Tight Binding

POOR

tioned the name of Mr. McPhelim, Deputy Treasurer of Buctouche. How tenderly he touched him! merely saying it was a very small sum; but he (Provincial Secretary) would remark concerning him, that he had passed away, and his sureties had given a confession of judgment, and had specified a time in which the amount due would be paid. With reference to Mr. McLauchlan, as soon as the Government became aware of the failure of that officer to make proper returns, he was communicated with, and informed that unless satisfactory returns were immediately received proper steps would be taken to remove him. As to the case of Mr. Tibbits, he supposed, from reading the Auditor General's Report with reference to him, that there was more discrepancies which required the explanation of the Provincial Treasurer. The accounts of the Deputy Treasurers were not sent direct to the Auditor General, but to the Provincial Treasurer, through whom they were forwarded to the Auditor. Mr. McNaughton's name had been mentioned, and he could not speak positively with reference to that gentleman's deficiency, but he had observed that that gentleman had paid in a considerable sum during the year. He must remind the House of one difficulty under which Deputy Treasurers in remote districts labored: it was in the trouble they found to obtain current bills in which to make their remittances, especially in the northern counties; and the Government, in view of that difficulty, had given instructions to Deputies so situated, to keep in their hands funds sufficient to meet the payments of the school warrants for the various localities, the receipts for which they should remit to the Treasurer, to be placed to their credit.—So far from the Government neglecting their duty in the matter, it had acted with all possible promptness. The Treasurer was instruted to insist upon his Deputies mrking returns every month, and whenever he communicated to the Government the failure of any one of the Deputy Treasurers to make their returns, or the fact that they had retained too much money in their hands, the Government was prepared to take the proper steps in order to ensure a remedy of the evil It sometimes, he thought, occurred, although he did not believe the principle to be a correct one, that some of the Deputies allowed large mercantile houses to retain considerable sums in their hands, being amounts of duties payable by them, with the understanding that the amounts should be paid before the time for making the quarterly or monthly remittance arrived. This applied to one of the Deputies referred to—namely, the Deputy Treasurer at Newcastle, who had, in the hands of a firm, a considerable amount, and did not remit a draft in payment until the third day of November, and thus it was received by the Treasurer too late to be placed to the credit of the Deputy Treasurer, and appear in the returns for the fiscal year; and the Treasurer did perfectly right in not carrying the amount into his accounts for 1859, for if he had, then the bank account would not tally with the general accounts. There were other cases mentioned, but he thought that when the papers asked for to day came before the House, all, with perhaps one or two exceptions, would be satisfactorily explaimed; and it would be found, with the bare exceptions referred to, that the Deputy Treasurers had done their duty.

Mr. Williston asked if the Provincial Secretary had stated that the large commercial firm referred to, had not paid the amount till the third of November.

The Provincial Secretary understood so. In order to show the extreme stringency of the measures adopted by the Government in connection with the Treasury department, he might mention, that while formerly the Deputy Receiver General was allowed to retain considerable sums in his hands, to meet warrants on the casual and territorial revenue, now he was instructed to forward all balances to the Treasurer monthly. Something had been said the other day, with reference to an amount paid to the government directors of the Saint Andrews and Quebec Railroad. The Government of which his hon friend (Mr. G.) had been a member, and likewise two directors—one of them a member of the House, and no objection was ever made to their being paid, although the gentleman who held a seat in the House did not draw his pay as a director until after the dissolution of '56. Three members of the Government of that day were sent on a mission to St. Andrews, on one occasion, the expense of which exceeded the sum now allowed a director yearly. As he was dealing with small items, he would observe that some hon. gentlemen, in looking over the list of warrants, might object to another small item of £39, drawn in favor of Mr. Gray; but the Government was prepared to justify that with every other expenditure, as it was for costs in the suit of Sears *versus* the Province, relative to the copper importation.

Mr. Gray.—"Yes; it was a suit commenced before the present Attorney General took office, and in courtesy I was allowed to continue it."

Provincial Secretary.—Of course, the matter could be justified, and he was glad that sometimes an opportunity occurred, in which Mr. Gray could justify the acts of the Government, as in this instance, he being personally acquainted with, and interested in the matter. He now came to the Grand Falls Bridge. The whole expenditure of that structure (including the Little River Bridge,) and the approaches, was about £5800, of which about £4500 had been paid. It was supposed that the portion of the Bridge which had fallen could be replaced under the original design for about £2500, which left about £1500 to be made up by Mr. Tomlinson or his sureties. Mr. Tomlinson proposed to throw a wooden truss bridge across the chasm for £1900, but from its proximity to the waterfall, it was feared that the effect of the spray would be to destroy the bridge in a very short time, and, therefore, in regard to the public safety, as well as to the ultimate economy of the matter, it was decided not to adopt the suggestion. To a structure similar to the one which fell, there were the objections arising from the late unfortunate experiment, and it was finally determined to throw a substantial iron bridge across. Of course, a large portion of the work which pertained to the old bridge remained, and was to be accounted for in connection with the present erection; the masonry stood as firm as ever, the piers requring some addition to their height, however; the road to Little River Bridge, and the approaches to the bridge itself, all of which cost a large portion of the aggregate amount which had been expended, remained perfect, as well as the Little River Bridge itself. On the new bridge, about £3000 had already been expended; the wire and iron work were all on the spot; and it was estimated to cost probably, when finished, £6000. He contended that nothing had been advanced, calculated to convince the House that it should not go into supply. Surely the hon. gentleman did not intend to imply a want of competence on the part of the Auditor General, who had submitted his Report, embracing in detail the various accounts, the amounts paid out and received by the Treasurer, and every item of, or connected with, the public expenditure. He (Mr. G.) had stated that he could not understand the accounts, but he (Provincial Secretary) thought they might be understood, with a little care; at all events, everything was before hon. members, calculated to throw light upon the subject of the public expenditure, and to show how the money had been used. There were the general accounts and the Reports of the various departments—Railway, Post Office, Board of Works, etc.; and a list of every warrant drawn on the Treasurer and the Receiver General, from the first March, 1858, to the first of March, 1860, showing in whose favor issued, and for what service paid; and if any further information should be required, after going into supply, it would be cheerfully given. He wished the House distinctly to understand, that the Government had no desire whatever to go into supply, in order to evade any discussion on, or investigation of its doings; but was willing to afford every opportunity and delay, not inconsistent with the public service, for enquiry and information.

Mr. Read felt called upon to give some explanation, as his name had been mentioned as one of the Deputy Treasurers who had not made proper returns. He could say to the hon. member from St. John (Mr Gray.) that it might, at some time, be his misfortune to be afflicted by the hand of Providence. He (Mr. R.) had been so afflicted, and it was only because he had been prevented by illness, that he had failed to make his returns at the proper time. His accounts, however, were now all in, and he could inform the House that he had not in his hands twenty shillings of the public money.

Mr. Wilmot said that the Provincial Secretary, and other members of the Government were constantly in the habit of justifying their own wrong doing by saying that their predecessors in office did the same thing, as if two wrongs could make one right; he would tell him that it was for those wrong doings, and many misrepresentations, that the previous Government had been turned out of office, and that it was no justification whatever that because Mr. Taylor's accounts as Deputy Treasurer were not settled, that the Government of the day should allow Mr. McNaughton's, and other Deputy Treasurers referred to by his hon. colleague, (Mr. Gray,) to remain unsettled. He saw on page 169 of the Auditor's Report large sums remaining in the hands of Deputy Treasurer's, among others, £806 in the hands of Mr Amasa Weldon, whose whole collections for the year appears to be only £1600; this might be all explaimed but the appearance was bad. One of the grave charges against the Government of 1854 was that they had allowed Mr. Thomas H. Peters, who was Deputy Treasurer at Miramichi, to retain in his hands a considerable sum of money that he was not entitled to. The Government of that day, in accordance with a report of the committee of the House. brought an action against Mr. Peters. He would ask the present Government why they had allowed the action to drop? He saw that several of the Deputy Treasurers had not furnished satisfactory bonds; why should such things be? A reason given by the Secretary why these remittances were not properly made was, that they were in the habit of permitting the importers at the ports on the North Shore to make their entries and wait for the payment of duties until the end of the quarter; if so, they were permitting those officers to act directly in the face of the law, for the law required that the duties should be paid before the permit to land the goods could issue. If such a state of things was authorized, it was no wonder that Deputy Treasurers should become defaulters, for it, like Mr. McNaughton, they were appointed to office from political motives, the payment of duties would be contingent upon a man's political creed; he must most decidedly reprobate conduct so illegal and improper, for under such a policy the revenues of the Province must suffer. With regard to the amendment, moved by his hon. colleague, (Mr. Gray) he did think the House should know the amount of liabilities on the 1st March, moved for by the Chairman of the committee of accounts (Mr. Kerr) before going into supply, but he must say that if the railway accounts were all as clear and distinct, as stated at page 190 of the Auditor's Report, and "that they are correctly made up and vouched," and "that the receipts from the Treasury from the commencement of the work are credited by the Commissioners at 2s. 10d. more than the Treasurer charges, and this arises from 2s. 10d. having been received in 1856 for an augar sold, which sum in lieu of being deducted from the gross outlay for general stores, was inadvertently introduced into the accounts as money received from the Treasury." If the accounts were all so clear, simple, explicit, and correct as stated, then it was certainly not necessary to wait until the railway committee reported before going into the committee of supply. He had been of opinion that the Railway Commissioners had been boring with a large auger, but it seems that it was only a very little one, and this sum of 2s. 10d. was the only item that was wrong in the enormous expenditure. He was of opinion that this Railway Board completely overshadowed the Legislature; it appeared that during the last year they had expended £329,252, some £100,000 more than authorized by law. This is merely a small matter for the Great Boar to do, and doubtless the Government and their supporters in the House would fully justify it; but it certainly did place the representatives of the people in a contemptible light, when all they had to do was to appropriate in supply the few thousands of the revenue not appropriated by law, while the Railway Board could appoint and pay a host of officials could say what they would give to their Solicitor, Appraisers, and other servants, while the House had no power, or would take no action, to say them nay.—It might do all very well while the money was being borrowed, and expended, but he would warn hon. members that a day of reckoning was coming, when the borrowing would cease and taxation commence. He was thankful to say that none of the responsibility rested upon him; he had given the proposition of buying out Jackson, and saddling the country with this debt, his determined opposition. He now had a word to say with regard to the mode of keeping the public accounts. In 1855 when the present Provincial Secretary made his first financial exposition, the House and the country expected that in future the public accounts were to be so clear, so explicit, and so simplified, that every man that runs might read. From that time our income, expenditure, and liabilities were to be plainly stated, and every man who had the slightest idea of accounts could tell without difficulty the exact position of the Provincial finances; now, he would ask hon. members, if from the Blue Book, the Auditor's Report, or the financial statement laid upon the table by the Provincial Secretaey, they were prepared to say what was the Provincial debt on the 31st October, 1859, what the amount of interest we were paying, and what was likely to be our debt when the railway was completed. On the first page of the Secretary's financial statement they would see there were two modes of bringing sterling into currency; one calculating the pound sterling at 24s. 4d. currency, or 9½ per cent. premium, another at 24s. currency, of 8 per cent. premium.—Would not this mode of calculating at two different rates lead to confusion in keeping the accounts, more particularly as neither of these calculations would show the real difference between sterling and currency, for that was regulated by the rate of the premium of bills for the day? An item put down by the Secretary among the assets was profit beyond 8 per cent for Bills of Exchange drawn. The profit was an entire delusion, which could easily be tested. If instead of selling debentures in England, to pay the interest on the debt, they were to buy Bills of Exchange in the market, to remit for the payment of it, for them they would have to pay 10½ per cent preminm, making an absolute loss instead of a profit. Another fault he had to find was that the Provincial Secretary did not have accounts made up on the same system each year. He had gone through the accounts since 1854, but no two years were made up in the same way. He had, however, tried to get at certain returns for each year during that period, which he now submitted, (although from the complicated returns he could not vouch for his being correct) by which it would appear that while the duties on unenumerated articles had been increased from 7½ per cent. to 15 per cent. since 1842, yet our revenue for 1859 was less than 1854, while our Saving's Bank, floating and funded debt, had each increased. The amount of interest paid had increased from £7,401 in 1854 to £53,032 in 1859. The economy, prudence, and good government that was so loudly trumpeted forth when the present Government came into power in 1854, has resulted in extravagance, recklessness, and debt.

[Here Mr. W. made a financial statement showing the comparative amounts of liabilities and expenditure during the years from 1854 to 1859 inclusive, as contrasted with the revenue resulting from the increased rates of duties.]

In 1854 His Excellency, in his speech, had congratulated the people that the Province was virtually out of debt. The Provincial Secretary (Mr. Tilley) in his speech on Ways and Means, in 1855, said —"In justice to the late Government he felt it his duty to say that this was strictly true, the Province then owed no debt beyond its own boundary; the only liability of the Province beyond the probable value of its assets was at that time the £75,000 due the Saving's Bank." He further said "that this liability was the most unsatisfactory one that could be incurred by any Government, for the Province had to pay for the use of money which they could procure on better terms elsewhere, and they might at any moment be called upon to pay the whole amount, if notice was given by the depositors that they wished to withdraw their funds." He quite concurred in that view, but what had the government of the day done to remedy it? That debt had been increased the last year nearly £20,609, and it was now greater than it had ever been before. While the Government had used a large portion of the moneys, raised under the Act 19 Vic., Chap 20, for meeting Saving's Bank and other Provincial liabilities, for other purposes than placing the Saving's Bank debt in a better position, the Provincial Secretary would say that under the Revenue Act of 1854 many articles paid duty that were now free under the Reciprocity Treaty; this was admitted, and the revenue so lost was estimated by the Secretary, in the speech alluded to, at £9,428, but under the Railway Import Act, and the present Revenue Bill, goods, including ships' materials, &c., were now charged duty that at that time came in free. He found that the same loose system, that had been inaugurated in 1854 by the advent of the present Government to power, that "to the victors belonged the spoils," was being carried out in the payment of duties, and that the increase of smuggling and false entries was defrauding the revenue, otherwise, with the increase of duties imposed by the present Government, our revenue should have been largely increased. The Provincial Secretary had referred to his hon. colleague (Mr. Gray) as being ready to support the Government, when any item that he had an interest in was to go into his own pocket. This certainly was an unfair inference to draw, and he could only warn his hon. colleague that he was in a dangerous position when he received the praises of his political opponents, as it was only done for the purpose of injuring him in the estimation of his own political friends.—When he (Mr. W.) first came into the Legislature, the members of that day appeared to be actuated by some spirit of patriotism, and measurrs were discussed upon their own merits; now all was done by party. At that time, the expenditure on roads and bridges was considered a most important one, as it not only made a great public improvement, but it calculated money in every county, and through every back settlement. That expenditure, in 1854, was £66,462; in 1859, it was only £32,000, less than half; while the debt, on the 31st October last, was £1,100 000, a great portion of which was expended on a local road, affecting only the counties of Westmorland, Kings, and Saint John. By the Railway Report lately laid on the table of the House, it appeared that by the Chief Engineers report, owing to the want of sufficient surveys, and sufficient experience of the action of frost and snow in this climate, it would be necessary to add fifteen per cent. to his last years estimate, which would only add the trifling sum of, probably, £140,000, to the cost of the road; an amount that really caused less interest among honorable members, than an overexpenditure of £60 in the building of a bridge would have done, ten years ago; in fact, less explanation is given for this enormous increase than any supervisor would have given in the latter case.—And what security had the House or the country that next session another fifteen per cent., or £140,00 more, should not be added to the estimate? He took a most gloomy view of this expenditure, but the Government and their supporters in the House treated the whole matter with the most profound indifference. If he could alarm hon. members, or could alarm the country, he would do so, but it was useless to talk about it. All that he regretted was, that he was a member of the Legislature; and he had told his constituents, at the last election in Saint John, that when the majority had endorsed the doctrine, that "to the victors belonged the spoils," and that the great object, aim and end, for which members went to the House of Assembly, was to get office for themselves and their party, he did not wish to be one, in assenting to any such policy. That, however, was the great Liberal policy of the day, and he was not at all disappointed in the results. The Provincial Secretary, in a late lecture, had said that there were two considerations, the Legislature would have to consider, in the extension of railways in this Province; one was, how much more duties the imports would bear, the other, how much farther the credit of the Province could be extended; so that he supposed taxation and debt must be carried to their utmost limits. He supposed that they could not stop where they now were, as the Shediac road would be valueless without being connected with other roads, but it was difficult to say what was to be done, to get the Province out of the mess.

Mr End made a few remarks, saying it would be much better if his hon. friend would endeavor to point out a remedy for existing evils, rather than to be continually finding fault. The Province, it would seem, had got into difficulties, which were expressed in the figures of a debt of so large a denomi ation, that he could not pretend to understand them.

The debate was then adjourned.

The Journal.

Thursday, March 22, 1860.

THE CANADIAN NEWS ON NEW BRUNSWICK

In another column will b found a letter from a gentleman from New Brunswick who is now or was when he wrote, in England. Besides the other information which he gives the few remarks respecting the Canadian News, the subsidized organ of New Brunswick in Great Britain is worth the utmost attention. The number of the paper of which our friend speaks has come to hand, and we have had the pleasure of reading with our own eyes the information mentioned. The leading article of the paper is upon Railway communication in the Provinces, and the following is the statement which might well cause "A New Brunswicker to open his eyes in amazement:" Nova Scotia has also been showing some activity in the matter (of Railways). and there we have a line *projected from Halifax to Windsor, &c.*" This information must fall strangely upon the ears of the Nova Scotians themselves; for they have had the pleasure of paying for the said "*projection*" at the rate of rather above £11,000 per mile.

We put it seriously to the country if it is not rather too bad to have to subsidize a paper which puts forth such statements as these. The woeful ignorance displayed of the actual condition of Railway matters in the lower Provinces is actually farcical. In the same paragraph from which the above is quoted we have the following: "Then there are other lines in progress or completed *between Woodstock and Fredericton* on the St. John River, and a line from the *harbor of St. John to Charlotte* on the St. Andrews and Quebec Line." It seems to me that the people of York are not particularly proud of the "*progress*" made in the extension to Woodstock. "Charlotte" evidently represents to this writer not what it is, a great County, but a town or village situated on the St. Andrews Railroad! Here we have within the space of a paragraph in this wonderful luminary which Messrs. Fisher and Smith subsidized, a Railroad in Nova Scotia which has been in active operation for some time converted into a "projected" line; and we have two other lines which never had any existence beyond a pencil mark on a map "*in progress or completed.*" We advise the Govt. to set this wonderful magician of the Canadian News at work at the Inter-Colonial line. In three flourishes of the pen he will do what Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have been

lorging after for ten years or more. will have Halifax and Quebec un by the iron road quicker than you say *presto!*

Leaving the editorial columns f little let us look at the letter "our own correspondent in New Br wick". This is the second numb *The Canadian News* which has into our hands, and the second of letters upon our Province which a attract the Emigrants of Great Br to our shores, which we have seen. former letter afforded us much a ment. We remember that amon rious facts of equal importance a terest to the people of New Brun it announced to them that Blanc five children behind him. The in tion which the letter before us co is scarcely less interesting to tho whom it is intended.

The letter opens with some pr remarks about the weather. T cond paragraph commences wit count of "several accidents occ by the extreme cold;" but soon off into——what do you suppose *Pemberton Mills catastrophe!* to convey this valuable and rel formation to the intending em of Great Britain that the people Brunswick pay for this correspo

Then follows an account of th of prayer meetings in St. John, circumstantial account of the time at which the meetings com the character of the exercises, time to be devoted to each!

This, taxpayers of New Bru is the information for which y to pay. It is to be hoped tha have a powerful effect upon i tion.

Then we have a paragraph Paul's Church" somewhere in S which is followed by a narrati circumstances of the Hoyt a mond matter in this Town.

The matters of which we ha occupy about a column. The ing two columns of the letter voted to the volunteer moveme one half of the space being with a speech of the Rev. M way at Sackville; and most mainder with the remarks o P. Fisher, Esquire, Mayor," of the Attorney General," at in Woodstock.

Really this farce of "our respondent" in New Brunswi ting beyond bearing. The p to pay roundly for all this "Commissioner for the auth of Debentures" is the only connection with the presen ment who works for nothing. the House of Assembly see matter? Will they not c shame the Government o shame'ess job? Paying a dent to write such trash a subsidized newspaper of wh in Great Britain or out of i copy—*this is promoting in* with a vengeance!

RAILWAY MEETING AT VICTORIA COUN

At a numerously attended ing of the inhabitants of the Basil and its vicinity, called pose of expressing an opinio the junction of the New Br Canada Railroad with the Railroad of Canada, P. C called to the Chair, and L was appointed Secretary.

The Chairman explained the object of the meeting an tude of the interest involve the following resolutions seconded, and passed unani