

THE HERALD

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 1898.

PREMIER WARBURTON delivered his budget speech last night. It can not be said that it was a brilliant oratorical effort; it had one good quality, however, it was not too long. It is not very surprising that Mr. Warburton should not care to dwell at any great length on our deplorable financial condition. We have not space this week to make any lengthened remarks upon the financial statement. The estimates of expenditure previously tabled amount to \$279,884. This is \$21,867.89 less than the expenditure of last year; but it is upwards of \$7,000 more than the actual revenue of last year. The Premier's estimates of receipts fall short of the estimated expenditure by about \$15,000. That is to say he admits at the start a deficit on the year's transactions of \$15,000. Among the reductions in the estimated expenditure and outlined in the budget speech, is the amount of \$6,000 for exhibitions. There are to be no exhibitions this year. We feel sure our agriculturists will be sorry for this. There is also to be spent on roads upwards of \$8,000 less than last year. Next week we shall go into these matters more fully.

NOTHING very definite regarding the progress of the war has come to hand since our last issue. The authorities at Washington have received advice from Commodore Dewey confirming the news of his victory at Manila. Considerable rioting and insubordination to authority is reported from Spain. The loss of the battle at Manila seems to have caused some of the people to lose their heads. Advantage is taken of this by insurance companies to make trouble. The United States authorities are massing troops and sending them forward towards Cuba. For several days past, it was expected the Spanish fleet would show up in the vicinity of Porto Rico, and the big battle between them and the United States ships would take place. As a matter of fact reports were current on Monday that a battle had luckily been fought in mid ocean on Sunday; but this rumor has never been confirmed. It is now said the Spanish ships, lately in the vicinity of the Cape Verde Islands, have returned to Cadix, Spain. In consequence of this, it is said the United States ships will, at once, commence the bombardment of Havana and Porto Rico. Some skirmishing between batteries at Havana and United States cutters has taken place during the week; but nothing serious has resulted. Some insignificant captures on either side are said to have been made. This, in brief, is about all that can be said with any degree of certainty.

PRESIDENT to notice given by his worship, Mayor Warburton, at the request of a majority of the City Council, a public meeting of the citizens of Charlottetown was held in the Market Hall, on Saturday evening last. The meeting was called for the purpose of taking into consideration certain amendments made to the Sewerage bill, elsewhere referred to in this issue. The framers of the bill considered it a usurpation of the privileges of the citizens, for the Legislature to amend the bill as to take from the tax-payers of the city the right to elect commissioners of sewers and water supply, and instead to legislate the present water commissioners into office for the purposes named, with a salary four times as large as they are now receiving. On the other hand the advocates of the bill held that the City Council, in framing this bill, had no right to legislate the present water commissioners out of office. Here were the two extremes of the case, and the meeting was called with a view of ascertaining which horn of the dilemma a majority of the citizens assembled would choose. The meeting was addressed by several of the City Councilors and other citizens, as well as by Hon. D. Laird, chairman of the water commissioners. It seemed quite plain from the views expressed that the action of the Legislature was not free from party politics, as an actuating motive. When the vote on the amendment was taken in the Legislature all the Government members and supporters, except the Premier, supported the amendment complained of by the framers of the bill. A complaint was made at the meeting, by those who backed up the action of the Legislature, that the Council should have submitted the bill to a public meeting of taxpayers before sending it to the Assembly. It was also said that the deadlock could have been avoided by the bill being so framed that a salary of \$500 would be assigned to the commissioners of sewers, leaving the present salary of \$300 to the water commissioners. This it was shown would leave intact the privileges of the water commissioners and would not increase the amount of salary provided in the bill for commissioners of sewers and water supply. To meet this demand an amendment was introduced embodying these particulars and stating

that the water commissioners would be eligible for election as sewer commissioners. This seemed a reasonable way out of the difficulty; but it did not carry. Finally the vote in favor of the bill as amended by the Legislature was declared carried. It certainly seems, on the face of it, an arbitrary proceeding to deprive the tax-payers of the right of electing commissioners to expend the large amount of money they will have to raise for the construction of sewers.

Seasonal Notes.

It must certainly be admitted that, in the art of killing time, the present Provincial Government and their supporters in the House are past-masters. It was five weeks yesterday since the present Legislative session opened; a sufficient length of time, in all conscience one would surely suppose, to do all the business that pertains to our Provincial rulers. It would be unreasonable in view of the deplorable condition of our finances, if on no other account, to expect the Government on the score of economy to push the seasonal business through as quickly as possible. Then again, it is a serious inconvenience and loss of time to the greater number of the representatives. This is the season of the year that demands their personal attention to their ordinary avocations. But such reasons count for nothing with the Government. They fritter away the day with perfect indifference to public expense, inconvenience and waste of time. It is said that the business of the session has been kept hanging for the convenience of Mr. Warburton, who desires to take his seat in the Assembly before the end of the session, but who found it inopportune to leave British Columbia till a few days ago.

On Monday and Tuesday of last week, the House sat less than two hours each day, and nothing of importance was introduced by the Government. The Opposition, however, made an effort to obtain certain information which they had already requested and had been refused by the Government. On Monday Hon. Mr. Gordon moved, seconded by Mr. Shaw, that an humble address be presented to His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, asking for all papers in connection with the new Prince of Wales College, and the new addition to the Hospital for the Insane, and also in connection with expenditures at the February term of the Supreme Court at Georgetown, and the Trinity Term of the Supreme Court at Charlottetown, as well as expenditures charged to the accounts in the three counties, as shown in the public accounts, and expenditures on Souris Beach, to which we referred last week. Mr. Shaw pointed out that, in consequence of the Government's refusal to bring down these returns repeatedly asked for, the Opposition were forced to this course. But the Government were determined that the information would not be furnished, and they argued that the resolution was out of order, because, as they contended, a copy of the resolution had not been laid on the table of the House 24 hours before. The Speaker sustained the Premier's contention and that was the end of the matter. Two or three bills were advanced a stage and the House adjourned.

After routine and the asking of some questions, consideration of a bill incorporating the Farmers' Institute of Cherry Valley, and a bill to shorten and lessen the work in the Court of Chancery, occupied the attention of Tuesday's sitting of the House.

On Wednesday, Mr. Lefurgey asked the Commissioner of Public Works for information regarding expenditure charged to the Charlottetown ferry steamers, and also regarding repairs required on a road leading from Summerside to Charlottetown. Mr. Shaw asked, regarding repairs on a road leading from Upton to Bridgetown, as prayed for in a petition. Mr. Keitham asked whether or not the Government intended to build a bridge across the Basin, West River, this summer, on a line previously surveyed by Government officials. Hon. Mr. McLean, of course, informed the different questions that the Government would take these matters into consideration, and, if possible, would attend to them. The sewerage bill was then further considered in committee. The bill, as drafted by the City Council, provided that on a certain day in June next, the present Water Commissioners would cease to hold office, and an election would be held for a board of three, to be known as Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply. To this the Attorney General moved an amendment to the effect that the present Water Commissioners become the Commissioners of Sewers and Water Supply, and remain in office till February, 1900, when the sewerage is expected to be constructed. After some discussion the amendment was carried. Some other amendments being agreed to, the bill was reported from committee and ordered to be read a third time.

The report of the recent ministerial delegation to Ottawa has been presented to the House some days previously, but the question did not come up for discussion until Thursday evening last. This report sets forth that the delegates urged against the Dominion Government claims amounting to upwards of \$2,000,000, arising from the non-fulfillment of the terms of

union in the matter of continuous steam continuation with the main land, expenditure on railways and canals, in which our Province did not profit, the matter of subsidies to railways not extended to our road, and from other causes. The memorialists expressed their desire to have these various questions submitted to arbitration. The matter came up for discussion, as above intimated, in the form of a resolution, moved by Mr. Sinclair. This resolution expressed satisfaction at the manner in which the delegates presented our claims. Mr. Sinclair spoke at some length in support of his resolution. He was followed by Mr. Bell, Hon. Mr. Gordon, Leader of the Opposition, followed. He reviewed briefly the question of our claims against the Dominion, and referred to the delegations that from time to time had gone to press those claims. Some of these delegations had presented masterly memorials on these matters. Hopes had been entertained of some favorable result from the last delegation, but he thought Sir Wilfrid Laurier's letter to the delegates had destroyed every vestige of hope, and if we are to depend upon Ottawa for the means to wipe out our deficits and debt, it is a vain and useless hope. Following is the letter in question:

PRIME MINISTER,

OTTAWA, MARCH, 1898.
MY DEAR SIR,—The memorial on behalf of Prince Edward Island's claims, which you submitted to the Privy Council, will be carefully considered by me and my colleagues. We are now so pressed with the daily business of the Government that we cannot hold out any hopes of a conclusion being reached by the Government before the present session. The question of submitting your claims to arbitration in one of a very important character and will require the most careful consideration, not only on its merits but in the light of the present financial condition of your Province. At the earliest time public business permits of it, your memorial will receive our best consideration.

Yours very sincerely,
WILFRID LAURIER.
The Hon. A. B. Warburton, Premier, Charlottetown, P. E. I.

The Leader of the Opposition contended that a reasonable interpretation of this letter meant the indefinite shelving of the whole matter. In conclusion he moved an amendment to the resolution under consideration. This amendment, after commencing our claims against the Dominion, expressed disappointment at the reply of the Dominion Premier, after the declaration of the Government in '97, "that our claims were well founded and could not be successfully denied." The amendment also set forth that no settlement of our claims should be effected prejudicial to railway extension in P. E. Island. Mr. Shaw seconded the amendment in a strong speech. He pointed out the change which had come over Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Bell. What the Governmentatives were in power, Mr. Bell ridiculed the failure of the efforts of the Government of those days to obtain our claims, and Mr. Sinclair said we had no claims. Mr. Bell used to say all this, and he is now saying that a reasonable interpretation of this letter meant that we were in power, and Mr. Sinclair thought we had a claim; but notwithstanding all the Grit boasting we appeared to be further from obtaining this claim than ever were. Mr. Warburton, after some remarks, adjourned the debate.

The debate on the delegates' report was continued on Friday by Hon. Mr. Warburton, Mr. Richards, Mr. McKinnon and others. During the evening session, after a short speech, the Attorney General adjourned the debate. After this the mystery in connection with the new "annex" to the Lunatic Asylum was, to a very considerable extent, unravelled by Mr. Shaw. Although the Opposition had been asking for and the Government had been refusing information on this matter, Mr. Shaw was well supplied with information, plans and correspondence, when he tackled the question. He brought the matter up in the form of a resolution of confidence in the Government. For the space of two hours and a half he roasted the Government, and especially the Commissioner of Public Works, whilst he showed up the blundering and incapacity that characterized the proceedings in connection with this contract. The exposure surely exhibits a nice kettle of fish. A contract was entered into between the Government and Mr. Walter Lowe, in August, 1896, for the erection of the building. The plans and specifications were prepared by Mr. C. B. Chappell, architect. These Mr. Lowe was bound to follow, by the terms of the contract. Any changes could not be made without the authority of the Commissioner of Public Works and the architect in writing. Although Mr. Lowe was prepared to go on with the work, he was requested to postpone operations till the following spring. Meanwhile he had placed \$8,000 worth of material on the ground. In April, 1897, the contractor prepared to start the foundation, but a reference to the plan showed him that, in consequence of the ground falling to a greater extent towards the seagirt than the architect had allowed for, that end of the building would be six or seven inches in the air, having nothing to rest on. When he brought this fact to the notice of the architect, the latter made certain offers to the contractor that he could not accept. The attention of the Commissioner of Public Works was called to the matter; the Government engineer was sent out and he pronounced the specification "defective in many respects." After that, at the request of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Lowe made an estimate of the cost of the additional work

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required. The Government declined to accept this offer. Correspondence followed, and the matter was investigated by Mr. Lamay, architect, and Mr. McMillan, Government Engineer. This report condemned the plans and specifications altogether. After this the Government agreed to accept Mr. Lowe's terms for extra work, and told him to go ahead, but did not comply with the terms of the contract by giving him the authorization of the Commissioner of Public Works and architect in writing. Finally, after backing and filling all summer, on the 8th of December last, Mr. Lowe was notified that the Government would take the work out of his hands, go into possession of Asylum premises and materials, and go on with the work. With the exception of covering up the materials, nothing has since been done in the matter. This is but the merest outline of this most scandalous transaction. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Lefurgey.

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DOMINION PARLIAMENT.

In the House of Commons on Monday the 2nd, Hon. Mr. Foster again brought up the subject of the vacancy in Bagot. Premier Laurier wanted Hon. Mr. Foster to say whether he desired this election to be held on the lists of four years' date. Hon. Mr. Foster replied promptly that he thought the election should take place promptly and he thought that the lists that were good enough for West Prince would be good enough for Bagot. Replying again to Hon. Mr. Foster, Premier Laurier said he had received no communication from Mr. Melness of Nanaimo respecting the resignation of his seat. Hon. Mr. Borden brought down an answer to the motion for correspondence between the Canadian commander in chief and the imperial government respecting the defence of Canada. The answer stated that the correspondence is of a confidential character and could not be made public. Mr. Martin of East Quebec moved for a return of correspondence respecting the branch railways in this province. He went over the question of the financial relations from Prince Edward Island to the Dominion, and covered both the government returns and the statements of the Toronto Mail by showing that all railways in Prince Edward Island were constructed at the cost of the province of Ontario. Mr. Martin pointed out that Sir Louis Davies had made a stronger ally promise in his own province, but he did not appear to be doing anything to carry them out. Mr. Martin had not finished his speech when recess changed the order of business. Mr. Richardson brought up again his bill to provide that the salaries of civil servants may be garnished. The bill was supported by Messrs. Fortin, Casey, Sprague and others, and opposed by Messrs. Blair, Quinn, Tisdale and another member. The bill then went through committee, but the second reading was postponed to next sitting. The house then went into committee on Casey's bill for the protection of railway employes. This bill was postponed at a previous sitting to give Mr. Blair an opportunity to look into it. Mr. Blair explained that the minister of justice had not given an opinion in the constitutional aspects of the question. Mr. Blair himself was of the opinion that the bill was within the power of the parliament. Premier Laurier said that the minister of justice had been called home on account of a death in his family, and suggested that the bill be allowed to go through committee. If the minister of justice should report against the measure, action could be taken on the third reading to give effect to his objection. The bill was reported, and the third reading stands for a future day. The house adjourned at eleven o'clock.

On Tuesday the 3rd, Hon. Mr. Fisher moved the second reading of the plebiscite bill. The minister of agriculture recited the various resolutions passed by the house since 1892. He quoted the resolution of the Ottawa convention constituting the platform of the liberal party. The bill before the house was the fulfilment of this pledge. He did not think it was wise to discuss in this debate the question of prohibition. That issue had been transferred to the hustings and would be fought out there. The only question before the house was whether it was wise to appeal to the people for their opinion on this question. Speaking for the government, Hon. Mr. Fisher said that if the bill was carried the day fixed for the vote would be the earliest time possible. Replying to Hon. Mr. Foster, Hon. Mr. Fisher thought the cost of the vote would not be different from that of a general election, or say, between \$300,000 to \$500,000. Mr. Bergeron asked why cider was included in the list of intoxicating liquors. Hon. Mr. Fisher said that old cider was intoxicating, but it was not intended to refer to the fresh juice of the apples. Mr. Bergeron said he was sure this inclusion of the word would increase the vote against prohibition, as many people would vote against the prohibition of cider who were not in favor of the sale of other liquors. Hon. Mr. Foster said that while he appreciated the reason why the minister had declined to discuss the question of prohibition, he thought he ought to have gone so far as to say what action the government proposed to take in case the people vote yes. Before the house incur any expense of a quarter of a million dollars it ought to know whether anything was to come of it. Four provinces had already voted on the prohibition plebiscite, and the result was a preponderance of opinion over in favor of prohibition. The bill passed it should be the government's duty to accept the majority of the country over as a prohibitory law. Issuing the plebiscite to the effect that the vote taken on the terms of the bill of 1892, Mr. Foster said this clause be amended so that the vote to be taken under laws in force at the time the bill carried, the plebiscite would be taken under the question would be the same as the cost. If a majority who poll their vote declared prohibition, he would exert every effort to give effect to the plebiscite. Mr. Sprague did not favor the plebiscite, but he supported the programme since amendment would add no other liberal, would vote on the issue, though he would have the prohibition bill first and then the amendment. He commended the refusal to promise prohibition, though the result of the plebiscite would be the fulfilment of the pledge of the government in the future. The speaker condemned both the policy of prohibition and the policy of the plebiscite proposed that Premier Laurier same way, and was merely people something to play second reading was then motion, the speaker left the bill to go into committee by Mr. Davin proposed vote on the plebiscite be amended to vote in manner which was supported on that that I will give vote. The amendment was lost. Dr. Montague proposed that a man should not vote twice in more than one man one vote motion was rejected. A third amendment to add to the clause requiring to be taken by the plebiscite bill now before the franchise bill now before the words "Provided that

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