

Is it possible to prove more clearly than I have done that the present Government has not fulfilled the promises so often and solemnly made by those who form part of it when they were in Opposition?

Let the hon. Treasurer permit me to say that he has been unjust towards his opponents when he claimed for his colleagues and himself all the merit of the augmentation in the resources of the province. The development of the revenue in the current year and in those to come is almost entirely the work of the Conservative Governments which have administered public affairs since 1879. It is very strange to hear you cite, for example, the commercial corporations tax as a proof of what you have done to increase the revenue, when every one knew with what energy you combated that measure. And is not your pretended surplus in the present year composed almost entirely of the arrearages collected on account of those taxes which had accumulated while your predecessors were courageously striving to obtain from the tribunals recognition of the constitutional right of the Legislature to levy those taxes.

If you wish to be treated with justice (and, be assured, we shall not withhold it from you) you ought to begin by showing justice to your adversaries, whom you have too long been combating with the weapons of a party spirit the most deplorable and most hurtful to the public interests.

You boast of having placed the finances of the province on a solid foundation. But that task was fully accomplished before your accession to power. You got into office just in time to profit by the patriotic labors of those whom you have so unjustly accused.

Your predecessors had an ordinary budget of three million dollars in round numbers. You pretend that it was an alarming situation. You arrive at power and in two years your ordinary expenses have risen to three millions and a half, while your revenue, by your estimate, is only \$3,345,672. Yet you cry out that you have saved the province from the ruin that threatened it. Is there any possible way of accounting for so strange a pretension?

CONCLUSION.

If I have deemed it my duty to show up the numerous contradictions between the conduct of the hon. ministers in power, and the principles which they professed in opposition, it was not, be assured, for the vain pleasure of drawing a party advantage from it. Since they have had the responsibility of office, our opponents have evidently begun to judge the affairs of Government very differently. I will not reproach them with their contradictions, provided they acknowledge they were deceived. Under certain circumstances, it is even honorable to contradict oneself, when the act is inspired by a broad sense of duty to the country. But, that it may have its full merit, it must be accompanied by a ready acknowledgment of the error of opinions formerly held. On our side, also, the roles are changed. We are now Her Majesty's loyal Opposition. To fulfil with good results to the province the duties of our position, we must understand that, far from being an obstacle to the vigorous administration of public affairs, a parliamentary opposition ought rather to be a source of energy by which the ruling powers are impelled to fresh ardor and higher efforts in the public service. Its criticism, if enlightened, loyal, just and marked by elevation of thought and patriotic feeling, should convey to the Government the impulse of its own sincerity and earnestness. On their side, let our adversaries cease to cast upon their predecessors the responsibility for their own acts. Neither the party in power nor the Opposition can live by recrimination. It is well to review the past when we can draw from it useful information or timely suggestions. But we should not forget that our duty as the people's representatives is to labor in such a way as to make the future as prosperous, brilliant, and as happy as it can be made. To that patriotic task let the Opposition apply themselves with unceasing energy and praiseworthy ambition and then it will have done its share of the work which it is the mission of this Legislature to accomplish.