

## FINANCES OF THE DOMINION.

### BUDGET SPEECH DELIVERED BY

### HON. A. W. McLELAN, Minister of Finance

In the House of Commons of Canada, TUESDAY, 30th MARCH, 1886.

Mr. McLELAN.—Mr. Speaker, in moving that the house resolve itself into a committee of ways and means, I desire, as has been customary, to make some statements respecting the position of our accounts. This duty has for a number of years been discharged by one who has made fiscal matters a life study, and whose clear and able statements commanded the admiration of the house and the confidence of the country. I am sure that all in this house will join with me in expressing deep regret that the condition of Sir Leonard Tilley's health has compelled his withdrawal, at least for a time, from the more active duties of public life, and I am sure also that I but give expression to the feelings of those around me when I utter the wish that he may be restored to health and may have many happy years of useful and honourable life. In attempting this task, without having had perhaps sufficient time to become familiar with all the details of my department, I should crave the indulgence of the house, more especially when I look back to 1867, and see that this position has been from that time to the present always occupied by distinguished and able men. Sir, in looking back to that period over the administration of those eminent men—an unbroken line of gallant knights—I am deeply impressed with the changes that have taken place in the country since that period, with the contrast which the Dominion of Canada presents to-day to the Dominion of 1867. Eighteen years in the history of any country mark it with changes of progress and development, or, perchance, of decay, but I venture to say that in no country in the world are the evidences more strong and marked of progressive development than in the Dominion of Canada. In 1867, we were four provinces, and we spoke of the country as a great country, one of magnificent distances. We had then Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, covering an area of 338,000 square miles, with a population of 3,331,000. On the east we have added that most fertile of all fertile islands, Prince Edward, and we have taken our boundaries westward and laid them beside the waters of the Pacific ocean. In area we now embrace 3,438,000 square miles. In territory we have increased more than tenfold, and our population more than 50 per cent. But it is not in increased area, it is not in added numbers, that the change is most marked. It is in the condition of the great body of the people. They have learned more of each other in those eighteen years, and have strengthened their political, their social, their commercial and industrial

ties. In 1867, the two provinces in the east were separated from the two in the west by an impassable barrier. In winter, and for six months in the year, we were dependent upon the United States for all intercourse and communication between the two upper and the two lower provinces. In the west, on the admission of British Columbia and the territories, the obstacles to intercourse were greater even than the increased distances, and for all communication and intercourse we were dependent upon foreign railways, foreign hotels and foreign conveyances. For fifteen or sixteen years we have been paying tribute to a foreign but a friendly power for all intercourse westward. To-day the iron rail, leaving the waters of the Atlantic, goes westward and westward until it touches the waters of the Pacific ocean, and gives us an unbroken highway from the extreme east to the extreme west; so that we shall from this time be able to pass to and fro thereon without being reminded, as heretofore, by a foreign flag and a foreign custom house that we were dependent upon a foreign people for our intercourse. The year 1886 will be in all future Canadian history a red-letter year, as being the year in which we obtained our national, our geographical independence—the year in which a highway to pass for pleasure or profit, in peace or in trouble, was opened to us throughout our whole territory. Something more than thirty years ago the public men of Nova Scotia were busy discussing the propriety of commencing the construction of what is now a portion of the Intercolonial railway, and a link in this great highway, and the men who were then discussing it, the men who were most earnest in the matter, said to us that the importance and value of this road would grow in the public estimation of the people of Nova Scotia, and in the estimation of the people of all the provinces, that it would be commenced and would go westward, until it would eventually reach the waters of the Pacific ocean; and we were told that many of those who were taking part in the discussion would live to hear the scream of the locomotive in the Rocky mountains. Sir, that prediction has been realized, and, if all, or if even in part the other predictions respecting the great value and importance of this work, in binding together the several provinces, in strengthening and maintaining British interests upon this continent, and developing the great resources of this country, and drawing to us a share of the trade of the millions of people who swarm the islands and the countries lying beyond our western terminus, are