SEVERE INDICTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Fredericton, N. B., April 2—When A. B. Copp rose in the house this evening, after the close of Col. Sheridan's speech, it was 11.30 o'clock, and he naturally expected that the same courtesy, of moving the adjournment of the debate until tomorrow, would be extended to him as had been accorded to members upon the government side on previous evenings while the budget debate has been in progress. He was mistaken, Attorney General Grimmer, who was leading the house, refused to permit him to adjourn and forced him to begin his speech, which he must have known, and as Mr. Copp stated, would take some time—probably some hours—at that late hour.

It seemed almost as if this kind of treatment was all that was necessary to warm the opposition leader up at the outset, for at the time of the adjournment, three-quarters of an hour later, he addressed the house with greater eloquence and force than is his usual custom.

He did not hesitate to tell the government, at the outset, of the unfair treatment of not only himself but of Mr. Byrne on a previous evening when, though in ill health, he was forced to continue because of the refusal of the premier to adjourn.

Scores Sproul.

Before he began the discussion of the budget, Mr. Copp paid his respects to Messrs. Sproul and Murray, of King, dealing in short metre with the uncouth speech of the former, earlier in the evening, and then taking up the personal references of Murray to himself, when he addressed the house.

The forecastle member of the government, representing Kings, had referred to Copp as drawing $228 for services to the old government, and after the opposition leader stated that he had given much time before a board of arbitration trying to save the province money, he said he was not ashamed of his account. It was open and above board. He did not try, like some of the government members, to hide behind a Price & Nevers or a John P. McAuley.

He had time before the adjournment to show up the inconsistent attitude of the government members, as compared with their speeches when in opposition, by quoting from the synoptic reports, and then he followed with statements from the auditor's report to prove how much more rapid the debt increase had been in the last four years than under the last four years of the old government.

His speech was listened to with the closest attention by both sides of the house, and he was frequently interrupted by the applause of the opposition.

The uneasiness of the government members under his scathing indictment was very noticeable, particularly when he referred to the rendering of accounts in the names of clerks and other employes.

There was an interesting debate in the house this afternoon upon Hon. Mr. LaBillois' resolution in favor of legislation to set one day apart in the week throughout the province, with the exception of incorporated towns and cities, upon which automobiles could not be used, save those of physicians and clergymen in the exercise of their professional duties.

The member for Restigouche has always been an advocate of such legislation and today made out a strong case in moving his resolution. He referred to petitions that had been presented to the legislature setting forth that autos were not a public convenience and that because of excessive speed and reckless driving they were a menace to the lives of people. He also quoted from the report of the agricultural commission recommending that some action be taken to remedy this grievance of the farmers.

Mr. LaBillois contended that the wishes and convenience of 60,000 farmers were of far greater importance than the pleasure of 500 auto owners. That in order they might have one day in the week on which they and their wives and daughters could drive teams upon the public highways without fear such a resolution should pass the house.

Another thing that he pointed out was the damage that was being done the trade of the country merchants in many places where the fear of automobiles kept the women at home and forced them to patronize the department stores of upper Canada.

He made a strong plea in favor of the merchants and farmers, and added that he would be in favor of the restriction extending to at least a part of the Sabbath day.

Mr. Upham made an effective speech in seconding the resolution, which was also supported by Munro, Sproul and Bentley, but it was opposed by Provincial Secretary McLeod, Attorney-General Grimmer, who was leading the house, and John P. Burgess. The vote stood eighteen to eleven in a thin house and the resolution was lost.

Central Railway Enquiry Costly.

Some information was given to the house in response to an inquiry which showed that the Central Railway inquiry cost in all $7,839. Of this amount Commissioner Landry received $2,273 and Messrs. Teed and McDougall $1,142 and $644 respectively. H. A. Powell also was paid $2,273 and stenographer, printers, etc., $1,474. There are no claims outstanding.

In answer to another query it was stated that Game Warden Dean did not send in any expense account last year and has no claim against the government that it is aware of.

Mr. Baxter furnished some evidence that the route of the Valley road from Gagetown to St. John is still undecided, for, in answer to his question as to what the government intended to do in answer to the petition of Loch Lomond people asking that the road take that route, the cautious reply was given that the government has the matter under consideration and will submit the facts set forth to the railway company before location surveys are made.

The committee that considered the bill sent here by the city council to give it control of the poles and conduits did not report it favorably and that respecting a four-minute service was sent back to the committee by the law committee for further consideration.

There was a large delegation here from Moncton objecting to the bills from that city and some amendments were made to them without affecting them materially.

Mr. Currie presented a petition in favor of a bill relating to the town of Campbellton.

Mr. Cyr introduced a bill relating to the assessment of Fraser's, Limited, Edmundston.

Hon. Mr. Grimmer introduced a bill to amend the act providing for the early closing of shops; to amend the act respecting landlords and tenants; to amend the public health act, and to amend the act respecting the conditional sale of chattels.

Automobile Resolution.

Mr. LaBillois moved a resolution to provide that automobiles should not be run on the highways one day each week. He said that for the past few sessions he had taken the stand that provision should be made to give the farmers protection from the running of automobiles. At the present time automobiles were a great detriment to the farming sections, and any one who would study actual conditions would learn that hundreds and thousands of people in the farming districts were deprived of the enjoyment of driving to market or to farmers' picnics.

The agricultural commission in 1909 had recommended that legislation be introduced to protect the farmer from the running of automobiles and petitions had also been presented from Queens, Restigouche, Kent, Carleton and other counties asking that the change should be made.

The farmers should receive some consideration from the government, and his resolution would give them an opportunity to go to market, picnics and church services without fear of meeting automobiles, which were a great menace.

Automobiles had been the cause of many fatalities and he read quotations to corroborate these statements. He would prefer that no automobiles should be allowed on the roads on Sunday forenoon, as in a great many instances people were unable to attend church service on account of automobiles. The farmers and their wives would not come to town on week days through fear of an accident, and thus the merchants lost a valuable trade which was being sent to departmental stores.

His resolution was reasonable and was in the interests of the farmers and merchants. Hon. gentlemen might say that it would be an injustice to men who were traveling from other provinces and wanted to run their automobiles through this province, but should the interests of these men be placed in advance of the interests of 60,000 farmers and their families?

Provision was made that incorporated cities should not come within the resolution, while there was also provision that doctors and clergymen should travel in automobiles in cases of emergency.

Mr. Upham, in seconding the resolution, said he thought it would meet with the approval of hon. gentlemen on both sides, as it protected the interests of about three-quarters of the population of the province. People who had made homes for themselves in the rural districts were entitled to consideration, and there should be provision made to give them one day when they could use the roads without fear of meeting automobiles and being thrown from their teams. If six days a week were given the automobile owners, surely the 60,000 farmers of the province had a right to some consideration.

Mr. Munro said that a somewhat similar resolution had been introduced by him in the house last year in an amendment of the auto act amendment making it possible for municipalities to prohibit the running of autos on Thursdays. He believed that the farmers were entitled to the consideration suggested in the resolution, and several years ago in the house he had presented a petition from residents of Carleton county asking that some action be taken to restrict the running of autos in the province.

Mr. Sproul said that he would support the resolution.

Hon. Mr. McLeod opposed the resolution on the ground that the house should not legislate against one class of people in favor of any other class. Legislation should be equal and for all. He represented a constituency which was composed largely of an agricultural population and not one-hundredth part of the people in his constituency would be at all interested in the proposed legislation.

Mr. Bentley said that the provincial secretary had declared that the government was pleased to legislate equally for all classes, but any honorable member would meet a very hard proposition to establish that 500 automobile owners should balance the convenience of 60,000 farmers and their families. Prohibitory legislation for one day in the week would not prove any great hardship to the few men who own automobiles. In Prince Edward Island automobiles had been prohibited altogether.

Hon. Mr. Grimmer said that he hoped honorable members would exercise the same good common sense in considering the proposed legislation as had been done in the past. Automobiles had now been in use for quite a number of years and for the past three or four years his honorable friend from Restigouche had annually presented a resolution against use of the automobile. First he had asked total prohibition and each subsequent year the curtailment of automobiles but his resolutions had been voted down. He (Grimmer) did not believe the same conditions existed today as three years ago. He represented a constituency where the automobile was used as much as in any other county and no application had been made to him to have the privileges of the automobile owner reduced. There were a great number of visiting automobilists in the province annually and they expended a large sum of money.

His honorable friend had quoted from a report of the agricultural commission to show that the farmers should have protection but conditions today were vastly different to those in 1908. Today scarcely a horse could be found which was afraid of an automobile. There was no petition in favor of the resolution except from Restigouche county. Other petitions, that had been referred to, were presented in 1908 and in the case of Queens county the petition had been signed by only eighty of the whole number of farmers there. He would be in favor of the resolution if he felt that conditions demanded the change and the farmers favored it.

There had been no deaths or serious accidents from automobiles in the province and he felt that was a creditable record.

His honorable friend referred to the fact that Prince Edward Island prohibited the use of automobiles. Perhaps that was the reason why that province was appealing to the federal government for a special grant to maintain its affairs. The resolution proposed retrograde legislation and this province should be going ahead rather than backwards in its legislation.

Mr. Burchill said he thought the resolution, even if passed, would not bring about the desired object of its promoters as honorable gentlemen supporting the resolution were divided already as to what day autos should not be allowed the use of the roads. One of the honarable gentlemen favoring the resolution said it was needed so that people could get into town from the country districts to do their shopping and others said they favored it so that people could go to church on Sundays. He thought that conditions in rural districts were in his county, at any rate, that the horses did not see enough automobiles to get used to them.

The resolution was declared lost on the following vote:

Yeas—Hon. Dr. Landry, Messrs. Munro, Sproule, LaBillois, Copp, Bentley, Perley, Leger (Gloucester), Hatheway, Upham, Sheridan—11.

Nays—Hon. Messrs. Grimmer, Morrissy, McLeod, Maxwell, Murray, Messrs. Dickson, Guptill, Slipp, Baxter, Jones, Pinder, Morehouse, Glasier, Prescott, MacLachan, Allan, Robinson, Cyr, Burchill—19.

Mr. Robinson asked if an honorable gentleman owning an automobile had to vote on the question.

Mr. Speaker said that he thought manufacturers or possibly an agent selling automobiles might be exempt from voting on the resolution.

Fred. M. Sproul made a characteristic speech of several hours, on the budget debate.

He was followed by Mr. Leger (Gloucester), who said that he wished to draw attention of the house to one or two things which go to show how far the government has been from meeting the results they promised would take place under their administration. Take for instance the new road law, under which it was promised the expenditures on the roads would be placed in the hands of the people through the municipal councillors.

In his county the road law had been a sad failure, so far as placing the road money under the control of the people. By reason of his position as member of the Caraquet highway board, he could say and he could prove it, that their highway board does not receive money to expend upon the roads that comes from the government, but this money was placed in the hands of special commissioners.

The public works report showed $405 had been spent on the roads in the parish of Caraquet, but not one cent of that amount had passed through the hands of the highway board. In two cases in which as member of the board he became responsible for the opening of the roads, he had to pay the amount out of his own pocket, as the government had completely ignored the highway board and its recommendations and estimates of requirements. Such being the case, how could the government claim the road money was in the hands of the people? Why did they require special commissioners? Was it because their political friends demanded their pound of flesh?

Mr. Copp.

Mr. Copp said it became his duty to make some observations on the budget debate, but as it would take some time he would ask the privilege accorded to honorable members opposite to move the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. Mr. Grimmer—Proceed with your remarks.

Mr. Copp said he understood it was not the intention of the government to adjourn the debate at the usual hour. It did seem to him rather singular indeed that during the progress of the debate this was the second occasion that honorable members on this side of the house had been refused the same courtesy as had been extended to honorable gentlemen opposite to move the adjournment of the debate. In the early part of the debate his honorable friend from Gloucester through ill health had been forced to continue at a very late hour, while in every instance honorable gentlemen supporting the government had adjourned the debate and not one word of protest had been made. The government supporters in Kent and Carleton had adjourned the debate about 11 o'clock.

He had listened with some degree of pleasure and some degree of regret to the remarks of an honorable gentleman who had preceded him. The house had been treated to an avalanche of oratory and it was inopportune that the lights in the chamber had gone out in order to hide the blushes of the honorable gentleman over the scandalous remarks of the honorable gentleman from Kings. His honorable friend had extended his hand in congratulation to his (Copp's) colleague from Westmorland, Mr. Robinson, on his valedictory before leaving this house. The honorable gentlemen should compare the remarks of his colleague with the remarks of his honorable friend from Kings, who had endeavored to paint every member on this side as black as the ace of spades. He (Sproul) could not have concluded his remarks without making a customary onslaught on Hon. Dr. Pugsley, and his honorable friend's criticism of a man of the sterling worth of Dr. Pugsley might be compared to the barking of a little dog at the heels of a powerful animal.

Mr. Copp continuing, said that the honorable gentleman (Murray) had challenged anybody to point a finger of scorn to any wrong doing on the part of the government as shown in the information which had been placed before the house. But the whole trouble was that there was not any information given; instead, the people were told to come to the board of works office and look into the accounts if they wished to see how the money had been spent on the wharves, bridges and roads of this country.

It was unreasonable to expect that the people would come here from all parts of the province to seek out this information, but members of the opposition had been deluged with letters requesting information as to where the money went to and how it was spent.

The honorable gentleman had said that the old government had not given any information in their reports of the auditor-general, and then he pointed to this government's report to compare it with the old. But in doing that he read an indictment against this admission, if the St. John Standard was to be believed, and honorable gentlemen seemed to think that everything the Standard said must be right.

He quoted from an editorial from the St. John Standard in which it stated that this year's auditor-general's report was made up with much less detail than last year and that it was the same as under the old government. If it was wrong under the old government, it was wrong now.

Hon. Mr. Murray—The honorable gentleman is an adept at distorting my remarks.

Mr. Copp said that the honorable gentleman had been unable to curb his venomous tongue and had referred to an account of his (Copp's) which appeared in the auditor-general's report of 1906 or 1907. He was prepared to have his standing in that respect compared with honorable gentlemen's opposite. He had been criticized because he had been paid $228 for work he did as counsel, for the then chief commissioner of public works, when large claims of contractors for extras had been referred to a board of arbitration to decide and when the contractors had employed the present Justice Barry as their counsel. The account on file in the public works department would show how many days he had been engaged in the work. That was a terrible charge that honorable gentlemen had to make against him. He had put in the account in his own name, and had not put it in the name of Price & Nevers, J. P. McCauley, or anybody else. Was that the way honorable gentlemen opposite did when they sold lumber to the government, or did they put in bills in the names of their clerks or somebody in their employ? What he had said was true not only of a number of honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the house, but it was particularly near the honorable gentleman who had made the criticism.

He thought that the honorable gentleman, in his endeavor to take a fling at him (Copp) might have got along without raking up any of his dead relations. The fact that the government of the day had referred the claims of contractors for extras to arbitration and that the claims were investigated, instead of paying them out carte blanc, as the present government did with their friends, was a glowing comparison of careful methods of the old government as compared with those of the present administration.

The honorable provincial secretary had said that the government's position was unassailable, and then he had referred to the public debt of this country. He did not wish to retraverse all the ground which had already ben covered, but nevertheless he did believe it his duty on account of the position he held, to give complete and correct information to the people of this province, and he approached that task with a wish to give a fair and honest statement of the financial status of this province, as it actually is today. He would compare the old government with the new, not for the task of defending the old government, because comparisons would show this administration to be far worse than the old, but because that was necessary in order to place a complete statement before the people.

Mr. Copp moved the adjournment of the debate which was made the order of the day tomorrow.

The house adjourned at 12.10 a. m.

COPP EXPOSES BROKEN PLEDGES

(Continued from page 3.)

dence in every corner. Even the dominion Indian officer is an official of the house; the secretary of the utilities commission is a federal preventive officer; the postmaster of Fredericton is also an engrossing clerk, and the paymaster of the public works department is, according to the provincial board of works, a structural superintendent.

Mr. Byrne's reply to the premier was much to the point. He saw no occasion for Mr. Blair's affidavit, as he had not mentioned his name. His information was that a government official had bid upon the lease and he had so stated. The premier had given him no notice that he intended to bring up the matter and he was consequently unable to get any statement from the gentleman who had brought the matter to his attention, who resided in a distant part of the province. He reminded Premier Flemming, however, that he, as surveyor-general, had attended the sale and was in his place in the house when he made the statement and had not called it in question at the time.

Mr. Copp Resumes Debate.

Fredericton, April 3—In speaking on the budget last night Mr. Copp said he wanted to make comparison of increase in public debt under old and new administrations.

According to the auditor general's report, the public debt of the province at the end of the fiscal year was $3,213,940 and the figures for the remaining years were as follows:

1904	$3,415,634
1905	3,493,118
1906	3,310,340
1907	3,590,897

The old government had been successful in reducing the debt from 1905 to 1906 and in four years from the end of 1903 had increased the net debt to the extent of $376,951 or an annual average of $94,237.

Under this government the net debt had been increased to $4,649,877. He could have taken previous years under the old government which would have shown up the old government in a more favorable light, as the increase in net debt had not been so great in previous years.

He would refer to some remarks of the hon. gentlemen opposite when in opposition over the increase in debt under the old government. The men who now occupied the treasury benches and had made a vast increase in the public debt had rubbed their hands and gnashed their teeth over the increase in debt under the old government.

In the year 1905 the present premier severely criticized the then administration for an increase of the debt that year, and he said that while the revenue of the province the previous year had been greater yet the debt had been increased and he condemned that. Either then the members of the opposition were trying to throw dust in the eyes of the people or they were insincere in their criticisms.

Mr. Hazen condemned the government of the day because it spent more than it received and if to do so was wrong in 1905, what can be said of the course of those gentlemen now that they were in power and enjoying the greatest revenue the province ever had? The revenues are the greatest and the squandering is the greatest ever seen in this province. The manner in which administration had increased the debt was shown in the following figures:

Net debt Oct. 31, 1907	$3,590,897
Net debt Oct. 31, 1908	3,999,775
Net debt Oct. 31, 1909	4,217,266
Net debt Oct. 31, 1910	4,402,547
Net debt Oct. 31, 1911	4,648,857

The total increase in four years was $1,057,960, an average increase per year of $264,490.

Tonight Mr. Copp in resuming the budget debate at 10.10 o'clock said he desired to offer an apology to his hon. friend from Carleton (Mr. Munro) over the remark that he (Munro) had moved the adjournment of the debate on a previous evening. It was his hon. friend from Albert who had moved the adjournment and not his hon. friend from Carleton. His (Copp's) statement of time was correct but the hon. gentleman named had been the wrong one.

When the house adjourned last evening he had been discussing the public debt and he had arrived at a point where he was making a comparison in the increases under the two administrations. In doing that he had quoted figures to prove that the increase had been very much larger under this government than under the old. He had not made the comparison for the purpose of defending the old administration but to show to the people of the country that if the old administration had increased the debt in an extravagant and reckless manner as the hon. gentlemen opposite claimed, the record of this administration was infinitely worse, because they had increased the debt to the extent of $4,649,857.

Speaking at St. John in the course of a joint debate on Feb. 20, 1908 he (Flemming) was reported in the press supporting his party as saying he wanted to ask the people of the province if they wanted another million dollar increase in debt during the next five years. Inferentially such an increase was not wanted.

His hon. friend had been given an opportunity to run the affairs of the province and had added to the net debt by more than a million dollars. He (Flemming) stood convicted on his own statements at St. John and had deceived the people of the province for in only four years he had increased the debt by over a million dollars.

His hon. friend had also declared that the amount involved in a guarantee of bonds was a liability and should be included in the net debt.

The ex-premier, Hon. Mr. Hazen, had spoken at Bathurst about the same time, and had declared that while the old government had placed the net debt at $3,590,000 it really had amounted to upwards of $8,000,000. If that be true the debt of the country today amounted to between $14,000,000 and $15,000,000.

The government was not entitled to credit for collecting the revenue of the province, for it was their duty to first collect all the revenues and then to spend as much as was necessary for the public services. But this government seemed to want to take credit for all the increase that there had been in the collection of revenue, and he would like to refer to some of the items for which they were not entitled to much credit.

First of all there was the dominion subsidy, which was fixed by population and for which the government could take no credit. Then there was the increased subsidy, which had been secured for the province in the last year of the old government and amounted to $130,000 annually. The old government went out of power after having received only the first semi-annual installment and in that connection he would like to refer to the statesmanlike proposal which had been made by his honorable colleague from Westmorland, Mr. Robinson, who was then premier, to lay aside $30,000 annually of that amount to go to pay off the debt of the province.

Succession duties were another source of revenue concerning which honorable gentlemen opposite, when in opposition, used to discuss, and the honorable president of the council had taken it to heart very severely and had declared that the government should not take money from the widows and orphans, and that honorable gentleman had been very anxious to place himself on record on that occasion, as he was in the city of St. John on the temperance question. He (Maxwell) had referred to five per cent. commission paid to the attorney-general as money taken and appropriated, and had declared that it was literally robbing widows and orphans. But they were crocodile tears and heart burnings of honorable gentleman of 1905. It it was not right then to collect succession duties and to pay the attorney-general for collecting them, it was not right now, and the same criticism which the honorable president of the council had levelled at Hon. Dr. Pugsley could well be levelled at Hon. Mr. Hazen, who had been attorney-general of this province during the past four years.

Honorable gentleman took credit unto themselves because they said they had put the Royal Gazette on a paying basis, but they had forced the people to advertise in the Royal Gazette by putting such legislation on the statute books.

Honorable members of the government take credit to themselves because they say the cost of the school books has been reduced forty per cent. He had no criticism to offer if a fair and honest decrease had been made, but he contended that there was no actual reduction in prices. When the expenses of carrying on the school book department were taken into account, cost of books, freight, superintendence and other expenses, he thought it would be found that books actually cost as much now as under the old administration, but the government was using it as a political machine to keep themselves in power. It was impossible for a man to get an appointment as school book vendor unless he had a certificate of character from Tory dispensers of political patronage.

Among the new items of revenue in the estimates is one of $1,000 from the Jordan sanitarium. The government did not deserve any credit for establishing that sanitarium, since it was a gift of a kind and philanthropic lady, a gift which was highly appreciated. He sincerely hoped that any expenditures made for the upkeep of the institution or the care of inmates might result in great good and such would not be criticized from the opposition side of the house.

The old government enacted a factory act and appointed a good man as inspector, but so anxious were the supporters of the present government that the position should be given to a good Tory that they legislated the former inspector out of office on the grounds that he was too old, and almost on the same day they appointed a sheriff in York county who was three years older than the former factory inspector. That was another example of the way in which Liberals had been discharged to make places for hungry Tories.

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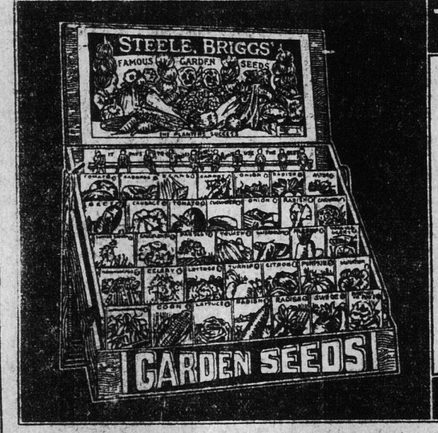

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