

# MANIFESTO

OF THE

## Right Hon. Sir R. Bond, P.C., K.C.M.G., LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

### To the Electors of Newfoundland.

MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,—

In compliance with the appeal made to me by Electors throughout the Island, I shall again lead the Liberal Party to the polls at the forthcoming General Election. If I consulted my own desire I would leave this task to some one else. But, you have called me to your service. In this call I recognize the voice of an awakened and alarmed people, and my sense of public duty constrains me to put aside all personal considerations and at whatever sacrifice perform my duty. In the Manifesto I addressed to you before the last General Election, I pointed out very clearly what might be expected to result to the country if my political opponents were returned to power, and I added these words, "having toiled continuously for thirty years to improve the condition of this Colony and its people; having devoted the best years of my life to the public service and to the settlement of questions that for centuries retarded the advancement of its industries—if by your votes you show yourselves indifferent to those services, I shall not waste what may remain to me of life in unavailing opposition to the deliberate decision of the people." The Electors at the polls recorded their decision, and a majority of them returned the present Government to power. I accepted that decision with a feeling of relief for it released me from a weight of responsibility, and appeared to afford me an easy exit from the anxiety and worry of public life. My resignation of the leadership of the Liberal Party was placed in the hands of its parliamentary representatives soon after the declaration of the polls, but, at their request I assumed the leadership of the Opposition in the House of Assembly, on the understanding that on the expiration of the period of parliament I would retire from active participation in the public life of this country. It is not without regret that I find the exit which appeared to be opened to me again closed. From the Address—es I have received it is entirely clear that the people have discovered through a bitter experience that my warnings in 1909 were not unfounded. They were deceived. Their trust and confidence has been betrayed, and I observe, from the call back to public life with which I have been honoured, that it is those districts which were mainly instrumental in returning the present Government that are now most anxious to rid the Country of their evil influence. I would therefore forfeit the respect of my countrymen, and become recreant to my duty as a citizen, if I declined to respond to the appeal that has been made to me.

I cannot hope to repair the mischief that has been done by the present Government during the past four years, for it is beyond remedy, but, it is possible to put an end to the present riot of political crime.

#### THE PERIL NOW FACING THE COUNTRY.

To-day we see peril stalking our country down. A grave peril which clutches at the very vitals of the community and is sapping our existence as an independent State of the Empire. A peril so grave and so insidious that it must be faced, investigated, and overcome.

Let me make my meaning clear. As soon as the present Government found themselves firmly established in power, within a month from the declaration of the poll, they entered upon a policy of enormous and unjustifiable expenditure. On the 19th June, 1909, a letter was addressed to the Reid Newfoundland Company stating that "the Government contemplate building certain branch railways," and asking if the Messrs. Reid were "prepared to entertain a proposal to build these branches." Two days later the Reid Newfoundland Company replied that they were "prepared to make an offer to build the branch railways referred to," and four months later, without inviting other tenders; without survey previously made; in the absence of all data as to the character of the country to be traversed, or the traf-

fic possibilities of the respective branches; before even a contract price had been agreed to, the Government gave the Messrs. Reid a free hand to go ahead with the work. The truth of this is established by the following letter which was tabled in the House of Assembly in reply to a question put by me.

#### LETTER FROM REID TO MORRIS. (Copy.)

Reid Newfoundland Company,  
St. John's,  
October 7th, 1909.

Sir,—

In reply to yours of the 5th, this Company will be prepared to enter upon the discussion of the matter of the contract of the Railways mentioned at any time which may be convenient to the Government. In the meantime, the Company is willing to begin work suggested on the Bonavista Branch early next week, and shall be prepared to take on men on the 15th instant, and thereafter will proceed with the same as speedily as possible affording the labour required, the Government paying for the same as you mention in your letter, and such payment to be credited as payment made under the contemplated contract. Of course the labour to be performed in the present circumstances will not, as you are aware, be as valuable to the Company as if it were done under ordinary conditions, but this is a matter which we may allow to stand over for consideration UNTIL WE BEGIN TO DISCUSS THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT.

I have, &c.,  
(Sgd.) W. D. REID,  
President.  
Hon. Sir E. P. Morris, K.C., LL.D.,  
Premier.

It will be observed that not only was Railway work commenced without tenders, without survey, without data as to character of the country to be traversed or traffic possibilities, without contract price being agreed, but actually in face of the above warning given by the Messrs. Reid as to a demand for a special price to be fixed when they and the Government "begin to discuss the terms of the Contract."

Two months after the above letter was written a formal contract was entered into between the Government and the Messrs. Reid in the absence of surveys and other necessary data, subject only to the understanding that "all the Branches shall follow, as nearly as may be practicable, the routes that may be decided by the Government." The foregoing words taken from the Contract prove the accuracy of my statement as to the absence of all data upon which a Contract could be intelligently based, and the cost even approximately estimated.

The result of all this is that the estimate of cost, placed by the Prime Minister before the Legislature for its guidance in passing upon the Contract was entirely misleading and has already been exceeded by MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, to which will have to be added millions more before the Colony is through with this iniquitous Railway Scheme.

Then, again, as I pointed out in the House Assembly when the Contract came before, another grave concession had been made the Messrs. Reid in that the Government had consented to pay them in Gold instead of in Debentures, which the Contractors had to convert into cash at their own expense. The present Government relieved the Contractors of such expenses by undertaking to float Debentures themselves and pay the Messrs. Reid in Gold. By so doing they have practically made the Contractors a present, at the expense of the taxpayers of this Colony, of nearly HALF A MILLION DOLLARS TO DATE.

#### A FURTHER CONCESSION TO THE REIDS.

Then there was the further concession to the Contractors of over a Million acres of land, together with all minerals therein. The Messrs. Reid previously held two and a half million acres of land in this country which, supplemented by that obtained from the present Government, makes them the owners of nearly FIVE MILLION ACRES. If the handing over to the Contractors of nearly half a million dollars in gold was gratuitous and wicked folly, the grant of land was nothing short of a high crime against the interests of the people of this country. For more than twelve years the Reid Newfoundland Company has held two and a half million acres of public land in possession. Up to this day the Colony has not received the slightest benefit from these lands, because the Messrs. Reid have done nothing to develop them or any portion of them. They are barred to private enterprise, and to being utilized for the benefit of the Country. Control over the land means power to control the future of this Country, and, therefore, to increase the immense power that had already been acquired by the Railway Contractors under the Railway Deal of 1898 was a crime, a crime which, if I am not mistaken, will hamper the future prospects of our Country.

#### THE FINANCIAL PERIL.

The peril which immediately faces the community is the financial peril, in part arising out of the Government's Railway Scheme, and in part out of the wasteful and improper expenditure of the revenues of the Colony.

When the Government introduced their Railway Scheme before the House of Assembly four years ago, the Prime Minister led the House to believe that the whole of the five Branch Railways would not exceed 250 miles in length nor cost more than Four Million Dollars. I pointed out at that time what I plainly saw was an error, and I warned the Government that double the amount of money named would not see the Colony through the Contract. My warning was not heeded, and already, with not one of the Branches fully equipped and completed and ONLY THREE OUT OF THE FIVE BRANCH RAILWAYS entered, more than FIVE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS have had to be raised on loan. (\$5,839,999.99.)

The loss to the Colony by the Government floating the two loans in London, which comprise the above amount, and paying the Messrs. Reid in Gold instead of in 3½ per cent. Debentures at par WAS MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$407,211.14). This is the difference between the par value of the Debentures and the amount realized by their sale or transfer. To this must be added the further loss of the interest on that sum at 3½ per cent. per annum. As I have previously stated the Government practically made the Messrs. Reid a present of nearly HALF A MILLION DOLLARS by their wicked folly.

#### BUT THE END IS NOT YET.

Still the peril walketh in darkness, while half the work contracted for has not been completed, and nearly SIX MILLION DOLLARS have already been added to the Public Debt on that account, another loan of at least an equal amount will have to be raised to meet the Colony's obligations to the Messrs. Reid under the Government's Railway Contract, or the Country will default and become bankrupt. If that money can be raised at all, it can only be raised by paying dearly for the accommodation; it can only be raised by adjusting our rates of interest to meet the altered conditions of the money market, that will mean an additional loss in principal and interest; it can only be raised then provided we have put our house in order by cutting down expenditure in every possible direction, and thus satisfy money lenders that the annual revenue will, without doubt, meet our liabilities; it will not be raised at any price or under any circumstance if the Government of the Colony at this time en-

ters into still further contracts with Messrs. Reid, and that is precisely what the Prime Minister in the House of Assembly and on public platforms has pledged his Government to do if again returned to power.

AT YOUR PERIL THEN, AT THE PERIL OF YOUR COUNTRY, you would record your votes for the present Government.

#### ANOTHER DANGER THAT THREATENS.

But the foregoing is only one aspect of the peril that is sapping our national existence. Since the present Government came into power four years ago they have not stopped short at borrowing nearly Six Million Dollars abroad for their Railway Scheme, but they have also endeavoured to borrow more than a million and a quarter from our citizens.

In 1909 there was a Loan	\$430,000.00
Act for . . . . .	
In 1911 there was a Loan	520,000.00
Act for . . . . .	
In 1912 there was a Loan	250,000.00
Act for . . . . .	
	\$1,200,000.00

Investors have not taken up the whole of these loans. Why? Because people who have hitherto invested their savings in local debentures have found, that whereas they paid one hundred cents in the dollar for those debentures they cannot now be realized for ninety cents, and they have become alarmed at the reckless manner in which the finances of the Colony are being handled by those in charge of the Government. In the mad riot of expenditure and waste that is going on they perceive the danger of default in the payment of interest on these debentures, and as a result hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of local debentures are unsaleable. It is a healthy sign to observe the cautious attitude of investors, as well as the pronounced alarm of the general public in respect to the gross extravagance of the Government, for, it indicates that they recognize the danger that threatens, and it affords room for hope that they will bend their energies to ward off the danger. It has been declared by a great Statesman that "it is a characteristic of the mischiefs that arise from financial prodigality that they creep onwards with a noiseless and steady step; that they commonly remain unseen and unfelt until they have reached a magnitude absolutely overwhelming." You have seen the dangers that menace our Country, let us hope not when too late.

#### PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS.

While the Government have been adding to the country with these vast obligations they have made no attempt to adjust ordinary current expenditure to meet the conditions they have created. Nearly every department of the public service has been demoralized by being made a dumping ground for political camp followers until the cost of administering the same has risen enormously, and form efficiency has been sacrificed. It would occupy too much space in this communication to review the expenditure in connection with each department of the Civil Service. Suffice it to say, therefore, that whereas in the year 1907-8, the last year for which my Government was fully responsible, the total expenditure was \$2,850,189.34. The total expenditure last year by the present Government was \$3,524,652.51, AN INCREASE OF SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE DOLLARS.

One would have imagined that in view of the deplorable condition of things to which I have drawn attention, the Government would have, at least, kept expenditure during the current year down to that of last year. BUT NO. They were determined to carry out their mad riot to the end, and they voted at the last session of the Legislature a sum TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN EXCESS OF THE ENORMOUS EXPENDITURE OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR. That sum does not include the cost of the General Election. Not content with this voted sum of THREE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS, since the House of Assembly

closed they have unlawfully proceeded to increase salaries and to pension off a number of Civil servants in order to make provision for political supporters. The Legislature did not make provision for these pensions and consequently this expenditure was unauthorized and unlawful. It is only fair to all concerned for me to say, that if my party is returned to power I shall not recognize as legal and binding ANYTHING that the present Government may have done, or may yet do, which has not been sanctioned and provided for by the people's representatives in Parliament, for a greater outrage on Constitutional Government it would be difficult to conceive.

It will be observed then that by incompetent finance, by reckless expenditure, and by entering into enormous obligations to the Messrs. Reid, the Government has brought the Country's resources into an embarrassment that is extreme. My first endeavour, if entrusted by you with the duty, shall be to restore public confidence in the Colony both at home and abroad. The land scandals that have shaken confidence in the Colony abroad and affected its credit shall be dealt with, and steps taken to prevent a repetition of the same. Every department of the Government shall be thoroughly investigated, and where it is found that there are unnecessary or untrustworthy officials they shall be dismissed. There shall be a watchful supervision over all departments to check extravagance, and to bring down expenditure to actual requirements.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Demoralization in the public service was not confined to the public departments. Even the high Court of Parliament was despoiled of the safeguard to its independence in order to meet party exigencies. There was on our Statute Book an Act to safeguard the purity and independence of the House of Assembly. That Act was amended by the present Government in order that they might pay over money from the public Treasury to their supporters in the House of Assembly without bringing them under the penalty provided by law. As a result of this shameful transaction, during the past four years districts represented on the Government side of the House were deprived of that free and independent representation that they expected from their representatives when they returned them to the polls.

During the whole period of Parliament three of the Government members have been drawing annual salaries not inferior to authorized Ministers of the Crown, while a number of others have been receiving large amounts of money as Railway Arbitrators, Solicitors, Commissioners and special service men. It is no exaggeration, it is simple truth, to say that every member on the Government side of the House, during the past four years, has, directly or indirectly, been receiving money from the public Treasury. This idea that the public Treasury is legitimate spoil must be weeded out. It is a rank infectious growth that is rapidly strangling all that is good in representative Government. The safety of public interests depend upon the independence of the Representatives in Parliament, and if a Government may with impunity purchase party allegiance by payment from the public Treasury, the high Court of Parliament is at once changed into an Assembly where an unscrupulous or despotic Government may wreck public interests, and bring irreparable injury upon the Country. If my party is returned to power the House of Assembly shall immediately have its safeguard restored, so as to ensure the complete independence of the people's Representatives.

#### THE LAND SCANDALS.

The scandals brought to light in connection with the disposition of Crown Lands are too fresh in your memories to need recital herein. That the matter calls for a rigid inquiry is beyond question, and I promise you that if you place in my hands the power to deal with the matter, it shall be dealt with most effectively. There must be serious investigation, such as will probe right to the bottom of the whole affair. The Truth—whatever

it be—is within the reach of resolute search.

At the present moment you are conscious of the fact that the interests of the country have been sacrificed and made subordinate to personal interests, and that the Government has become a mere machine for the dispensation of patronage. The remedy for this is now in your hands. To-day the Government is clinging to office long after they had a legal right to be there. Many thousands of Electors by petition to the House of Assembly sought for opportunity to dismiss them twelve months ago. Their prayer was treated by the Government with contempt. The opportunity those Electors sought to obtain is now yours. Instead of remaining quiescent, and hoping that others will do the work which is crying aloud to be done, let us all gird our loins, shoulder our responsibilities, and meet our destiny with such will and concentration of effort that the results of our united actions shall be OMNIPOTENT.

#### BROKEN PLEDGES.

Having reviewed the salient acts of the Government during their four years of office, I will deal with the pledges they gave when they appealed to you for your votes. Have they fulfilled them? Let us see. First, let us consider the most important one of "Reduction of Taxation." The Government declared "that the burden of taxation borne by the fishermen and working classes of the Colony is too great, and calls for such adjustment as will lean more equitably on those who at present feel most seriously the increased cost of living in this Colony"; and Sir Edward Morris in his Manifesto to the Electors in 1908 said "reduction of taxation so that it will bear equitably on the working classes can be best accomplished by placing on the free list such items as tea, sugar, pork, and other prime necessities on which high taxes are now imposed." I regret being obliged to observe that this promise was a cruel piece of deception, intended only to catch the votes of the fishermen and other working classes, and this I shall proceed to prove from the Official records of the House of Assembly. During four sessions of the House of Assembly nothing was done. In the last session but one, by way of testing the honour of the Government in this connection, I moved the following Resolution:

"That having regard to the acknowledged injury resulting to the fishermen and working classes of the Colony by reason of the 'burden of taxation, and to the fact also that they feel most seriously the increased cost of living in this Country, it is the duty of the Government to immediately readjust the tariff, so as to place 'tea, sugar, pork, and other prime necessities' on which taxes are 'now imposed on the free list.'"

This Resolution was voted down by Sir Edward Morris and all of his supporters. When moving this Resolution I pointed out that "this would reduce the revenue by the sum of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars, and that in view of the obligations 'with which the Colony had been burdened' it would puzzle wiser heads than those of the Government to devise a revision of the tariff under 'which that large amount of taxation 'may now be dropped.' My Resolution was the means of forcing from the Government an admission of the correctness of my statements, as the following extract which I quote from the Official Report of Debates will show. Sir Edward Morris said 'if we were to reduce taxation three or four hundred thousand dollars then we would have to reduce the Education Vote; we could have no Old Age Pensions, no extension of telegraphs, no relief of the poor, you could have none of the extensions in the public service for which this money is now being spent.' Here was an admission of the absolute truth of my statement that the promise of this reduction of taxation by Sir Edward Morris at the last Election was a cruel piece of deception intended only to catch the popular vote.

NOT THE WORST PHASE OF THE MATTER.

But, this is not the worst phase of the matter, for at the last session

of the Legislature, was being rung down est burlesque of the ment that the word we found Sir Edw precisely that which session he declared 'without doing away sions, telegraph ex of the poor, and of the public service money is now being With the mere without any readju if; without the re the above services; estimate of expendi year of TWO HUN AND DOLLARS of enormous expendi with the certainty of having to go to market for still an the Messrs. Reids, this THREE HUN TY THOUSAND D COME HAS BEE WITH. Let the consider what this First, it means, a political machine for Election purpos of the Trade whose disarranged, and at credit of the Colon pend upon a surplus expenditure in orde their loan to meet ment's obligations Reid.

Secondly, it means and a silly one at the public on the eve of tion. In order to to the Country with carried out their 'Reduction of Taxa ment has not the moment of their a to disorganize trad Treasury, and to ri of the Colony abro solvency. Knowi paragraph I have Edward Morris's s of Assembly prove turned to power th restore this revenue 'Old Age Pensions graph extension, an for Education."

There is a grim that is worth rem whom the gods wi first make mad."

#### AGRICULTURE.

The promotion of the payment of a bo ing of land so as 'number of our pe attention to the c soil' was a pledge, earnest speech, the late Parliament. N en. The Votes of that should have were doled out in s ment members, and cal supporters Country. Nearly THOUSAND DOLL wasted in this that would have and additional ac cultivation, and wo bonus of twenty d every man who cl the recommendation bers of the Gover were drawing year this Vote the Model mental Station es Government in 19 of the youths of desired to learn f lessly destroyed an equipment practica While the children this Country were the advantages tha forded by the State ernment actually Agreement with p to send out pauper ed here in Agricult of the already ove ers of this Colony, this Colony the Don pire refused to be scheme and it fell glaring wrong was on any community the self designated have carried out, i

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