

THE HERALD

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Our Provincial Finances.

An abstract of the report on the Public Accounts of this Province for the year ending December 31st, 1913 was presented in the Legislature yesterday. The report shows that our Provincial finances are in a most healthy condition; that a very respectable surplus remains after providing for all the expenditure of the year, and that a considerable reduction has been effected in the Provincial debt. The Government have done all this, not by reducing necessary expenditures or causing any of the public departments to suffer, but, on the contrary, after supplying ample money for efficiently carrying on all branches of the public service and largely increasing the salaries of our school teachers.

This is a financial condition that the people of this Province had wished and hoped for; but wished and hoped for in vain during the many years our Liberal friends were in power. Matters financial, under Liberal Provincial rule, grew worse and worse from year to year. Every year showed a larger deficit than the one preceding it; the debt, on growing and the public service became less and less efficient. Remembering this deplorable condition of our Provincial finances in these dark days, it is most gratifying now to hear testimony to our improved position. We have now a larger Provincial revenue than ever before; we have the departments of Government more efficiently conducted; we have a respectable surplus, instead of the "ugly" deficits that annually stared us, when the Liberals ruled and we have, what we all so anxiously desired, a beginning made in the reduction of our Provincial debt.

The proof of all we have just said will be found in the following figures from the Auditor's Report, showing the receipts and expenditures of the past year: Receipts for the year ended 31st December 1913: \$506,553.39; Expenditure for the same period \$490,987.47. These figures show a surplus on the year's transactions of \$15,565.92. No one will deny that this is an excellent financial showing for the past year. A comparison of the actual receipts and expenditures with the respective estimates of these, by the Premier in his last budget speech, also presents gratifying features. The estimated receipts were \$501,776.88, but the actual receipts as shown above were \$506,553.39, showing an excess of \$4,776.51; and the estimated expenditures were \$500,361.00, while the actual expenditure was \$490,987.47, or \$9,373.53 less. All will admit that this is safe and careful financing.

The surplus of \$15,565.92 on the year's transactions does not present in full the advantageous showing of the year. To the surplus of \$15,665.92 must be added the amount in the debenture sinking fund \$14,745.00, and also interest accrued on this fund amounting to \$4,774.60. These two items added to the surplus of the year make a total reduction of Provincial debt of \$32,185.52. This is certainly an excellent financial showing for the past fiscal year; a show-

ing of which the Government may well be proud. To reduce the Provincial debt by \$32,085.52 in one year is an achievement that cannot fail to be gratifying to the people, while it is most creditable to the Government. There are other features of the financial statement to which we will refer later.

Sessional Proceedings.

House met on Tuesday 24th at 3 o'clock. After the usual routine, Hon. Mr. Arsenault presented a petition for incorporating the New Annan Black Silver Fox Company. On motion of Hon. Mr. McNeill, a petition was presented asking for an act to amend the Summerside incorporation act. On motion of Dr. Dewar, a return was tabled by Hon. Mr. Stewart showing the vote taken on the automobile question in the 3rd district of Queen's County. On motion of Hon. Mr. Arsenault, a bill to incorporate the New Annan Black Silver Fox Company was presented, read a first time and referred to the private bills committee. On motion of Mr. Myers a bill in connection with the New London North Presbyterian Church was also read a first time and sent to the private bills committee. On motion of Hon. Mr. McNeill the bill to amend the Summerside incorporation act was advanced to the private bills committee stage. Hon. Mr. Arsenault, chairman of the private bills committee, reported several bills agreed to. The report was adopted and the bills were ordered to a third reading. On motion of Hon. Mr. Stewart, in the absence of Hon. Mr. McKinnon, the bill to incorporate the Prince Edward Island Co-operative Egg and Poultry Association was read a second time, committed to a committee of the whole, reported, agreed to and ordered to a third reading. The House then adjourned.

Hon. Premier Mathieson was in his place when the House opened at 4:20 p. m. on Wednesday 25th. After routine a petition praying for the incorporation of the Village of Kensington was presented by Mr. James Kennedy. A bill founded on this petition was introduced, read a first time and referred to the private bills committee. Mr. Dobie presented a petition praying for an act to amend the act incorporating the Trout River Fox Company. The bill asked for was introduced, read a first time and sent to the private bills committee.

Before the orders of the day were entered upon, Premier Mathieson rose to give some account of the mission upon which he and Hon. Mr. McLean had been absent at Ottawa. He reviewed the attention our Provincial Government had been giving to the matter of our Federal representation. Beginning with the interprovincial conference held at Ottawa in October last, he outlined what had been done in the case all along down to the present time. He showed that we had the strong support of Ontario and British Columbia, and the entire sympathy of the Premier of Quebec. Before the redistribution committee he and Mr. McLean had again presented the case in all its phases. Premier Mathieson showed the committee that the word "readjusted" had already been interpreted by Canada in the broadest possible sense. This was shown by the way British Columbia and Manitoba had been treated. These Provinces had been given a larger representation in the Federal Parliament than they were entitled to and had this representation readjusted upwards, although they had not nearly

a population justifying such increased representation. The Premier said he had the very highest hopes of success in getting back our six members. If we did succeed it would not be because we had not done everything we could in the matter. He said he was happy to hear testimony to the valuable assistance rendered in the matter by Messrs. McLean and Nicholson, M. P. and Senators Murphy, Yeo and Prowse. Should our case succeed, our Jubilee celebration of the first Confederation Conference will be a memorable meeting. Six members was the only number he and his colleagues had always contended for and he never entertained an idea of being satisfied with less. Six, and no other number than six, had been pressed for. He had the strongest hopes that success was about achieved.

Mr. Richards, Leader of the Opposition, said he was quite satisfied that our case had been presented in the best possible way by the Leader of the Government and his associate delegates, and he too thought the hopes of success were of the highest. He wished to thus place himself on record. Some private bills were reported from the private bills committee. Several fox company bills were read a third time and passed. The House then adjourned.

On Thursday the House met at 11:20. After routine the bill to incorporate the town of Kensington was on motion of Mr. James Kennedy, read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole. This occupied the time of the committee up to 1 o'clock when the House took recess.

When the House reassembled at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, committee was resumed on the Kensington incorporation bill. At 4:50 the Speaker took the chair and progress was reported. Several bills were read a third time and passed. A petition was presented praying for an act to incorporate the Prince Edward Island Trust Company. A bill in accordance with this petition was introduced, read a first time and referred to the private bills committee. The House then adjourned.

The House met on Friday at 11:15. After routine, several petitions for private bills were presented and some bills founded on them were received, read a first time and referred to the private bills committee. The Kensington incorporation bill was advanced another stage in committee when progress was reported. Hon. Mr. Arsenault presented a report from the private bills committee which was adopted. On motion of the Premier the House adjourned until Tuesday 31st.

The Government, and especially the Hon. Commissioner of Public Works, have the thanks of the press for the improvements effected in the reporters gallery. The space has been enlarged by the removal of the spectators seat in the rear, and all the room back to the wall has been given to the press. The old settee in front of the desk has been removed also and replaced by chairs. Notice is posted that this space is "strictly reserved for the press." The reporters find these changes a great relief. They are not now liable to be "sat upon" by spectators as formerly. If the chairs were a little higher the reporters "as in duty bound would ever pray."

Job Printing at the Herald Office

Federal Parliament.

Ottawa, Mar. 24—If strong expression is permissible in dealing with a question of such vital importance to all Canada as is the matter of the construction of the National Transcontinental Railway, an undertaking which has vitally affected the credit of this country and has also largely precipitated the present Canadian Northern situation, may be said as a result yesterday afternoon's and last evening's debate in the House of Commons on the matter Mr. George P. Graham's government is now securely tethered to the desk of the acting Minister of Railways, Dr. J. D. Reid, and the Liberal opposition was so far notable failed to offset the charges or allegations contained in the report of the commission appointed to investigate the construction of the eastern section of the N. T. R. When the matter came up in the Commons, Graham was put up to reply to the charges contained in the report.

Dr. Reid introduced the matter and briefly reviewed the evidence. His synopsis showed:

1st—The Liberal Government were responsible for the conditions shown in the construction of the N. T. R. because they entrusted this most important work to a commission which did not number among its members one particular railway man.

2nd—That the amount involved in the transactions showing graft and dishonesty was so vast that the road could never become a paying proposition.

3rd—That extravagance, graft and waste in construction defeated the very object which the Laurier government hoped to achieve, i. e. to give the people a transcontinental line of such character as would ensure reasonable freight rates.

Hon. Dr. Reid showed plainly that the amount of rental the G. T. P. have to pay when taking the eastern section of the railway would be \$8,705,422.97 per annum provided the road could earn profit at once after being taken over. If this could not be done the amount of interest for three years would be added to the principal and when the G. T. P. did take the road over and pay interest the annual charge would be \$7,327,190.54 per annum. On such basis what chance exists for the railway ever providing reasonable freight rates?

Again as evidence of dishonesty so startling, the report showed absolute waste of more than \$40,000,000 and the people must bear this burden.

An interesting feature of Dr. Reid's presentation of the case was that the report amply justified the stand taken by Hon. A. G. Blair when, protesting against the whole plan, it was also notable yesterday that Mr. Pugsley, who sat beside Mr. Graham, who handled the case for the Liberals, applauded every point made by the minister of railways.

Mr. Graham devoted himself largely to attacking the character of the commission of enquiry. He started in well, but blew up and during the evening session most of his address consisted in the reading of legal opinions.

He got into deep water once or twice; first by claiming that Dr. Reid had no right to include the sum for Quebec bridge in the amounts squandered. The Quebec bridge, he claimed, would be used not only by the National Transcontinental Railway but by the C. P. Canadian Northern, Delaware and Hudson and I. C. R. He proceeded along this line with some gusto when the Premier rose in his place and quietly asked if the Quebec bridge has no connection with the matter, why did Mr. Fielding include as part of the cost that bridge in his estimate of the cost in 1904. Mr. Graham had no ready reply to this and devoted himself to another line of argument. After speaking five hours, Mr. Graham moved the adjournment of the debate.

Ottawa, March 25.—When Hon. George P. Graham, of South Renfrew, sat down tonight at 6:10, concluding his address on National Transcontinental Railway scandal he accomplished one thing he created a new endurance record for the House of Commons. From the time he rose on Tuesday afternoon he had talked for seven hours and ten minutes, the previous record being held by Sir Charles Tupper. He concluded by moving an amendment characterizing the whole Gutelius-Staunton report as partisan and misleading and for this reason valueless and that the government for accepting it merited the censure of the house. Hon. Mr. Pugsley seconded this and at 6:10 o'clock Mr. Graham sat down amid prolonged Liberal

cheers. The expected effect of the ovation, however, was considerably reduced by the taunt of one Conservative member; "Keep at it boys, they are the last cheers he will get."

When the house resumed at 8 o'clock W. S. Middlebro replied to Mr. Graham. He made an effective speech completely refuting Mr. Graham's contention that the great cost of the road was due to the high character of construction and low grades. When Mr. Fielding made his estimate of \$61,000,000, the standard proposed for the road was just the same as afterwards followed out. The rate of grades was then determined on and there had been no change since. Consequently no part of the difference between \$61,000,000 and the vast sum the road will cost the country when completed can be explained on that score. Mr. Middlebro also criticized the agreement between the government and G. T. P. company. By its provisions the government must run the road while it is unprofitable, but if the time ever comes when it can return a profit no quantity that can accrue to the country will be commensurate for the vast sum wasted in construction. Mr. Middlebro spoke until 9:30 and F. R. Carvell followed. Mr. Carvell dealt largely with the charge of overclassification, for which he claimed there was no evidence. There had been all sorts of insinuations but he thought the time had now arrived to call a spade a spade.

"That's what Gutelius did and you are sore," was the interruption and Mr. Carvell waxed wroth.

Greeted by hearty cheers from the government benches, Mr. W. S. Middlebro rose to reply. He pointed out that there were five questions which must be answered in the present issue. What was the object of the N. T. R.? What were the representations as to its cost? What were the reasons for the excessive cost? Had the railway accomplished its object? Dealing with the first question, the speaker quoted Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches in which he had represented this road as one which would reduce freight rates. As to its costs—this road which was now admitted even by the opposition to have cost \$18,000,000—Sir Wilfrid had time and again said it would be only \$13,000,000, the interest on the cost of construction for the seven years when the Grand Trunk Pacific was not required to pay interest on the line. As for the cost of the road itself, Sir Wilfrid had said the money for it would be borrowed at three per cent, and the Grand Trunk Pacific would pay three per cent, rental and in this way what the government gave with one hand it would take back with the other.

Ottawa, March 26—continuation of the debate on the National Transcontinental investigation today was again preceded by a lively three quarters of an hour. Col. Sam Hughes took occasion to reply to opposition criticisms of his alleged course in giving assurances to Ulster Orangemen that the government would not prevent the sending of aid from Canada. Last Friday, Liberal members, basing all their allegations on an unverified newspaper report of an article published in the Yorkshire Post criticized Col. Hughes very severely during his absence. Today the minister of militia was again in the house and alleged that this was only another effort on the part of the opposition, "slander-band" engineered in opposition "boozeriums."

A General Change in I. C. R. timetable will take place commencing April 5th inst. The people of P. E. Island will be pleased to know that Canada's favorite Train—the "Ocean Limited" will resume services on that date. Ocean Limited leaves Halifax daily at 8 A. M., arrives in Montreal next morning at 8 o'clock. Ocean Limited leaves Montreal 7:30 P. M. daily, arrives in Halifax next evening at 8:20 o'clock.

The Maritime Express will leave Halifax daily except Sunday at 3:00 P. M., arriving in Montreal at 6:30 next evening. Maritime Express will leave Montreal daily except Saturday at 1:30 P. M.

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Disservice of Mr. H. M. P.

HON. MR. STEWART'S EXPRESSION OF OPINION in the House of Commons on the 24th inst. with respect to the proposed representation in the House of Commons of the Province of P. E. I. is a most creditable one. It is a pity that Mr. Stewart should have been so misled by the Premier's statement that the proposed representation in the House of Commons of the Province of P. E. I. would be a disservice to the Province.

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