

The Standard

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SAINT JOHN, TUESDAY MORNING, MARCH 14, 1911.

A MENDACIOUS PREMIER.

Never has a Canadian premier been placed in a more unenviable position than was Sir Wilfrid Laurier by his admirer and whilom supporter, Mr. Lloyd Harris on Wednesday night last. Mr. Harris, a summary of whose speech appears elsewhere in this issue, was giving his reasons for breaking with his party on the Reciprocity question. He spoke of the admiration he had always had for his leader, his loyalty to him, and his implicit trust in his truthfulness. What Sir Wilfrid told him he believed, what Sir Wilfrid pledged himself to do he took as a sacred obligation, relied upon it, and in turn pledged his word to his constituents. When therefore Sir Wilfrid declared in the West that before the Reciprocity bill was passed there would be an investigation by a tariff commission and an opportunity given all interests to be heard, Mr. Harris believed it, and quoted the Premier's statement to his friends and his constituents who were disturbed by rumors of changes to be made.

Later rumors became more insistent when Parliament met and the information was current that negotiations with the United States were contemplated, and were even begun. Again Mr. Harris was appealed to by his friends, and was assured by Sir Wilfrid that no changes would be made before investigation. To make assurance doubly sure, Sir Wilfrid in November repeated and confirmed his statements in the House of Commons.

Let Mr. Harris continue the narrative in his own words:—

"The third reason which I have for opposing it, is 'the one to which I attach the most importance. No doubt all of the hon. members of this House have had the same experience that I have had while these negotiations were in progress. I had letters and interviews, and when I went to Western Ontario, I met a great many people who expressed their anxiety that 'something might not happen which would affect them' or 'their interests adversely. To one and all of such requests for information, I said:—You need have no fear whatever, because there will be no revision of 'alteration of the tariff of this country without a thorough investigation. I want to state my reasons for having given that answer, and if I make a longer quotation from 'Hansard' than I would like to do, I hope the House will bear with me. The right hon. the Prime Minister, on the second day of this session, speaking in 'the Debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, referring to his visit of last summer to the West, made this statement:—

"I stated to the people of the Northwest during 'my recent trip that it would be our duty to consider 'their requests and to deal with them in the spirit in 'in which we have always dealt with requests from the 'people. And I repeat that now. I stated, and my 'hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) quoted my words, that 'we would have a commission of investigation before 'we undertook a revision of the tariff. . . . The 'statement made by myself and quoted by the hon. 'gentleman that we would have an investigation by 'commission before we altered the tariff called forth a 'special cheer from hon. members opposite. Does any 'hon. member on the other side take issue with the 'promise I made? Would any of them advocate rushing into a revision of the tariff without previous 'investigation? "

"That I consider a statesmanlike utterance. I was 'perfectly satisfied with it. I took it as a distinct and 'definite promise, and I made other promises on the 'strength of it. "

To this exposure and indictment Sir Wilfrid listened and had no word of excuse or denial, of apology or justification. He was caught in a vulgar lie, by his own supporter, and with a shamed face he sought refuge in silence.

For a man who prized his honor, who was sensitive to his pledged word, who appreciated the obligations of a public man to be truthful where public interests were involved, who had any proper sense of the shock to personal and public confidence involved in the mendacity of a party leader, the situation would have been unbearable. He would have justified his repudiation of a solemn promise by pleading unforeseen circumstances, or national exigencies or by frank apology. Sir Wilfrid Laurier did neither one nor the other, and thereby sealed his own condemnation. Henceforth Sir Wilfrid's pledged word is worth exactly that of any other common prevaricator.

THE TELEGRAPH'S MISREPRESENTATIONS.

When the Telegraph attempts to deal with the financial position of the Province, it is sure to make itself and its party ridiculous. Its attempt to prove that the surplus announced by the Hazen Government on its transactions for the past year was fictitious, was so transparently stupid and untruthful as to raise a smile on all who read it who were familiar with the real conditions of affairs in the Province.

It is the custom of the Government to lay before the House early in the session a statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Province from the close of the fiscal year to the opening of the Legislature. This statement is required by law and is a most useful and instructive document. It is not difficult to understand, and its similar statements are made every year and published in the journals of the House, it is easy to make comparisons one year with another. Notwithstanding that this statement has been annually laid before the House for years as required by law the Telegraph seeks to give the impression that it was smuggled in by the Provincial Secretary this year as something that he wished to keep from the public.

This is how the Telegraph describes the manner of its presentation:—"During the short session the provincial secretary quietly gave the house a document that 'contained information enough to startle those who 'understood its contents. It was a statement of receipts and expenditures since October 20, the close of the fiscal year.

"During that time, or only one-third of the year, 'the total expenditure was nearly a million dollars—'the exact figures \$964,152.12. Of this amount \$223,413 'was charged to the department of public works, of 'which \$125,193 is for ordinary expenditures.

This statement of the Telegraph of the affairs of

the Province would be starting if it were true, but unfortunately it is not even partly true. There has been no such expenditure as \$964,152.12 and the Telegraph knows that the figures are the result of book-keeping. The actual expenditure for ordinary purposes was \$462,546.62 and represents about one-third of the total expenditure for the year. The principal items are education, \$106,519.36, interest \$113,416.25, public works \$125,193.48. As the Telegraph ought to know, if it does not, the semi-annual drafts of the school teachers are paid immediately after the close of the school term. The interest on several issues of bonds is payable in January and July and this accounts for the large payments on this account. The payments for public works result from the completion of many important works after the close of the books for the year. The payments are not for work done on the roads in the fall of the year, as the Telegraph suggests. The Highway Act makes it incumbent to close up the highway accounts at the end of August.

For the information of the Telegraph and in order that it may not fall into the same error again without being guilty of malicious slander, the following statement of public works expenditures between the end of the fiscal year and the opening of the Legislature for the past six years are given:—

1906	.....	\$196,669.01
1907	.....	153,918.56
1908	.....	188,084.49
1909	.....	113,938.40
1910	.....	127,347.65
1911	.....	132,193.48

The first three years belong to the old Government and show average payments on account of public works between the close of the fiscal year and the opening of the House of \$176,224. The last three years are those of the Hazen administration and show average payments during the same period of \$124,493.14. On this item alone the payments of the Hazen Government have averaged \$1,730.86 less than their predecessors. To put it briefly the Hazen Government has made every effort to clean up the accounts of the year before closing their books while the old Government did exactly the opposite. It was announced by Mr. Robinson in the House that the public works appropriation for the year he was premier was exhausted in May—before the real work of the year commenced—and for the rest of the season the work was carried on with money borrowed from the bank.

So much for the public works expenditures. A similar comparison of the total of ordinary expenditures for the last eight years gives the following results:—

1904—March 2	.....	\$301,637.58
1905—March 9	.....	306,029.38
1906—Feb. 7	.....	300,000.00
1907—Feb. 13	.....	329,206.83
1908—April 30	.....	380,204.00
1909—March 17	.....	415,029.88
1910—Feb. 11	.....	441,609.34
1911—March 1	.....	462,546.62

The dates given are those of the opening of the Legislature. During the years 1904 to 1907 the old Government had recourse to a variety of suspense accounts to keep their actual expenditures from figuring in the returns given to the public. In 1908 the old Government went out of office and for the first time in a quarter of a century the actual financial position of the Province was ascertained. The expenditures in 1907 were given as \$329,000, about the same as had been laid before the Legislature for years previous. In 1908 it was shown by an independent audit of the books of the various departments there had been an actual expenditure of \$380,000, a quarter of a million more than the Government had submitted to the House the previous year.

In comparing the expenditures of the Hazen Government it must be borne in mind that since Mr. Hazen's advent to power the revenues of the province have been increased over a quarter of a million dollars annually, and that the various services of the Province have been more adequately provided for than under the old regime. Furthermore suspense accounts are no longer resorted to and there is no charge of concealment of expenditures as formerly existed. Had these suspense accounts of the old Government been eliminated it is doubtful if there would have been any material difference in the expenditures, between the close of the fiscal year and the opening of the House, of the old Government and the Hazen administration notwithstanding the difference in revenue.

As to the wild and untruthful statement of the Telegraph that the total expenditures were nearly a million dollars, what are the facts? It has been shown that the total ordinary expenditures were \$462,546. As for the remainder the Government called in a loan of \$268,314 and redeemed outstanding bonds bearing 5 per cent. interest and amounting to \$75,000, paid \$56,200 as a subsidy to the International Railway and \$29,219.48 for the erection of permanent bridges. Legislation for both of these expenditures was secured by the old Government and the expenditure cannot be charged against the Hazen administration, although made by them. If the Telegraph hopes to make good its charge of extravagance against the Hazen Government it will be compelled to seek elsewhere than in the public accounts.

THE TELEGRAPH'S CAUSTIC COMMENT.

The ignorance of the Telegraph coupled with an insane desire to injure the Hazen Government, led to a reproduction in its editorial column yesterday of the absurd and untruthful statement made by its Frederick correspondent regarding the surplus shown by the Government in the Public Accounts which was exposed by The Standard yesterday.

"Why," asks the Telegraph, "are these items not included in the statement for last year?" Had the Telegraph even an elementary knowledge of the Public Accounts, or desired to be truthful and honest in its dealings with provincial finances, it could very readily have ascertained that each and every one of the items which it falsely asserts were held back in order that the Government might show a surplus were duly charged up in the proper accounts.

This being the fact there is not much sting in the closing paragraph of the article which says, "Evidence of the incompetence and extravagance of the administration steadily accumulates, and the sooner this Government is retired the better it will be for the finance and the general interests of the province." It will require a more convincing argument than a statement of the Telegraph, which has been proven false, to cause the electors of New Brunswick to swerve from their allegiance to the Hazen Government which has given the Province the first honest administration they have had in years.

The Times last evening quotes a portion of a paragraph from The Standard of yesterday referring to the Auditor General. As usual the Times omits the important part of the paragraph where it says, "There is nothing in any of these communications that will justify the lying statements of the Telegraph and Times." The Standard has no quarrel with the Auditor General, nor any particular fault to find with him, and merely pointed out that in one letter to the Treasury Board he used language which conveys a different meaning from what he intended, and has been used by the Telegraph and Times to misrepresent the Government and give the impression that there had been an attempt to evade the provisions of the Audit Act when, in point of fact, the course pursued was in entire accord with that act.

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MANY PUBLIC FRANCHISES SCATTERED

Continued from page 3.

Labor Legislation. The ex-Surveyor General speaking in St. John on December 10th last told the people that Dr. Pugsley was the friend of the working man, and was responsible for the labor legislation that had been passed in this province. The Workmen's Compensation Act was before the House in 1903 and Dr. Pugsley then refused to pass the bill in the form favored by the Labor Council and labor unions of the city of St. John, as well as of Moncton. None of the members for Westmorland did anything to have the bill put through in the way suggested by those bodies. But the Hon. Mr. Hazen urged that the bill be not passed when it was against the wishes of the St. John trade unions and Labor Council. Where was the member for Victoria County whose voice was always to be heard about water power matters?

In 1906 there had been a division of the Westmorland members in the House against one another. Mr. Copp then said that he knew the stumpage was not all collected and Mr. Sweeney said that he would defy anyone to show that the stumpage was not all collected. When Mr. Sweeney was elected and first came to the House he boldly stated that assistance should be granted to the smaller industries, but he was a member of the House a short time later and said nothing when the bill was passed granting exemption to the Flewelling Company at Hampton when the municipal council had not asked for it.

The Hon. gentlemen comprising the opposition had done nothing towards promoting labor legislation in the House. In 1907 Dr. Pugsley received a petition from the Labor Council and unions of the city of St. John and Moncton complaining that the miner, the pondman and the quarryman were excluded from the advantages of the Compensation Act, and asking that they be included as was done in the British laws. Dr. Pugsley then said it would be an injustice. But how could it be an injustice for New Brunswick? Neither one of the four gentlemen for Westmorland was not one word to aid labor in its contention. Yet today they claim to be "the friends of the people." "Coddlin's your friend or not short," is their slogan.

Forest Reserves.

He believed the time was coming when the province would have to take some action to have a forest preserve set aside. He noticed there were two large blocks of timber land amounting to 177,720 acres and he said that in the near future. He was told that these blocks were pretty well cut over, and he thought it might be well if the survey general was to disallow the transfer of the lease as was done in 1892. Last year only 5,000,000 feet was cut off the property and the revenue to the province from this land was only about \$8,000. If it was possible this land ought to be conserved by keeping it closed for a period of years.

Mr. Hatheway said that the question of the export of pulpwood cut on Crown lands of the province was a matter worthy of consideration, and he quoted the remarks of public men both in the United States and this province, including a number of members of the legislature in favor of taking such action.

In conclusion he trusted that when the closing of the Grand Falls water power lease in 1911 was taken up that the government would do as that good man, Hon. Adam Beck, had done, and that the people of the Province of New Brunswick would have one half of the waterpower reserved for themselves. If the administration was not so tied up by the old government there should be retained 20,000 horse-power of the waterpower for the use of railways and other purposes in the future. Other franchises such as that of the Ollite Company would lapse in a short time and he hoped that the government would see to it that the people of the province had their heritages returned to them if these companies had not carried out the provisions of their franchises. Water powers and mineral and other deposits of the land are the heritage of the people and it is the duty of the government to hold them in the best way it can for the benefit of the people.

CLOSING COTTON LETTER.

By direct private wires to J. C. MacKintosh & Co.

New York, March 12.—The cotton market made a great show of strength today but when closely analyzed it would seem that the May position maintained most of its steady undertone. There was heavy short covering in that month due to nervousness over a possible squeeze and a further premium on July of ten points was established, the difference at the close being 28 points. The room was full of tips that the government would see to it that the people of the province had their heritages returned to them if these companies had not carried out the provisions of their franchises. Water powers and mineral and other deposits of the land are the heritage of the people and it is the duty of the government to hold them in the best way it can for the benefit of the people.

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control and dealings in that month are dangerous to bull and bear alike. There was little business in the new crops. Reports of heavy rains in some portions of the Southwest were followed by despatches stating that a hot sun had quickly dissipated the moisture. It looks as if the bull interests have planned to duplicate their former "coup" in July and August and the statistical position just now is such as to create apprehension that this success will in some measure be repeated.

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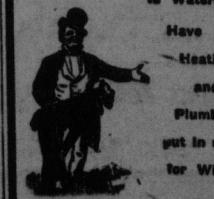
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