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The Financial Statement.

The budget speech was delivered in the Legislature, by Premier Hazard on Thursday evening last. Like all previous financial statements of the present Liberal Government, it presages nothing but gloom and discouragement to the tax payers of this Province. It foreshadows a huge deficit for this year, and as a consequence a large increase in the Provincial debt and additional interest charges. In presenting his statement the Leader of the Government sugar-coated his bitter pill to the greatest extent possible. He consumed no unnecessary time in the delivery of his speech; slurred over the suspicious phases and turned the awkward corners with all the agility of which he was capable. He presented the damaging pronouncement with all the plausibility he could bring to his aid; but when subjected to criticism and investigation it proved to be a veritable whited sepulchre. With a wonderful show of ingenuity, he took much credit to himself for the near approach of his estimates with expenditures during the last fiscal year; but he failed to make known how far the receipts of the year fell short of the expenditures. That is the comparison in which the people are interested. His estimate of expenditure of the current year is \$424,461 while the receipts are placed at \$381,439. That is \$20,000 more than the expenditures of last year. Notwithstanding this large expenditure, the Leader of the Government anticipates a gross deficit of \$43,030 on the years financial transactions; or a net deficit, after deducting the amount placed to sinking fund account, of \$31,435. Surely these figures afford cold comfort to the tax payers of our Province, who have been hoping that a time would come when revenue and expenditure would meet. Instead of that we have staring us in the face, an addition of at least \$31,435 to the Provincial debt by the 30th September next.

The Leader of the Opposition, in short order, completely shattered the flimsy fabric which the Premier had set up. His criticism was trenchant and complete and his admirable speech roused the greatest enthusiasm among his followers. He lost no time in pointing out the Premier's armor vulnerable point, and he was through with it in a few moments. He maintained as a

The Leader of the Government, said Mr. Mathieson had taken a novel departure when he compared estimates with expenditure, instead of with receipts. That however would not deceive anybody. The Government, he said, had collected more money than previously; but the increase had come out of the farmers. The taxes from other sources had fallen off. When the Premier delivered his budget last year, he anticipated an increase of \$20,000 from the land tax re-adjustment; but only \$8,000 were received, and it cost over \$3,000 to collect the \$8,000. The Premier did not say anything about that. The Premier had estimated \$6,000 for building a jail; but did not build it, and now he takes credit for keeping close to his estimates. He

had no doubt that the debt and liabilities of the Province were now a million dollars. Many accounts of expenditure were held back. Why, for instance, was not the money expended on the repairs to Government House charged in last year's accounts? Over \$3,500 were spent; but only about \$800 were shown in the Auditor's report. There was nothing to show that there were any tenders or competition in this matter. In the Premier's present estimates of expenditure there is an item of \$20,000 for permanent bridges. Nothing could be less permanent than the bridges already built by the Government. The expenditure of last year contained an item of \$349,77 paid by the Government for costs in a case of dispute between School Trustees and rate payers at Johnston's River. The rate payers were in the wrong and the court so declared; but the Government paid their expenses. That is a nice way to exploit the money of the people. That was but one instance. But the Premier was happy as he had delivered his valdictory (Laughter and cheers.)

Sessional Notes.

On Monday March 28, the House opened at 3.50. Petitions, questions and answers occupied considerable time. When the orders of the day were reached the bill incorporating the Arena Rink Company, promoted by Dr. Warburton, was read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole House. The bill was reported agreed to without amendments. On motion of Mr. McLean, the House next went into committee on the bill amending the Souris incorporation act with Mr. James Kennedy in the chair. After some time in committee progress was reported. The bill incorporating the Fanning Brook Hall Company was read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole House. The bill was reported without amendment. On motion of Mr. McLean, the bill incorporating the Souris Citizens Band was read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole House, with Mr. McKinnon in the chair. The Speaker took the chair and the chairman reported the bill agreed to without amendment. The Leader of the Government tabled papers relative to the proposed arrangement between the Federal authorities and the Provincial Government, in the matter of the oyster fisheries, and expressed a desire that the question should be discussed by the House. Mr. Mathieson said he presumed the Premier's move in this matter was in pursuance of something that was said during the debate on the address. His remarks made in Commons by

the House then adjourned to 3 p.m. Wednesday.

On Wednesday 29th, the House met at 4 o'clock. During questions considerable sharp sparring across the floor took place, in consequence of the failure of the Commissioner of Public Works to bring down full information requested by different members. In reply to several questions seeking information regarding the payment bills no vouchers were tabled, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. McLean, Mr. James Kennedy and others took a hand in the discussion.

When the orders of the day were reached, Mr. Mathieson brought up the question of our oyster fishery. The papers brought down on the pre-

vious day contained a draft agreement between the Dominion Government, and the Governments of the three Maritime Provinces, on the question. He wanted to know what progress had been made towards a settlement. The Leader of the Government in reply stated that no definite conclusion had been reached. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries had not agreed to suggestions made by the Government of this Province.

Discussing the papers tabled Mr. Mathieson pointed out that on their face, it appeared that the bargain proposed was decidedly unfavorable to this Province. It appears that they are negotiating to take over the oyster fisheries, and then lease them and collect the rentals. After that they are to pay back to the respective Provinces half the money collected, after deducting the cost of protection. The bottoms of these oyster beds belong to the Provinces; but by this proposed arrangement, we give away these to the Dominion, to be farmed by them and returning to us only one half the income. That certainly seems a poor bargain for us. He certainly did not think this proposition should be entertained. Our shell fisheries were almost as important to us as our agricultural lands. Why then should we take the Dominion Government into partnership? We own the land; but we propose to allow the other partner to regulate the crops and take half the proceeds. He thought the Dominion Government, possessing the power, should regulate and protect these fisheries in the manner most advantageous to the Provinces. We should not allow any unfavorable bargain to be consummated. The greatest consideration should be exercised before anything is completed. On motion of the Premier it was agreed to discuss the whole matter in committee on a future day.

Some bills were then advanced a stage after which the House adjourned to 8 o'clock same evening.

House resumed at 8.40 p. m. The bill creating a "Farmer's Central Institute" was read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole House. The bill was reported agreed to with some verbal amendments. The estimates of expenditure for the current fiscal year were submitted and the Leader of the Government announced that he would deliver the budget speech on the following day. The House then adjourned to Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

It was ten minutes after 4 o'clock before the House opened Thursday afternoon. When the orders of the day were reached, Mr. Arsenault

presented to His Excellency, the Governor General in Council requesting that a suitable person be appointed to fill the vacancy in the Senate of Canada caused by the death of the late Senator Ferguson. He backed up his resolution by appropriate arguments. He outlined the constitution of the Senate, and the extent of its membership. He referred to the loss suffered by this Province by the lamented death of Senator Ferguson. At present two of our surviving Senators are incapacitated from attending to their public duties, on account of illness. In consequence of this condition of things, we had only one Senator taking part in the deliberations of the Senate. At present especially, when very important public questions are before Par-

liament, we should have the vacancy filled.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. McLean. He considered the present one of the most important periods in our political history and we should have a full representation in both branches of the Federal Parliament. This vacancy had continued for about a year and a half. He considered it necessary that our Legislature should impress upon the Federal authorities the importance of making this appointment.

The Leader of the Government evaded the importance of the resolution and reported the old plea, that the Federal Government had the right to make the appointment in question and they would probably attend to it when they got ready. He was altogether opposed to approaching the Governor-General.

Mr. Mathieson considered it an unfortunate thing that the Leader of the Government should so far forget his public duty as indicated by his remarks in this connection. The Senate was intended to exercise most important functions in the Government of the Country. Whether or not the Senate had always done its duty, was no reason why any delay should be allowed in completing its membership. At any time, the occasion may present itself when the Senators would arise to their duty. This was a right denied; a most outrageous proceeding. He could not understand how any member of the Legislature could vote against the proposed resolution, as it called for righting a wrong under which we have too long slept. In this matter our rights are invaded; and it was deplorable that men could be found willing to condone such outrageous proceedings. In the words of the Leader of the Government, it was an "infernal swindle." How ridiculous for the Premier to assert that the Government of Canada were too busy with importance matters to give their attention to the appointment in question. As the British North America Act sets forth the Governor-General is the proper authority to appeal to in this matter. The Leader of the Government expressed his unwillingness to go to the "foot of the throne," as he says. But he should know that the representative of the crown was the proper person to go to. Surely, said the Leader of the Opposition, the members of the Legislature would not be so obsequious as to oppose this resolution. He was convinced that delay began at this end of the contract. We had suffered unpeakable loss in consequence of the demise of Senator Ferguson; yet the Government of this Province refuse to make the slightest move to have the vacancy filled. Conduct such as this would not be tolerated by Manitoba and other Provinces for one moment. In every case where our Provincial interests and the interests of Canada came into conflict our interests are sacrificed to those of the Dominion. That is the way our present Local Government give away our rights in every case.

Hon. B. Gallant, after a few remarks (moved an amendment to the resolution to the effect that a committee of the Legislature be appointed to represent the matter to the Federal authorities.

Mr. McKinnon pointed out that it must sound very strange to the public to find the Government members in our Legislature putting forth the argument they do at this late date. It is nearly two years since the vacancy occurred, yet we have the evidence that our Government have up to this moment done absolutely nothing.

Mr. Frowe considered the evidence furnished by the attitude of the Government members was sufficient to show that they have acted scandalously in this matter. They had not lifted a finger to right the wrong under which we are suffering. This was not a political question; Liberals, many of them, are loud in condemnation of the delay permitted in this senatorship matter.

Mr. Wyatt said the vacancy in the Senate deprived us of a part of our Federal representation. The question of our representation in the House of Commons has been debated in our Legislature, and much money had been spent in prosecuting this question before

the courts. It was carried to the highest legal tribunal, the Privy Council. Conferences of the Premiers of the Maritime Provinces have been held to discuss the matter. Nor is this question yet concluded. Resolutions have passed in our Legislature setting forth that no adjustment of our claims against Canada would be considered adequate unless our original representation of six members in the House of Commons was restored. Our Premier, Mr. Wyatt said, invariably threw a wet blanket on any movement intended to favor us in our demands against the Federal authorities. It was not by backing down, as our Premier invariably does, that so many victories against the Dominion had been won by Ontario, when Oliver Mawat was Premier. Surely vacancies in the Senate are as important as vacancies in the Legislature; and sometimes the Government create vacancies in the Legislature, in order that there may be no vacancies. This was done in the case of the late Mr. Laird. Under present circumstances our representation in the House of Commons is from time to time liable to be smaller and smaller. Under these circumstances it is of the utmost importance that our Senate representation should be kept up. At six o'clock Mr. Wyatt moved the adjournment of the debate and the House adjourned.

House resumed in the evening at 8.35. The Leader of the Government proceeded to deliver his budget speech. He started by congratulating the House and the country on the general prosperity which existed. He thought the estimates had never been so nearly realized. He said the receipts had exceeded the estimates by over \$4,000. An extraordinary statement of the Premier was that the revenue last year had exceeded the expenditure. As a matter of fact, as we have more than once showed, the revenue fell short of the expenditure by over \$28,000. With one breath the Leader of the Government said the revenue of last year had exceeded the expenditure by over \$4,000, and that the increase to the debt during the same year was over \$14,000. Both these statements cannot be true. He thought the people were not paying as high taxation as they should. The increase in revenue from the new arrangement of taxing the farm lands of the Province, the Premier said, amounted to \$8,000. This, he said, was much less than he expected. He estimated the expenditure for the year at \$391,261, besides \$33,100 for concrete culverts, steel bridges, etc. This makes a total of \$424,461. The consolidation of the schools, recommended by the Education Commission is not to be adopted, he said. About \$6,000 are to be spent in repairs to the Hospital for the Insane. The estimated receipts he placed at \$381,431. That will leave a deficit of \$43,030. He concluded his speech at 10 o'clock, having spoken an hour and twenty minutes.

The Leader of the Opposition immediately followed. He pointed out that the Premier had adopted a new method of comparison. He compared receipts and estimates, instead of receipts and expenditure. In this way he covers up his deficits. He pointed out that whatever increase there was in receipts last year came out of the farmers. Last year he estimated \$20,000 increase from the land tax, but received only \$8,000. But the Premier did not tell that it cost over \$3,000 to collect the \$8,000. The best the Premier's figures can show is a gross estimated deficit of \$43,030, or a net deficit of \$31,000. If all the debts and liabilities of the Province were discharged the Provincial debt would be a million dollars or upwards. Government House had an expenditure made upon it last year of over \$3,500. If Government House and grounds were in such a condition of wreck and ruin why did the present Premier and the present Governor allow this to happen. Mr. Mathieson created much amusement by reading from the Journals of the House a resolution moved in 1898 by Mr. Rogers, the present Lieutenant-Governor, setting forth that no expenditure should be made to Government House and the property should be sold. Now an expenditure of over \$3,500 is made on this house without any authority or warrant. Wall paper border that cost \$6.75 a roll. All kinds of errors were discovered between the Premier's estimates and their realization last year. What reliance can be placed on such statements as these? In the expenditure for the Executive Council, it

appeared that the travelling expenses of one member was \$2.00, and for another only a couple of dollars less. One was from the east and the other from the west. All this time these gentlemen have free passes. There are few things less permanent, he said, than what the Government call permanent bridges. In 1890, when this Government was born the education department cost, outside the teachers' salaries, \$11,000. Last year it cost for the same service \$23,856. The salaries of teachers are now, on an average less than they were twenty years ago. \$349.77 appear as a charge in the department of education which were paid for legal fees in a case of dispute in the school district, at Johnston's River. The Government backed up the rate payers who opposed the action of a majority of the trustees. The case was sent to court, on the advice of the late Premier Peters, and the case was decided against the men who attacked the trustees. Thereupon the Premier agreed to pay the costs. The money was paid by Premier Hazard and charged to education last year. That is how the money goes. He controverted the Premier's statements regarding the attitude of the opposition regarding gold storage. He read from the Journal the resolution moved by the opposition advocating an improved system of gold storage. He inadvertently strongly upon the conduct of the Government in refusing to furnish information regarding the fees received at the gold storage. This second crime charged to the opposition was that they opposed the readjustment of the land taxes. What the opposition did stand for was that the payers of income tax should be treated in a similar manner. He twitted the Premier to the amusement of the House, on his prospective elevation to the Bench. He should know the difference between right and wrong. That and a little law were necessary qualifications for a judge. The Premier had done nothing towards pushing our claims against Canada. He read the statement of Sir Wilfrid Laurier setting forth that it was the intention at Confederation that the Province should be freed from direct taxation. The reading of this statement flatly contradicted the Premier's statement on the matter. He strongly emphasized the absolute failure of the Premier to do anything towards getting our just claims from the Dominion. We are face to face with another big deficit at the end of this year. The least amount of this deficit will be \$31,000. Mr. Mathieson concluded an exceptionally able speech amid applause at 11.05. Hon. Mr. Hughes followed—and after speaking briefly adjourned the debate. The House then adjourned to Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

The House did not meet till 3.45 Friday afternoon. The routine portion of the programme having being disposed of, and the orders of the day being cleared, the bill incorporating the Prince County Publishing Co., was read a third time and passed. This was followed by several other third readings. When the third reading of the bill providing for a new jail site was reached, Mr. Mathieson moved an amendment to the third clause to the effect that this Province in which the Dominion Government have purchased land for experimental farms. He followed his amending motion by a strong speech. Among other things he pointed out the inconvenience and expense necessary involved in having the jail outside the city. Prisoners would have to be conveyed between the courts and the jail by teams, while at the present time, prisoners walk from the jail to the courts.

The Leader of the Government resisted the amendment, and combated the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition. The House divided on the motion, when the vote stood 14 to 13. The bill was then read a third time and passed. The bill amending the Souris incorporation act was put through committee and reported with amendments. The bill amending the incorporation of the Pioneer Publishing Company was read a second time and committed to committee. Progress was reported, a bill amending the income tax was read a second time. Some other bills were advanced a stage, before six o'clock, when the House adjourned to 8 p. m. the same evening.

House resumed in the evening at 8.45. The debate on the budget was at once resumed by Hon. Mr. Hughes. He was loud in his praise of the manner of budget speeches annually delivered by Premier Hazard.

Mr. McLean followed Mr. Hughes. It was his opinion that the Premier's budget speech was a most doleful tale. Referring to the readjustment of land taxation, he showed that there were over 600 appeals from the assessments. He pointed out that the Premier showed in his budget speech that the Government had not the money to do anything towards improving education. Why then did the Government appoint an education commission costing \$4,000? Was it a proper procedure to spend \$3,500 on Government House without any authority? The Provincial Government act as if they were the apostle of the Dominion Government. The Local Government do not represent the people; they are the representatives of the Federal Government. They complain about improper transportation, and as soon as a resolu-

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