

THE HERALD

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JAMES MCISAAC,
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Nearly a month and a half of 1909 have already elapsed and still a great many of our subscribers have not remitted their subscriptions to the Herald for 1908. They have been furnished with statements of their accounts and have been pretty constantly kept in mind of this little obligation; still they have shown great tardiness in its fulfillment. We need the money and should be pleased to hear from our friends without further procrastination.

"Wasting Time."

Under the above caption the Patriot of the 3rd inst. undertakes to lecture the opposition members of the Legislature, for their manly fight against the tyranny of the Government in refusing them fair and reasonable representation on the Public Accounts Committee. The Patriot animadverts upon the conduct of the Opposition in their fight for the rights of the people, and says they are "wasting the time of the House, and delaying the business of the country." Pursuing the question a little further, the Patriot holds up for commendation and admiration the "striking contrast" it finds in "the silence of the Government side of the House." We must assume that we have here expressed, through their organ, the real attitude and true inwardness of the Government, so far as the peoples' rights are concerned. The request of the Opposition in the matter under review was most reasonable and moderate. It was simply asking, in the name of those who sent them to the Legislature, to be represented in proportion to their strength in the House, on the most important of all sessional committees. The matter to come under the consideration of this committee is the finances of our Province, a question in which every tax-payer is, and of necessity must be, deeply interested. Is it not reasonable then that the Opposition should desire as fair and equitable a representation as possible of the people's representatives on this important committee? So reasonable and just was the concession urged by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, that more than one member on the Government side admitted the equity of their contention. But the Patriot commends, on the part of the Government, an attitude of silent contempt.

So this is the attitude assumed by our Liberal Premier and our Liberal Provincial Government, in respect to the peoples' wishes and the peoples' dearest interests. These wishes and these interests are brushed aside with a wave of the hand; they are treated with silent contempt, and for this illiberal conduct; this prostitution of the peoples' rights, the Premier is patted on the back by the Government organ.

The Government newspapers are very fond of alluding to the Liberal-Conservatives as "Tories." Do these newspapers know, or do they ever stop to consider who are "Tories" and who are "Liberals." When did the present Leader of the Provincial Government become a Liberal; when was he any thing but a hard-shell family-compact Tory? It does not require any extraordinary observation to show that his political ideas are of the family-compact variety. In

his estimation, the people have no political rights that he is bound to respect. There are many honest electors throughout the Province who are persuaded they are voting for a Liberal Government, when they support the present Administration. What an awakening these people would have, if the true political character of their counterfeit idols were revealed to them.

In resisting the just and reasonable request of the Opposition, in the matter of the Public Accounts Committee, the Leader of the Government had no valid excuse to offer. It is true, he undertook to appeal to precedent; but his appeal was not sustained by facts. Only within the past few years have, even his own Government, departed from the usage of allowing to the Opposition adequate representation, according to numbers, on this most important of all Legislative committees. All this was fully demonstrated by the members of the Opposition, during the discussion. But if we were to admit, for argument sake that a bad precedent had been established in this matter, would that constitute any excuse for the Government to do wrong now? Do the Government confess themselves incapable of initiating anything; of inaugurating any new departure? Do they mean to say they are only flies on the wheel, and that the only thing they feel bound to do is to follow a bad precedent?

The Government's conduct in the matter of the committees is of a piece with their political duplicity in calling the Legislature, without having any any of the sessional business ready. This latter phase of the Government's determination to humbug the people was made amply manifest by the House adjourning, after sitting twenty minutes, Thursday forenoon. This adjournment was taken until Monday of this week, because the Government had no business ready to go on with.

Even the address to the Lieut. Governor which, as was pointed out by Mr. Mathieson, is nothing more than an echo of the speech at the opening of the session and could be written at the same time, was not ready. The Government's committee relating to our claims at Ottawa, had nothing to report; the educational committee was not ready to report. There was nothing to do, consequently the House was adjourned in the middle of the week.

This huge bluff of the Government, in calling the session before having any work ready, is declared by the Liberal organ to be "in accord with the progress of the Hazard Administration." Surely this is "progress," when the House almost immediately after the opening of the session, has to adjourn for nearly a week; because there is no work ready. So this is an exhibition of the "business-like promptness," for which the Patriot "commends the Executive."

In the face of this political duplicity; this ill-concealed attempt to defeat the ends of justice; this glaring prostitution of the peoples' rights; the Government have the temerity to raise the cry of "wasting time." Their obsequious party hench-men, echo the cry, "wasting time," and the hirling editor of the party organ takes up the hypocritical refrain, and shouts louder than all others, "wasting time!" What do the people think of the whole business?

After a year's operation the surplus of the Manitoba Telephone system is \$250,000, and after deducting the cost of six hundred miles of long distance lines, and a number of rural systems which have been constructed by the Government in January, 1908, the Provincial Government purchased the lines from the Bell Telephone Co. A reduction in rates will follow soon. Manitoba has an economical progressive Conservative Government, hence these admirable results.

SESSIONAL NOTES.

It was four o'clock when the House met on Wednesday afternoon last, and for some time after the speaker took the chair nothing was done. In solemn silence, the Speaker and the members sitting round gazed at one another in mutual admiration fashion. After a considerable interval the monotony was changed, by Speaker Smith reading prayers. Strangers were then asked to withdraw while the journal of the previous day was read. This seemed an interminable job; it was half past four when the doors were opened again.

The debate on the appointment of the public accounts committee was resumed, and it did not take long to demonstrate that the Government had not profited by the recess, to mend their ways and that Mr. Speaker's prayers had not been efficacious in bringing them to a more just and reasonable frame of mind. They proved as obstinate as ever in their refusal to grant the Opposition proportionate representation on this important committee. On committees of five the Opposition were represented by two members; but on this committee of seven, the most important committee of the House, the Government would allow only two from the Opposition side. That surely was a most illogical and untenable position to occupy. All this was forcibly impressed upon the Government by the Opposition speaker's, but all in vain.

Mr. McLean resumed the debate, and forcibly pointed out the unprecedented course of the Government. The only argument of the Government was the use of their slight majority to vote down the Opposition amendment, and this was done with alacrity. After the amendment substituting the name of Mr. Prowse for that of Mr. Laird was defeated, Mr. Wyatt moved that the name of Mr. Cox be struck out and that of Mr. John McLean, be substituted therefor. The debate was renewed on this amendment. Mr. Mathieson again pointed out the unjust and unreasonable position assumed by the Government. In vigorous language, he argued that if the Government refused these reasonable concessions, and persisted in imposing on the House a committee of no practical value, it would only show their desire to leave this matter in the same chaotic condition as formerly. If this was their determination, said he, recourse would be had to other means, another course was open to the Opposition.

The Premier undertook to show that the course now pursued was similar to that which had previously obtained. Mr. A. J. McDonald pointed out that this had not been the practice of the Legislature. The ordinary course had been, when one member of the Opposition was named on a committee, he named the next; he another, and so on. Mr. McLean said he thought that the Leader of the Government, after sleeping over the matter would be disposed to reconsider his position of the previous day; but the very contrary was the fact; he seemed more obstinate than ever. He showed that from 1890 to 1894, under the present Government, there had been three Opposition members, to four from the Government side, on this committee. During the previous Conservative administration this concession had always been made, except perhaps when the Liberal Opposition numbered only four or five. In that case only two from that side were appointed. This, for instance, was the condition of things in 1879.

Mr. Cumiskey, who invariably tries to justify the Government to which he belongs, by citing alleged instances of similar procedure by the Conservatives, when in power, quoted from a journal of the House showing that a greater number of Liberals than appeared on division in the Assembly in March of that year. He chuckled over the discovery of this mare's nest, and turned the sweet morsel under his tongue in high glee, until Mr. Morson exploded his ridiculous bluff. Mr. Morson quoted from the journal of the House for April, 1879, a division showing only four members in the Liberal opposition.

He passed the journal to Mr. Speaker and then pointed out that the journal from which Mr. Cumiskey had quoted contained the proceedings of the last session of the Davies Government, which was defeated in the House in March, 1879. The House was dissolved and a general election was held in April of that year. The appeal to the people resulted in the overwhelming defeat of the Davies Government, only four Liberals being elected. The Sullivan Government met the House during that same month of April, and when appointing its public accounts committee, put on it one half the opposition members in the House. The exposure of Cumiskey's bluff was complete, and the fair play of the Conservatives in the matter of appointment to committees fully established.

Mr. McNeill, of Summerside, took up the argument. He considered the course pursued by the Government very arbitrary and unreasonable. So far as he himself was concerned, he said, he did not consider himself sufficiently expert in accounts to serve on such an important committee as this, although he had been placed thereon by the Government. He would be quite pleased to give his place to some other more experienced member of the Opposition. His experience had taught him that the unravelling of accounts, anyway intricate, require expert knowledge along these lines, and for this reason he considered the arbitrary course of the Government was not in the public interest. Mr. Palmer, from the Government side, admitted that the contention of the Opposition in this matter was not unreasonable. As parties stood in the House three members from the Opposition side would not be out of proportion. This appeared a very reasonable view of the matter under discussion, and one would think the Government would take the hint and act reasonably. But no; the Government employed the only argument of which they seem possessed; they voted down the Opposition request for fair treatment and carried their resolution by force of numbers.

The House met at 11.20 Thursday forenoon. After routine, the Leader of the Government handed Mr. Speaker a message from his Honour, the Lieut. Governor, authorizing the adjournment of the Legislature from Thursday 4th to Monday 8th. Mr. Mathieson asked the Leader of the Government if the committee appointed last session, to formulate and push our claims against the Federal Government had any report to make. The Premier answered that there was no report from this committee. The Leader of the Opposition further enquired if the committee appointed by the Government last session to enquire into educational matters had yet submitted any report. Mr. Hazard answered that the committee had not yet reported, and were not ready to report. Mr. Palmer, chairman of the committee to prepare an address in reply to the Speech of his Honour the Lieut. Governor, at the opening of the session submitted a draft of the address and moved that it be committed to a committee of the whole House on Monday next. The House had now been in session twenty minutes, and the Leader of the Government moved adjournment.

On the motion to adjourn Mr. Mathieson Leader of the Opposition called attention to the extraordinary and ridiculous conduct of the Government in the matter of the Legislative session. What was the emergency necessitating the calling of the House in this break neck fashion? In the ordinary course the House should adjourn until the 13th day of February and could be called for the despatch of business ten days after that date. True, the Lieut. Governor, in the case of urgency could convene it sooner. Was the urgency in this case sufficient to warrant the course that had been pursued? Only two days remained till the Royal Gazette would be issued in the regular way; but a great was the precipitation of the Government that the members of the Executive were precipitately summoned, an extra Gazette was ordered to be published and the House was called for the 2nd of February. What did all this mean? Was the business to come before the House of such an urgent nature that it could not wait; or were the Government bent on rushing the

sessional work through with unprecedented despatch? The actual situation certainly could not bear out this view; for here we are at the very beginning of the session without anything to do. The Government have no work ready and they are obliged to ask the Lieutenant Governor to give them authority to adjourn in the middle of the week. Why were the Government impelled to have the House called for despatch of business before the 3rd of February? The House and the public are entitled to an explanation of this urgency.

Mr. McLean expressed his astonishment at the Leader of the Government being unable to give any reasonable or plausible excuse for the hasty calling of the session and then being obliged to adjourn, for nearly a whole week in consequence of no work being ready to go on with. Had the House been called at this early date to facilitate public business and to accommodate the people's representatives no reasonable exception could be taken. But we had the most abundant evidence that this was not the case. Here we are at the very beginning of the session without anything to do. All were anxious that the public accounts should be in the hands of people; so that some conception could be formed of our present financial condition and the amount of our Provincial debt. Why are these accounts not now made public? More than four months have elapsed since the end of the fiscal year and it is high time we should be made acquainted with the conditions of finances for the twelve months ended Sept. 30th 1908. It looked very suspicious that a special gazette should be issued two days before the regular date for the appearance of this publication. The people knew quite well the reason why the Government were so anxious to have the House called before the 3rd inst.

On Monday the 8th the House met at 4 o'clock p.m. After routine the following questions were asked by the Opposition, and answers to them were promised by the Government, at some future time: Mr. Mathieson asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government what progress has been made during the past year in consolidating the debt of this Province? Have any and what efforts been made to negotiate the Provincial Debentures and with what result and at what cost? Had any offers been received by the Government for the purchase of debentures and what were the prices offered? What price did the Government ask?

Mr. Mathieson inquired of the Commissioner of Public Works if any public money was spent on the road leading from Hillsboro Bridge to Southport between the 1st day of January, 1908 and 31st day of December, 1908. If so, how much money was expended to whom was the same paid and when. When was the work let? When was it done? Was it let by public competition or how otherwise? By whom was it let? Is any amount due thereon? To whom and how much in each case? Also to lay on the table of the House all reports, returns, contracts, letters and papers in respect to said work.

Mr. Mathieson asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table of the House a statement of all moneys expended by Wm. Lavers, Road Inspector on public roads or other public works between the 30th day of September, A. D. 1908 and the 31st day of December, 1908. Were the said moneys expended by public competition or how otherwise? State how much of the said money has been paid, when and to whom respectively. Are any and what amounts still owing in respect to such work and to whom respectively? When was the work done in each case? Also all reports returns, letters, correspondence between the said Inspector and the Commissioner of Public Works or any officer of his Department in respect to such work.

Mr. McLean asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table all petitions and correspondence re survey between Lots 61 and 59.

Mr. Mathieson for Mr. Wyatt asked the Commissioner of Agriculture to lay on the table a return of the names of the farmers' sons who attended the Short Course of Instruction at the Agricultural College at Truro last session. The amount paid each student and the method or system employed in the selection of such students.

When orders of the day were reached, Mr. Palmer, moved the address in answer to the Lieut. Governor's speech, and spoke for something over half an hour. The motion was seconded by Mr. William Laird, who did not speak quite as long as the mover. The Leader of the Opposition followed in an able and vigorous speech, to which reference will be made in next issue. He was still speaking when the House adjourned at six o'clock till three o'clock Tuesday afternoon.

The House met at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Before the orders of the day were called Mr. John A. McDonald, member for Cardigan, was introduced to Mr. Speaker, by Mr. Mathieson and Mr. Morson, signed the roll, took the oath and was escorted to his seat. Mr. Mathieson finished his speech on the Address, and was followed by the Leader of the Government. Silence ensued for some minutes after Mr. Hazard sat down and Mr. Speaker started to put the motion, when Capt. Joseph Read, the member for Wright, took the floor. He continued speaking till six o'clock, when the House adjourned till 3 o'clock today. Who now is "wasting time?"

P. E. Islanders in Boston. Following out the custom inaugurated at the inception of its organization, the P. E. Island Benevolent Association, will on Thursday evening Feb. 18th, hold its ninth annual reunion and ball in Paul, Revere and Talbot Hall's Huntington Ave., Boston. This is a social event which is yearly looked forward to with anticipation of pleasure by P. E. Islanders residing in greater Boston, and it has in the past and will no doubt on this occasion prove to be one of the distinct social events of the season. The P. E. I. Benevolent Association is too well known to need much comment here, but it is certainly much to be regretted that more of our people residing in Boston do not become active members of it for no more worthy organization for their advancement and general good exists today. During the past year the Association has paid out several hundred dollars in sick benefits and not only this fact but the social benefits accruing from membership in this Association should induce every P. E. Islander residing in greater Boston to take up active membership in it. The proceeds of the ball go to help swell the sick benefit fund, and this fact should bring a large gathering of P. E. Islanders and their friends to Paul Revere and Talbot Hall's on Feb. 18th. The committee in charge of the arrangements for the ball and reunion is as follows: Pres. Dr. F. J. Lanigan, Joseph A. Carey, Jas. H. Griffin, Eben McGregor, Daniel McClean, Mrs. Jas. Pendergast, Mrs. Wm. Lioskey, Mary McAulay, Ed. R. Thornton and Mrs. Jennie McDonald. The following are officers for 1909. Pres., Dr. F. J. Lanigan; V. Pres., Joseph A. Carey; Treas., Michael Walsh; Fin. Sec., A. J. McLean; Rec. Sec., Frank L. Campbell; Corresponding Secretary Mrs. Jas. Pendergast; Sergeant-at-Arms, Miss Mary McAulay; Guard, E. J. McAulay.

Mr. McLean asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table a statement in respect to the work of the Inspector? Who was employed on the work? At what rate of wages? How much was paid to each person employed? From whom was the material purchased and what prices were paid for each class of material. What was the total cost? Also to lay on the table of the House all reports and returns and correspondence relating to this work.

Mr. Arsenault asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table a statement in respect to Haldimand Bridge showing: Whether the contract was

let by public competition or how otherwise. If by tender, how many tenders were received, from whom and for what amount respectively? Also the plans and specifications of the said work and all reports, letters and correspondence in respect to the same. Was any and what amount paid for extras? Was the work performed according to specification?

Mr. McKinnon asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table all petitions and correspondence re survey between Lots 61 and 59.

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