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THE BUDGET

Mr. Kent's Criticism.

(Continued from 5th page.)

is complaining. The man whose salary or income was a certain amount on this day week, to-day is not worth as much as it was then, because of these duties. The laborer who earns two or three or four hundred dollars a year cannot buy as much for that two or three or four hundred dollars to-day as he could last week. His clothes, his household utensils, his tools, his tobacco, etc., have gone up in price. The business men have got to work out how every one of these changes affect their business. And then you take to yourselves the power to change this. These people may have arranged their businesses, and after three months, or six months, or twelve months they may find that a change is made, and after another few months another few months another change may be made. It looks, Mr. Chairman, as if this tariff were simply made up on the spur of the moment, without any consideration having been given to the matter, and without its effect upon conditions here having been thought out. The Minister's own statements, and his own system of working out figures which he has adopted the last two years in working out his surpluses and his revenue and expenditure, if applied to the working out of this Budget, will show a surplus of half a million dollars taken out of the pockets of the people which is not needed for any current expenditure. I, for one, Mr. Chairman, do not intend to vote for this tariff. I intend to protest as strongly and as long as I can against the tariff, and to put myself on record against this method of dealing with it.

I would like to refer briefly, to our public debt. We have had already in this session two loan bills. One of them was for \$2,000,000 in order to carry on the work of building the Branch Railway. The circumstances relating to that loan have already been discussed in this House, and I do not intend to deal with it again, but we were assured, as I pointed out the other day, that these railways

would be built for \$4,000,000. We have to date authorized the raising of \$8,000,000, and I pointed out when this loan bill was in committee, that even this sum would not be sufficient to cover our obligations under this contract. Then we have had another loan bill for \$360,000, not to carry on works which the Government intend to undertake, but in order to indemnify the Government for work which they have already accomplished—work which they knew, when the House was in session last year, would be undertaken and which they had not the courage to come in here and tell the people before the election, would mean the borrowing of \$300,000. What did they do? They anticipated last year a surplus of \$150,000. As a matter of fact when the accounts are closed, they found that they only had \$115,000, but they subsequently found that they had drawn in anticipation of this surplus, more than the amount of the surplus would warrant. Then, the purposes for which the Legislature had appropriated that surplus had to be paid for by money obtained from the Bank, and this loan bill had to be introduced in order to replace them, and to remove the expenditures which were made from the surplus and bring them in to the loan account. This, Mr. Chairman, is another example of the manner in which the finances of this colony have been managed under the present administration. When the present administration came into power the public debt of the Colony was \$22,000,000. To-day it is nearly \$32,000,000, an increase of nearly ten

million dollars during the last five years, and that in face of the fact that the revenues of the colony have exceeded during the same period the estimated expenditure by over a million and a half. It is time that this manner of dealing with our finances should stop. The revenue of \$2,900,000 which the Minister referred to the other day, should be enough to cover the expenditure. We are not a thickly populated or wealthy people. The whole population of Newfoundland, if they were put together in one town would not be equal to even a middle-sized town in the Old Country. Our people are scattered all over our coastline. If they were in one town, where they would be able to see what goes on day after day, then we would not have the condition that prevails here to-day, because public opinion

would be brought to bear on the Government which would prevent such things as this.

There are only about two hundred and forty thousand people in the country, according to the last Census, and some of them, with very few exceptions would be considered wealthy. In fact the number of wealthy men could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Still during the past four or five years our public debt has been increased to the extent of ten millions of dollars and our revenue by \$1,125,000. Our annual revenue, therefore, will increase up to \$1,500,000 from the time this present Government came into power up to the end of the next year or fifty per cent greater than it was the first year the Government assumed office. What have they got to show for all this. The construction of lighthouses, fog alarms, telegraphs and public buildings have not been paid for out of the receipt for current accounts, but by money that was borrowed on capital account entailing an annual charge for interest. Even money was borrowed from the Bank to pay the interest on our public debt.

We are told of the votes for Old Age Pensions and of the increased cost of maintenance of the telegraph system and of the increased vote for education, but what do they, and all the other public works which I have mentioned, amount to compared with the revenues received by the Government since they assumed office? They might have been met fully and further extended and still leave large surplus

of revenue over expenditure for reduction of taxation or expenditure on capital account instead of the extensive and expensive borrowings undertaken by the Government. The Minister places in his Budget a comparative statement in relation to the civil service in order to rebut a statement that the expenditures had taken place under the heading of salaries. Any one who has followed the accounts furnished and the Auditor General's Report cannot fail to have observed that all the salaries and increases are not covered by the estimates, and year after year you cover salaries in your contingencies of every department that have not been put into the regular estimates. The Governor-in-Council, on Executive responsibility, year after year added to the expenses on salaries. During election year, between July and December, nearly fifty thousand dollars, according to the Auditor General's Report, were spent on salaries without authority from this Legislature and were not taken into account by the Minister of Finance in his estimates. This method of increasing salaries on Executive responsibility should cease and no salary of any public official should, unless in exceptional cases, be added to except with the consent of this Legislature.

There is another statement in the Budget Speech to which I should like to refer, although the matter has already been debated by this House. This statement is in relation to the Railway Contract of 1909. The Minister deals with this Contract and labors to show the advantages of this Contract over previous Contracts, and particularly as to the Contract of 1893 for the construction of the railway across the country. He speaks of the increased cost of rails, materials, locomotives, rolling stock and equipment of all kinds, and he speaks of the difference in facilities for handling materials owing to the nature of the

country. Now, there is one clause in the Contract which entirely disposes of the argument of the Minister and that is in relation to rolling stock and extras; and this clause affords an open door through which all these increases may escape to the relief of the Contractor and come to bear directly on the people of this country. The cost of equipment and rolling stock is only barely provided for, and provided for on a money basis in the 1909 Contract.

The Contract of 1893 for the construction of the cross country line specifically provided for a certain amount of rolling stock and specifically mentioned the number of freight and passenger cars required for equipping the cross country line. These items were included under that Contract in the payment of \$15,500 per mile and when they were supplied the line was fully equipped as required by that Contract. The 1909 Contract says the obligation of the contractor will not be fulfilled until each branch line is thoroughly and efficiently equipped. There is no definition of what thoroughly equipped means. The contractor may add rolling stock and equipment with the permission of the Government until each line reaches that undefined condition of being thoroughly equipped. The equipment so furnished is not included in the \$15,000 a mile but for the purposes of payment is reduced to a cash value, at the same time a value is made of the rolling stock supplied under the 1893 Contract which is subtracted from the value of the rolling stock, etc., applied under the 1909

Contract and the difference is to be paid as an extra to the contractor. By this arrangement all the force of the argument of the Minister of Finance based on the increased cost of material so far as it effects the contractor falls. It is really an extra charge on the people of the Colony. Take the nature of the country through which the railroad was built under the 1893 Contract and compare it with the country through which the branch lines were constructed. It was much more difficult and costly to bring the material and supplies into the interior of the country for the purpose of building the cross country line than in the case of the branch lines. These lines are built along the coast line and carriage by water could be availed of for transporting materials.

Then, again, under the 1893 Contract we had to pay in Bonds for the construction of the road, whereas under the present Contracts we have to pay in gold. The Finance Minister must negotiate our Bonds in London and take the risks of the market. Formerly we gave Bonds to the Contractor and he was paid, he negotiated them and took the risks of the market, but now the Colony has to go into the market and get the gold at once. For the work must go on, the money must be found in gold and the Colony cannot wait for a favourable market but must take it as its finds it at the time the money is needed to meet the payments earned by the Contractor.

With reference to the last loan for \$2,000,000 the Prime Minister must go to the London money market in the spring and procure the money—no matter what is the condition of the market if the railroad work is to proceed next summer. If the market conditions are any indication of what he will receive for his Bonds in London at the present time he will find that the country will have to pay

pretty dearly for the gold required. Towards the end of last year the money market was very hard against borrowings of this kind. There was a slight reaction during last month, but conditions at the present time are still uncertain and even at the best

conditions three and a half per cent. bonds do not offer sufficient inducements to investors, others Colonies are offering more. The Dominion of Canada has increased her bonds to four per cent, and so has Australia and South Africa, and even at that a large proportion of those loans are on the hands of the Underwriters. It is very difficult to anticipate the effect on the market of a new issue of 3½ per cent. Newfoundland Bonds. It is difficult to understand why the Government has not adopted the example of the other Colonies and authorized 4 per cent. bonds. Last year our 3½ per cent. stock fell considerably. Take your 1912 loan. It was quoted in December, 1912, from 92-94, whilst in December, 1913, it was only 87-89. At 89 after making allowances for commissions and other amounts chargeable to the loan, we would, in all probability net 85 or 86; or in other words the loan would cost 15 per cent. Even if the Prime Minister realizes the same percentage as the last loan we are going to drop, by reason of paying the railway contractor in gold instead of in bonds, six hundred or six hundred and fifty thousand dollars on the three loans, one of four million dollars and the other two at two million dollars each. Looking at the conditions and the revelations during the present session and particularly the contents of the Budget which the Minister of Finance read the other day, is it any wonder that our efforts during the early part of the session asking the Government to open up two districts by filling the offices of the Ministers of

Justice and Agriculture were unavailable and not accepted? Is it any wonder that the Government is afraid to open any constituency in the country to go before the people with such a statement as the Budget discloses? Last year the Government removed duties which the Colony could not afford to do without and now at the first opportunity they not only restore an equivalent amount but impose an additional amount of \$300,000.

What now becomes of the statement in the Premier's Manifesto that all the work done had been accomplished without increased taxation, and that these works would be continued without increased taxation? Now, at the very first session after the people had given him a renewal of confidence he not only put back the old duties as far as amount is concerned, but imposed an additional burden of three hundred thousand dollars on the people of the country. He takes off \$350,000 on the eve of an election and as soon as it is over he replaces it and adds another three hundred thousand. Is it any wonder, then, that when we asked for the appointment of a Minister of Justice and a Minister of Agriculture and Mines the Government voted down the Resolutions we introduced? The matter, according to the Prime Minister, was not worthy of serious comment. These two important Departments are without official heads to represent them here in the Legislature. Their duties in the House have had to be undertaken by those who receive instructions on the spur of the moment from clerks in these offices and who cannot possibly be aware of what is occurring in these Departments. However, I think the Government cannot possibly avoid the necessity of filling these offices. I do not think the Governor should allow this House to close without these offices being filled. It is due to the House and to the country that they

should be filled. Of course the real reason why the Government has not done it is revealed in the Budget. Truly, Mr. Chairman, it may be said of the present Government that "the foolishness of our rulers hath destroyed the bounty which Providence has bestowed on the country." We never had a better illustration of the manner in which a Government can interfere with the flowing tide of industrial prosperity in a country. When the Government came into power efforts were being made to build up the material resources of the country, but since then no advances have been made beyond the building these branch railways, and the expenditures on them came out of the people's own pockets. If these railway expenditures had gone on the other side with the establishment of industries and the development of the resources of the Colony there might have been some justification for them. Railways are a right, but you must have development to render them useful, but all the energies of the Government appeared to be directed towards railway construction only. Last year in Canada some of its greatest thinkers advised going slow in the matter of railway construction and were of opinion that more attention should be given to the development of the material resources of the country. It is the same here and we must give more attention to the development of our resources based upon the increased earnings of our people, and if possible avoid going into debt year by year as we have been doing during the past

four or five years.

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY LIGHTING

Gas, it may be said, vitiates the atmosphere. True. But it also helps to purify it. Its purifying power is greater than its vitiating power. Electricity does not vitalize, nor does it purify. Hear what three eminent men have said:

Much evidence has lately been adduced to show that gas is more useful than the electric light in promoting efficient ventilation of air. It is for this amongst other reasons that gas is being frequently substituted for the electric light. The latest example is perhaps the Society of Medical Officers of Health, which has recently installed gas on its premises, after experience with the electric light.—Dr. Jamieson B. Hurry.

He would merely add that no member who had experience of their meeting room under the old conditions could deny the improvement that had taken place since gas had been substituted for the electric light and the new system of heating and ventilation had been installed.—Dr. Reginald Duffield, before the Society of Medical Officers of Health.

I have in my mind's eye, at the moment, a hall which, in the old days was lighted by gas, and in which a large audience could, with comfort, sit through an hour's lecture, or with pleasure through a three hours' dinner, but which, with the march of civilization, had its illuminating latter being applied with all the latest refinements to effect the lighting under the best conditions, with the result that any large gathering within its walls leads to a state little short of asphyxiation.—Vivian B. Lewis, Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.—Nov. 11

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