sapping the foundations of our liberties and responsibilities.

Mr Mathieson showed up the scandalous waste of public money

that had been made for election purposes; for the purchase of votes. One road inspector had freely spent over \$600, without tender or competition of any kind, in one district, to buy votes. This was a discredit to our civilization. All this money was spent from the 30th. Sept. to two days before the election. Mr McMillan, member for West River, asked the Leader of the Opposition to name the district referred to. Mr Mathieson in answer, said it was in the Georgetown district, where the Government were putting forth such desperate efforts to defeat himself. This Government, said Mr Mathieson, holds on to power by freely spending the people's money to buy votes. He did not wonder Mr McMillan had asked that district be had specially referred to. Other members might with equal curiosity ask: "was that in my district?" The information tabulated by the Leader of the Government, defective as it was, showed that, on the 21st. of January, the half year's subsidy, received on the 25th. of that month, and the \$55,000 of taxes, as well as other money, had all been spent except \$6,000. This was all the Government had to meet their expenditure for five months, until another half year subsidy would be received.

Winning under the castigation administered by the Leader of the Opposition, Premier Haszard rose to reply; but Mr. Mathieson pointed out that he had exhausted his right to speak, when he moved his resolution. The Premier sat down, and Mr. Cummiskey rose to speak; but it was quickly pointed out that he, too, had spoken, as he seconded the resolution. Issue was joined on this point. Mr. Mathieson called Mr. Speaker's attention to the fact that he (Mr. Speaker) was proceeding to put the motion; therefore, it had been moved and seconded. Mr. Speaker, however, ruled that Mr. Cummiskey had the right to speak. The Leader of the Opposition appealed from the Speaker's decision; but the ruling was sustained by a strict party vote, 15 to 13.

Mr. McLean referring to Mr. Cummiskey's statement, that it would be misleading to give a statement of receipts and expenditure from Sept. 30 to Dec. 31, 1908, pointed out that a comparison of this kind would be understood by the people. This had been done for the previous thirty years. Had the Government told the people the truth at the election, would now be in the House. We had a perfect right to know how last year's supply was spent before we voted new supplies. If the Government would act honestly, he said, the people would understand the financial condition of the Province. We are entitled to the information, and the Government are acting in a high-handed manner by refusing it. In consequence of Mr. Agnew becoming Speaker his place on the P. A. committee became vacant. The Leader of the Government admitted the justness of the contention of the Opposition regarding representation on this committee, by naming Mr. Prowse to fill the vacancy. Mr. Prowse declined on the ground of poor health, and the Opposition suggested Mr. McLean, but the Premier appointed Mr. McKinnon. The House then adjourned till next day.

After routine business on Thursday, the Leader of the Government moved that Mr. William Laird be deputy Speaker of the Assembly. On this motion Mr. Murson expressed some surprise at the proceeding. In the Patriot of the previous afternoon, he had read that Mr. Laird had already been appointed deputy Speaker. In confirmation of his assertion the Government organ had published Mr. Laird's picture, along with the announcement of his appointment. Who gave this picture to the Patriot? He wanted to know if the Patriot ran the whole Government, and the proceedings in the House were only to confirm what the organ proclaimed.

At the afternoon sitting of the House on Thursday, some bills were advanced to a third reading, and some matters of routine were enacted. After this a resolution relating to our natural resources, which had stood in Mr. Agnew's name, was brought up for discussion, and elicited a considerable amount of information. It was a non-partisan discussion, and good speeches were made by Mr. A. J. McDonald, Mr. McLean, Mr. Dobie,

Mr. Arsenault, of the Opposition, besides speeches from several members on the Government side. Following is the resolution:

Whereas it is of the utmost importance that the natural resources of the Maritime Provinces should be conserved;

And whereas one of the most important interests of this Province is its fisheries;

Be it therefore resolved that this House respectfully request the Federal Government to take such steps as may be deemed best with a view to preserve, increase and develop the several fisheries, including oysters, clams, lobsters, herring, mackerel, codfish, smelt and others.

Further resolved that this House suggest the appointment of a Commission after the pattern of the Scotch Fishery Board whose duty it shall be to act on the spot and carry out the intentions of the above Resolution.

And further resolved, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each of the Representatives and Senators of the Maritime Provinces and also the Federal Ministers.

Mr. A. J. McDonald considered this a valuable discussion; and the suggestions thrown out are important and the action is in line with that taken in neighboring Provinces. It was a long time, he said, since a discussion regarding the lobster industry had taken place in our Legislature. When Mr. Hunter Duvar was at the head of the fisheries here, he had asked for suggestions from all the packers. At that time the law prevented the taking of lobsters less than nine inches, and also prevented the taking of seed lobsters. Under the conditions then prevailing, it was impossible to carry out the law. He had suggested the shortening of the season, much longer than that it is now. For this he had been denounced at the time, but now it is proved that he had been right. He considered the waters of this Province were over-fished. He did not consider the suggestion regarding size limit of any value. It is impossible of enforcement. He considered it would be an improvement to open the season on the first of May, and had always been in favor of that. He understood that in some places the very best lobsters were taken in comparatively shallow water. Regarding the falling off in the mackerel fishing, his theory was that they used to feed on the lobster spawn and the young lobsters, which had been quite abundant around our shores. As these decreased by reason of the lobster fishing, finding the food was no longer here, they sought out other feeding grounds. Mr. McDonald was speaking at six o'clock when the House adjourned till Friday.

On Friday forenoon the House sat only long enough to get through prayers, the reading of the Journal and a few questions, before one o'clock.

In the afternoon the House met at four o'clock. Questions were resumed, and before finishing them some warm discussion and a division eventuated. Mr. Mathieson moved a resolution to the effect that there should be a select standing committee of the House, empowered to examine witnesses on oath. As matters now stand no such power is possessed by any of the committees. The result is that no evidence of importance can be secured, if such might at any time be required; as officials of the Government, for example, when required to tell what they know about certain public matters of the utmost importance to the people, simply refuse to testify on the command of the Leader of the Government. This is what happened before the Public Accounts Committee last session. Mr. Murson strongly condemned the Premier and the Government respecting their conduct in refusing to grant the power to examine witnesses under oath. It certainly was a most unmanly course for the Government to pursue, he said. What were they afraid of, he asked. If the Government has a good case, should it not be only too glad to have such knowledge established and unequivocally confirmed by reputable witnesses under oath? The debate was continued by Mr. McLean. He pointed out that the humblest magistrate in the land has the power to examine witnesses under oath; but the Legislature, the highest court in the Province, refuses this power. He quoted from the official records of other Provinces showing that all granted this power to their Legislative committees. This was the only

Legislature that refused such authority. Under these circumstances, the work of our committees falls to the ground. It was a poor affair, indeed. Finally the question was put to vote; but, of course, the Government supporters jumped up to record their votes against granting the power asked for by the resolution. The vote stood 13 Government and 11 Opposition.

Mr. A. J. McDonald, resumed the discussion on the fisheries resolution. In his opinion a fishery board, such as the resolution asked for, would be very good; but the difficulty would be in its appointment. If not paid it would not work, and if paid the members would be Government officials and do only what the Government wanted. He dwelt at considerable length with the steps leading to the erection of lobster batcheries, in which he had been a first promoter, and cold storage and many other phases of the fishery question.

After Hon. Mr. Richards had spoken in favor of the resolution, Mr. McLean made an excellent speech, presenting a large fund of the most practical information on the subject under review. Our lobster business, he said, had run up to \$600,000 or \$700,000 a year. Much difficulty had been experienced in enforcing the regulation as to size limit. Some years ago, a regulation on this phase was passed and instructions sent out by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to have it strictly enforced. The result of enforcing such a regulation would be the fining of every factory in the business. All of them were packing lobsters, under size. It was found, on enquiry that the enforcement of this regulation was impracticable. The only effective regulation to shorten the season. Formerly the season for catching lobsters was much longer than it is now. Since the shortening of the season, business had rapidly improved. He would favor shortening it still more. He was in favor of not beginning before the 1st. of July. He also favored limiting the number of traps. The size limit could not be enforced and would prove irritating. The fishing is much better now than it was in 1894, as a result of shortening the season. There were as many factories on our shores now as can be profitably run. If all are left free to pick, the matter would in a short time regulate itself, as the competitors would eventuate in the survival of the fittest. If such a board as asked for by the resolution were established, the greatest possible care should be exercised in its selection. It should be composed of practical men. Fishermen and packers should have their interests properly conserved. Regarding mackerel and herring packing, there was room for much improvement. The packages had much to do with the placing of the fish on the market in good order. He gave an instance of shipment of mackerel made by his firm in an improved barrel, which reached market in first class condition and was worth about five dollars a barrel more than if packed in the ordinary barrel. The improved barrel would not cost probably more than ten cents more than the barrel ordinarily used. The same thing held good for herring. Regarding the smelt fishery, he pointed out that cold storage was necessary, and the Government should provide a cold storage warehouse at Georgetown. That was the point of transshipment in winter time, when these fish were caught and sent to market. Much loss had resulted in consequence of this lack of cold storage. It was his opinion that as many mackerel as ever came into the Gulf; but they did not touch on the Island coast.

The Premier in reply to Mr. Dobie said that it was not in the interest of

pointed out that different dates for opening and closing the lobster season were adapted to different portions of our Island coast. As matters stand now a factory closed for two years cannot receive a license to reopen. He did not consider this a good arrangement. Small factories are sometimes bought up by the larger ones and thus a monopoly is created. If this regulation, preventing a factory closed for two years, from reopening were removed, matters would regulate themselves. He was not sure that the limiting of traps altogether would be well; but he would favor limiting the number of traps to each boat. He considered that about one third of the fishermen owned their own gear. Regarding the oyster fisheries, he knew that a good deal of dissatisfaction existed about the regulations in Richmond Bay, Essequo Bay and Grand River. The oyster fisheries and the mud diggers, come into conflict. The mud digging, in these places, was just as important as the oyster-fishing and it was of the utmost importance that the regulations should be such that it would be known where the beds to be preserved, as well as the places where mud might be dug, would be found. The sooner such regulations were made, the better for all interested. He alluded also to other fisheries and praised the good work of the Fish and Game association. He considered that this association should receive some public aid.

SOME QUESTIONS ASKED.

Mr. Laird asked the Commissioner of Public Works if the Government had decided to open a road and build a bridge thereon on a place surveyed between Bay View and Stanley Bridge. If so when will the work be begun?

The Opposition had asked for the original tenders for coal for the Hospital for the Insane early in the season. These had not been given so Mr. M. Kennedy gave notice of a resolution that the House order that the return be laid on the table. This had the desired effect, and the Commissioner produced the tenders asked for without the resolution coming before the House.

The Premier in reply to Mr. Dobie said that it was not in the interest of

the country that the correspondence in respect to the establishment of an Experimental Farm here be laid on the table.

Mr. J. A. MacDonald asked for a statement in answer to the following questions:

- (1). Has a new School District been established at or near Riverton in King's County within the past twelve months?
(2). If so, give the description or boundaries of the new District.
(3). How many scholars of school age are there in said District?
(4). Out of what school District or Districts was the area embraced in the new District taken?
(5). Give the number of ratepayers and the number of scholars of school age in each of such Districts before the creation of the said new District; the number of ratepayers and the number of scholars remaining in each of such Districts?

(6). Lay on the table of the House all petitions or copies of same, reports of officers, correspondence and all other documents or information in the hands of the Government or the Board of Education relating to said new District either for or against its establishment there. The answer was that the statement would be prepared.

Mr. McKinnon asked the Leader of the Government if any or what action was taken on the Resolution of the House passed last year expressing the opinion that one of the vacancies on one of the new commissionerships on the Railway Commission be filled by an appointment from P. E. Island and to lay on the table of the House all correspondence relating thereto? The information asked for was promised as soon as prepared.

Answers to Questions Nos. 67 and 69 were tabled.

In reply to Mr. Wyatt, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Leader of the Government stated that there had been no particular method up to

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