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The Budget Speech.

Mr. Mathieson Leader of the Opposition, on Thursday afternoon resumed his speech on the budget. Referring to the refusal of the Government to furnish information due the public, he pointed out how every member on the Government side of the House voted against granting power to the Public accounts, or any other committee, to examine witnesses under oath.

Mr. Mathieson next called attention to the reckless manner in which the peoples money is spent by the Public Works department. There was, for instance, the Vernon River Bridge where over \$2,000 of public money were actually wasted. Everything in connection with the contract was slighted; the work was allowed to be done under the supervision of an inspector who knew nothing about the business for which he was hired.

Resuming the budget debate on Thursday 17th. Mr. Mathieson called attention to the Liberal organs pliability and obsequiousness. It mattered not what tune the Premier played; it mattered not how contradictory his statements, one time with another, the Patriot was fulsome in its approval and its praise.

Premier's speech was one of the greatest ever delivered in this Province. So there it is; no matter how ridiculous and contradictory the utterance of the Leader of the Government, he is sure of fulsome praise from the party organ. Mr Mathieson pointed out that Mr Hazard did not know very much concerning what he was talking about when he asserted that the statement as to our million dollar debt was in the "Red book." No, no, this very awkward and depressing statement about the unfortunate condition of our Provincial finances was to be found in the official blue book.

It is impossible for us, in consequence of the manner in which the Government conduct public business, to ascertain a true statement of our debt and liabilities. If our public accounts committee were called together and allowed to investigate, something could be done. But the books are closed in our faces, and the chairman of the public accounts committee has refused up to now, the sixth week of the session, to call that committee together.

Referring to the wrecking of the Executive under in the late election Mr Mathieson compared Mr. Hazard's position to that of a merchant who had lost a large part of his stock of goods; but still wanted to maintain his credit. In order to do this he keeps up appearances by filling up his shelves with any old thing he can find; empty hat boxes, for instance. The money that should be spent and the work that should be done on the public roads was not spent and the necessary work was not done; but money was spent freely, without authority, for the purpose of buying votes. The Government have, therefore, proclaimed a theoretic policy of making revenue and expenditure meet; but in practice their policy has been to go head-long into debt.

The Premier last year estimated the expenditure at \$378,000; but the actual expenditure was \$420,000. The debentures had nothing to do with this. According to the Premier's theory, the more we borrow the richer we are. All this money spent without a vote of the Legislature, was spent contrary to law. But the Premier says this over expenditure was unavoidable. Can the Government point to one item of this expenditure that was urgent, or unavoidable? Was the grant of \$2,500 to the Quebec battlefields unavoidable? The Premier says the expenditure for this purpose, in other Provinces was made in a similar fashion. That is not true. In Ontario, for instance, there is a treasury board, given discretionary power in such cases, and something of the same kind exists in other Provinces. We have nothing of that kind. The Government had no right to pass the order in council, upon which the Leader of the Government falls back as an excuse for this violation of the constitution. Spending the people's money in this way, without authority from the people, is going back to the order of things existing in the days of the family compact.

Mr. Mathieson pointed out that formerly we had ships to suit our wharves; but now we get the vessels first, and then try to make wharves to suit them. Little or nothing was spent on the roads before the 30th. Sept. This year the Premier figures out a deficit of \$23,000, to begin with. Last year he estimated a deficit of \$7,000; but went behind over \$50,000. What will the deficit be this year? During the election campaign, the Opposition took the ground that the increased subsidy would not prevent a deficit or stave off taxes. These contentions were correct; we had a deficit of over \$50,000, and the taxes must be collected. In addition to all the money spent on the roads, all other expenditure made to secure votes at the last election have been carried forward and will load down the debit side of the financial statement this year. What shall the deficit be? The statements made to the people last fall by the Premier and his friends were false and misleading. The greatest and most genuine loyalty is to tell the truth; and the Government should be more loyal to truth. The Premier, said Mr. Mathieson, boasts that he is prepared to go before the people with his financial policy. He did not dare to do so last fall; he would not tell the people what the financial position of the Province was. Had he done so, where would he be now? The Premier displayed no little temerity in coming out as boldly as he did. He should, instead, be expiating his political crimes in sackcloth and ashes.

Mr Mathieson resumed his speech in answer to the Premier's budget, on Friday afternoon. He strongly emphasized the violation of constitutional usage in spending the public money without authority from the Legislature. Last year, the Hazard Government had spent \$41,000 in this way, and the present Liberal Government had, in the last eighteen years, spent over \$400,000 without any authority from the people. This was a direct violation of the law. In this connection he quoted from the records of the Legislature of New South Wales. The Governor of that colony had called the attention of the colonial office at Westminster to the abuse of Governor's warrants. The Colonial Secretary in reply showed that a public money was improperly spent notwithstanding the Premier said it was a credit to the Government. The result of the elections in summer, showed that the people there thought of Clark and Clark, who had so much to do with the Court House job. The Leader of the Government did not consider it was patriotic to object to the grant for the Quebec battlefields celebration. The Opposition did not require to learn patriotism from the Government. Last session the Premier refused to place this item in the estimates, and then spent it without permission after borrowing the money. It would be better to restrain our manifestations of patriotism, when such tended to impoverish the Province. Referring to the ridiculous statement of Captain Read that the Conservatives should have attended the conference at Quebec in 1887, Mr. Morson, asked why the Liberals who attended the conference of 1902 had not brought with them the \$2,000,000 of which the Captain speaks. This kind of talk was ridiculous and absurd in the highest degree. The contention of the Government about the responsibility of the Conservatives for the Provincial debt was preposterous. Mr Morson showed how the Grish had, in first place, been liable for \$52,000 of debt left as a legacy from the Davies Government. Multiplying and compounding this for the last thirty years, after the methods of calculation adopted by the Liberals, we could easily see what an immense sum it would amount to. The people, said Mr Morson, do not relish paying large taxes and at the same time going behind to the tune of \$50,000 a year. In addition to creating large deficits, year by year, the present Liberal Government collect over \$80,000 taxes a year from the people. Last year the Government collected taxes equal to what the Conservatives collected altogether. The deficits were always larger in election years. How was it, he asked, that the income of the Hospital for the Insane always fell off in election years. Even the poor lunatics were made to do duty for the success of the Liberals in the elections. Last year the Government held out the false, misleading statement that we would have a surplus of \$33,000. This was to be obtained by borrowing \$40,000. They borrowed \$40,000; but still went in debt over \$50,000. The public accounts showed this. That was the answer to the Government false statements.

ment sake, the Government assumed a debt of \$171,000. Do they acknowledge themselves such ninnyes that they have been unable to grope beyond that burden in the course of eighteen years? If that is the measure of their ability, they ought to be ashamed of themselves; they ought to go and hide their diminished heads and give place to better men. He showed how misleading and false was the contention of the Liberals concerning the Conservative Government's operations in relation to financial accounts at Ottawa, by pointing out that our subsidy at the Federal capital was \$24,514 more when the Conservatives went out of power here in 1891, than when they came in twelve years previously.

What, asked the Leader of the Opposition, had Mr Hazard and his friends done in connection with our present claims against the Dominion? Last session a resolution was passed through the Legislature authorizing the appointment of a committee to push these claims. This session the names of the committee were submitted and entries in the public accounts of some \$400 paid to delegates to Ottawa in the last two years, for what service no one can tell. In his budget the Premier referred to two or three petty claims of a few thousand dollars that he intended to bring to the notice of the Federal authorities; a claim for expenditures in the probate court, and for some little rebate in connection with some of the other courts, and so on. What is the sense of confining operations to these trifles? Why not formulate and push our claims for non-fulfillment of terms of union in connection with winter communication; the cost of the P. E. I. Railway and the tunnel? Why are the Government doing nothing along these lines? What is the occult influence restraining the Government in these matters? Then there is our claim to a share of the unorganized lands of the Dominion. These will presently be carved up and distributed among the different Provinces of the Dominion, and we should lose no time in pressing as strongly as possible our claim to a proportionate recompense in this division, as we cannot have any of the land annexed to our Island Provinces. After the distribution is over, it will be altogether too late for us to put in our claim. We have been taxed our proportionate share for these lands, when they were of no value to the Dominion; but now when the time has come to distribute them among the Provinces we are likely to be thrown over board, unless a supreme effort is made by our Government. After the distribution of these lands is completed, it will be useless for us to make application for compensation. We will simply be asked "Why did you not come in time?"

The Leader of the Opposition continuing showed from the evidence furnished by Premier Hazard's financing last year and his budget this session, that our deficit at the end of the present fiscal year, could not be less than \$70,000. What is the advantage to us to have received \$70,000 additional subsidy? We still continue to go in debt, even worse than before. We have been disappointed and have had our hopes dashed to the ground in this matter. The Premier openly announces his intention of going in debt for so-called public works; so that the idea of making revenue and expenditure meet, is now unreservedly thrown to the winds. In face of a resolution moved in the Legislature by a member of the Government, that the formulation and pressing of our claims on the Federal authorities would cost nothing, we are confronted with a bill for \$400. What services were performed for this expenditure no one can tell. A Government that acts in this way and thus disregards the wishes of the people must soon come to an end. (Opposition cheers).

Mr Morson, continuing the debate said the Summerside court house was a job upon which public money was improperly spent notwithstanding the Premier said it was a credit to the Government. The result of the elections in summer, showed that the people there thought of Clark and Clark, who had so much to do with the Court House job. The Leader of the Government did not consider it was patriotic to object to the grant for the Quebec battlefields celebration. The Opposition did not require to learn patriotism from the Government. Last session the Premier refused to place this item in the estimates, and then spent it without permission after borrowing the money. It would be better to restrain our manifestations of patriotism, when such tended to impoverish the Province. Referring to the ridiculous statement of Captain Read that the Conservatives should have attended the conference at Quebec in 1887, Mr. Morson, asked why the Liberals who attended the conference of 1902 had not brought with them the \$2,000,000 of which the Captain speaks. This kind of talk was ridiculous and absurd in the highest degree. The contention of the Government about the responsibility of the Conservatives for the Provincial debt was preposterous. Mr Morson showed how the Grish had, in first place, been liable for \$52,000 of debt left as a legacy from the Davies Government. Multiplying and compounding this for the last thirty years, after the methods of calculation adopted by the Liberals, we could easily see what an immense sum it would amount to. The people, said Mr Morson, do not relish paying large taxes and at the same time going behind to the tune of \$50,000 a year. In addition to creating large deficits, year by year, the present Liberal Government collect over \$80,000 taxes a year from the people. Last year the Government collected taxes equal to what the Conservatives collected altogether. The deficits were always larger in election years. How was it, he asked, that the income of the Hospital for the Insane always fell off in election years. Even the poor lunatics were made to do duty for the success of the Liberals in the elections. Last year the Government held out the false, misleading statement that we would have a surplus of \$33,000. This was to be obtained by borrowing \$40,000. They borrowed \$40,000; but still went in debt over \$50,000. The public accounts showed this. That was the answer to the Government false statements.

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Mr. Arsenault pointed out that the Government, in addition to saddling a debt of \$60,000 on the Province, had collected upwards of \$88,000 in taxes. He was amused at the charge of ancient history thrown across the floor, while every speaker on the Government side went back into the past. The Government, like the individual, should live within its income. Five hundred and fifty dollars were spent in his district on the eve of the election. He would not object if it was spent in the proper way and at the proper time. We should have got twice seventy thousand dollars in additional subsidy. Money was spent for rights of way five years ago and the roads not yet opened. No one objected to the grant to the Battlefields Fund, but the Government should have got authority from the House.

Mr. A. J. McDonald, referring to the speech of Mr. Laird regarding the Liberals, said he himself had been a Liberal of the old school, whose principles were those of the Liberal-Conservative party of today. Mr. Laird, on the other hand, was a Tory in principle, as he approved of the Tory way of spending money without the authority of the Legislature. He said the jumble of figures presented by Captain Read reminded him of what he heard a man say at the Asylum the other day. He thought himself very rich, and had his thousands in the hands of this man and that man. Was it not better to withdraw the \$200,000 than to pay six per cent to the banks? Premier Farquharson had sold out a \$5,000,000 for \$80,000. We have no right to tax the people while we have claims to collect from Ottawa. The Government said "it was inopportune" to press our claims at the present time. Yes, the Government found it inopportune to do anything for the Province, as against the Liberal Government at Ottawa. When the Conservatives were in power the revenues were small; not as they are now. The Conservatives collected only \$82,000 in taxes, while the present Government collect that much every year. Only ignorant people would take any stock in the Government stories about our finances. We should have our share in the lands to be distributed among the Provinces by the Dominion Government. Regarding the debt, when the Liberals came into power, he pointed out that Mr. Fred. Peters said it was all wiped off the slate when the \$80,000 debentures were issued. We have no independent men now. The members on the Government side are like a flock of sheep, falling under the lash of a shepherd. He stood by the minority report of the public accounts committee of last year. \$39,000 interest means at least a million dollars of debt.

A very important matter under discussion on Tuesday, was the question of cheaper school books for our children. The matter was brought up by the introduction of the following resolution by Mr. McKinnon: "Resolved, That this House condemn the Government for their failure and neglect to take effective action to secure a reduction in the cost of school books and school supplies for the pupils attending the public schools."

Before this resolution was seconded, Mr. Cox arose and moved the following amendment: "Resolved, That all the words after 'Henceforth' in the first line be deleted, and the following be substituted in lieu thereof: 'Commends the Government for appointing an able public-spirited commission which is working up the best mode of improving the education of the Province, and especially with a view of procuring cheaper and better school books and school supplies for the pupils attending the schools in the Province.'"

Strong speeches were made on the resolution by Mr. McKinnon, Mr. Mathieson, Mr. Morson and others. It was pointed out in the debate that the Government had failed to do anything to relieve the hardships of the people in this matter, while the Government of Ontario had brought about reductions of 40, 50 and 60 per cent. in the prices of school books. Our Government favored the monopolist publishers of these books. We have no space in this issue to give any lengthy account of this important debate.

An important discussion arose on Friday forenoon, on the following resolution moved by Mr. John McLean: "Resolved, that in the opinion of this House the opening of the season for lobster fishing should be changed from the 20th day of April to the 1st day of May in all parts of this Province where the former date is now the date of opening, and that the Dominion Government be respectfully requested to make such change. Mr. McLean explained that some years ago the 20th of April had been fixed as the day on which the fishermen should be allowed to put out their lines and traps. To have some particular day for this purpose had been proved to be in the interest of the industry, and saved a great deal of gear. If the day is changed, to the first of May, it will be a still greater benefit to the fishermen. In that part of the Island on which the 20th of April is not now the day for putting out the nets, the proposed change will not take place.

Several members made good and practical speeches, on this resolution, and the debate was adjourned, we have no room for any further report in this issue.

Some Questions.

Mr James Kennedy asked the Leader of the Government:—Is the Government aware that the Meat and Canned Food Act, and the regulations thereunder, are doing much injury to the farmers in this Province, having closed the markets of the greater part of Canada against our meat products? Has the Government taken any action to obtain an Inspector for this Province? If any correspondence has taken place respecting this matter will the same be laid on the table of the House?

Mr Kennedy remarked that this is a matter of great importance to the general public. He explained the provisions of the Canada Food Act, and pointed out that under it the best market for our meat products are closed against us by reason of the fact that the Act requires inspection and a certificate of the inspector. This is a matter, he contended, which requires immediate investigation and action on the part of the authorities. The difference of half a cent a pound on pork, which is the difference between the price in the West and in the Maritime Provinces is too much to be lost by the pork producers of this Province. The Government should try to have the matter adjusted in some way. The Premier had some time ago promised to do what he could—but we are not yet able to ship beyond the limits of the Maritime Provinces. All meats going out, side these Province must have the Inspector's certificate. It is too bad that a monopoly like this should be established, and that the people of this Island should be the losers.

Hon Mr Hazard said, in reply, that he was not aware of any correspondence concerning the matter, except by telegram. In response to representations made last year, a commission has been granted, permitting a free exchange of meat products in the Maritime Provinces. Meat products sent outside of the Maritime Province must have the Inspector's certificate—and the Government will only appoint an Inspector where there is a large slaughter house. At Mr. Kennedy's request, he had some time ago, telegraphed to the Department at Ottawa, but without result.

Mr McLean agreed that the Province suffers a great loss under the law. He suggested that it would be well to have a large central slaughter house at which animals could be slaughtered. Then we could have an Inspector, and meat which was intended for export outside the Maritime Province could be inspected and sent forward.

Mr Mathieson agreed with the suggestion, but thought it would be well to have a slaughter house in each of the three countries.

Mr. Kennedy said that the people are greatly interested in this matter, and he felt sure that the difficulty could be adjusted in some way. In his own case, the export of pork to Quebec was not permitted, but after some correspondence, he was enabled to send forward the poultry he had in hand. But poultry can under the law, go forward unless inspected. If poultry could go forward, why not also dressed hogs? While in correspondence, respecting the matter, he had been led to believe that there is a tendency to give certain parties a monopoly in the meat products of the Province. Hon. Mr Hazard stated that all correspondence in connection with the matter would be brought down.

Mr. Morson asked the Commissioner

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