

RECORD OF LIBERAL ADMINISTRATION

How the Joly Ministry Governed the Province.—The
Financial Question.—Liberal Scandals.—The
Joly Policy.—The Railway Question.
The Chapleau Policy.

THE FINANCIAL QUESTION.

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The circumstances which led to the formation of the Joly Administration are too fresh in the minds of the people to require any reference to them now, and in dealing with the special feature of its policy which we propose to refer to to-day, we shall not in any way allude to those circumstances. Mr. Joly took office upon the declaration that he would make expenditures and revenue meet without having recourse to any new sources of revenue. That was the promise upon which he appealed to the people, and it was in consequence of that promise, and from a willingness to afford him an opportunity of fulfilling it, that he succeeded in carrying thirty-one out of the sixty-five constituencies, in May of last year. He has been in office for twenty months, certainly a sufficient time to enable him to fulfil his promise if he was able to do so. Has he fulfilled it? That, it seems to us, is an important question at a time when the people are asked to reject the new Ministers because of their success in defeating the Joly Government.

There is a question which may be referred to briefly before we enter upon the financial question, viz: the extent of responsibility which attaches to each party for the position in which the Province finds itself. We are wont to hear about the embarrassments which have been brought upon the Province in consequence of the policy of the former Conservative Government. It is a sufficient answer to this charge to point out that with the single exception of the objection to assuming the North Shore railways, the policy of previous administrations was

all sanctioned by the Liberal party in opposition, under the lead of Mr. Joly. No single grant by way of subsidy to any railway met with opposition. Indeed, so far from opposition being offered, the Rouges sought to embarrass the Government by complaining that they were not sufficiently liberal in their dealing with the subsidized lines. The policy of aiding railways was not a party policy, but a patriotic one, which not only received its strongest support from Mr. Joly and his friends, but which, if their motions in the Legislature had not been defeated, would have been greatly extended. In so far, therefore, as the present financial embarrassment arises from the grants by way of subsidy to railway companies, including the grants to the North Shore Railway Companies, the Liberals are as responsible for it as their opponents.

Only upon the policy of assuming the North Shore Railways, and completing them as Government works, on the failure of the companies, was issue joined by the two parties, and the Liberals may claim that financial embarrassment would have been avoided had the Government refused to take over the roads. That is true, but it is also true that in that case the Province would not have had the great advantage of these railways, the advances already made by the Government and the municipalities would have been absolutely lost, and we should have had simply the ruins of a half-finished railway to show for the expenditure. The Conservatives may fairly, therefore, claim that their policy was in the interests of the country. If there was any doubt upon this point, however, Mr. Joly himself has removed it. The roads were still unfinished when he