

# SPEECH

Delivered at the WINDSOR HALL, Montreal, on 16th February, 1892, by

## HON. JOHN S. HALL

Treasurer of the Province of Quebec,

### ON THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE PROVINCE AND CRITICISM OF THE MERCIER ADMINISTRATION.

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In making the remarks that I am going to make this evening with reference to the financial affairs of the Province of Quebec during the Mercier administration, and in offering my criticisms, which may seem to some harsh, but which I consider justifiable, there are four points to be well borne in mind :—

1st. The financial year runs from the 1st of July to the 30th June, and when I will hereafter speak of the years, it will be intended as referring to the year ending the 30th June.

2nd. In dealing with the figures, I will take the Public Accounts of the Province of Quebec as they have been printed under my predecessor, Hon. Mr. Shehyn.

I do not for a moment admit that the classification of the expenses into ordinary, extraordinary or special, as the case may be are correct, or that in many cases the entries properly represent what the transactions are.

In reading over speeches and discussions on our provincial finances, the wrangling has taken place as to whether items were chargeable as ordinary or extraordinary expenses or chargeable to capital. I would not attempt to settle the distinction with you to-night.

Mr. Shehyn introduced a new classification which he calls "Special" expenditure. This I do not think any one can accept, and it will be seen from the figures I will give you this evening that he puts "Repairs to Court Houses," "Iron Bridges," "Night Schools," "Books" and "Settlement of Claims," etc., all in this category of "Special Expenditures." It seems to me elementary that such expenses as these must come under ordinary expenditure. They are all recurrent or part of the policy of the Government.

However, we may as well, for the moment, close the discussion on the subject by the people consoling themselves with the fact that, whether it is ordinary, extraordinary, special or other expenditure, it has to be paid for out of revenue or earning power, and if you make loans for such purpose,