

A Discordant Note.

I am glad to be able to say, sir, that the debate thus far has been conducted along reasonably fair lines and upon a somewhat elevated plane. I regret to be obliged to give passing notice to the discordant note sounded by the honorable member for Centre Bruce. That honorable gentleman has seen fit to state that in the position I occupy—a position that was not of my seeking—I have not a united party behind me in this House. I beg to take distinct and clear exception to this wholly unwarranted misstatement. (Cheers). It is true, sir, that he may be able to point to three honorable gentlemen now occupying seats in this House who will not again be candidates for re-election. Two of them have accepted Dominion conventions and the third had announced his retirement from public life long before my accession to the leadership. I am pleased to be able to state not only to this House, but to the people of the Province, that there is not a particle of foundation for the uncalled for statement of the honorable member for Centre Bruce. (Cheers)

Finances.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the subjects discussed at some length by both the mover and the seconder, in speeches that were alike creditable to themselves, the historic party to which they belong, and also to this Assembly, was the very important question of finance. The honorable the Provincial Treasurer was warily congratulated upon the fact that when he delivers his budget speech he will be able to announce a handsome surplus—a surplus of probably \$600,000.00. 'Twill be strange, indeed, sir, if the facts do not warrant such an announcement. When I look at the estimates brought down last year and compare the net result with the announcement of the honorable the member for Brockville that there will probably be a surplus of \$600,000, I am somewhat disappointed. I find, sir, that the estimated excess of receipts over expenditure as shown by last year's financial statement, was \$1,093,156. Therefore, sir, apparently the surplus will fall short of the estimates by some \$500,000.

Sources of Revenue.

But, sir, when we consider some of the sources of our revenue, when we consider some of the channels

through which this revenue flows, when we consider who dug these channels and who it was that ineffectively attempted to dam these channels and who actually condemned them; when, sir, we consider the attitude of honorable gentlemen opposite when these channels were being dug, through which a very large portion of our revenue flows into the treasury, neither the honorable the Provincial Treasurer nor any other present occupant of the treasury benches can truthfully or fairly be made or considered a fitting subject for congratulation. (Cheers). In the late years of Liberal administration three measures of what I may call constructive finance were passed by this House. I refer to the Succession Duties Act, the Supplementary Revenue Act and the act taxing brewers and distillers. To the Succession Duties Act, when amended in 1899, honorable gentlemen opposite gave a qualified opposition. They moved an amendment, sir, that would have decreased the receipts under this act by at least one-third. The estimated receipts under this act for last year were \$700,000, and the actual receipts were \$821,692.99. (Cheers). These receipts, sir, are due to the constructive financing of a former Liberal Government, and no credit whatever is due the present Government. However, sir, notwithstanding their qualified opposition, while in opposition, to this measure, immediately they succeeded to office they rather increased the tax thus giving us a practical illustration of the fact that imitation is the highest form of flattery. But, sir, the attitude of the two political parties with reference to the Supplementary Revenue Bill, passed in 1899, is even more marked and striking. This act was passed for the express purpose of reaching several large corporations that could not be and had not theretofore been equitably assessed, such as telegraph companies, telephone companies, street railway companies, etc. We have often been told that the old Government was the friend of corporations. Yet, sir, when the question of equitably taxing these wealthy corporations became a practical question, every Conservative member in the House lined up against this bill. (Cheers). I, sir, to see men evidence their love by their works. When the practical test came as to whether these wealthy corporations were being sufficiently taxed, when the bill was brought down to lay upon