

SPEECH OF

Mr. L. G. DESJARDINS, M. P. P., FOR MONTMORENCY,

ON THE

FINANCES OF THE PROVINCE,

Delivered at the sittings of June 20th and 21st, 1888.

Mr. Speaker,—The constitutional Opposition is one of the most important wheels in our parliamentary machinery, because it is in the interest of the public that the general policy and administrative acts of the ministers responsible to this house and to those who have elected us, should be submitted to the free discussion of the representatives of the people. The role of Her Majesty's loyal opposition is that of criticism, but to be useful and attain its object that criticism ought to be just in principle, should be based on indisputable facts and should recommend itself to the public approval by the sincerity of those who assumed the responsibility of it. I will consider it my duty to conform strictly to those essential conditions of all deliberation that is profitable to the country in the remarks that I have to make in reply to the able speech on the budget of the hon. treasurer, (Mr. Shehyn.)

We are all agreed that the proper management of our financial affairs is one of the questions that interest our province and, I will add, the country in general, in the highest degree. United on this point our divergencies of opinion commence and become more and more marked, as we study the situation of our finances, the policy which has produced it and more particularly the responsibility of the public men who have for several years directed or criticized the march of affairs. The recollection of our past discussions on the same subject is still present to the memory of all those who have given it any attention. It is not necessary to insist too much on that point, in order that my honorable colleagues may have a clear knowledge of the starting point of the debate in which I am now engaged in the name of my honorable friends

of the Opposition. Besides, the hon. treasurer (Mr. Shehyn) gave a resume of our former controversies in the opening words of his speech of Friday last. I have a perfect right to make use of his own remarks to show how, by carefully following the direction indicated by the principles and the facts, we can assuredly arrive at conclusions very different from those which he has drawn from them with such apparent satisfaction.

The Hon. Treasurer said:

"We promised to work with energy for the restoration of good order in the finances of the province; before submitting the budget it is our duty to show that we have kept that promise. Of course, in the brief period that has elapsed since our accession to power—a period of only fifteen months—it has not been possible for us to accomplish all that we undertook; but we have labored courageously in the work of rehabilitation, and the facts which I shall lay before you will, I hope, prove that we have accomplished the greater part of our task. In fact we have already placed the financial position of the province on a foundation which allows us to look to the future without fear, and if the policy that we are pursuing does not meet with too much opposition, we shall soon have accomplished the task at which we are aiming."

Let us further consider the remarks of the honorable Treasurer. He tells us that the present Government have labored courageously at the work of rehabilitation which they set themselves; that they had promised to work with energy in restoring good order in the finances and that they have kept their