

method advocated by Mr. Bourassa himself in his speech at the Drillshed in Quebec in 1903, that is to say, that they were disposed of by emphyteutic lease and at public auction. I have the books before me to prove this. These powers were offered for sale on the condition that the lessees should, within the first five years of their lease, expend \$100,000, \$150,000 and \$500,000 respectively on their development. They were put up for sale after examination by one of the most competent men on the American continent, Mr. Gauvin, C.E. The only water-powers sold in this province by public auction have been sold by the present Government. Mr. Bourassa knows this, or should know it. A superficial knowledge of the facts is really the least that should be required from a man who aspires at the regeneration of his Province.

What could be thought of Mr. Bourassa's good faith when he asserts that the government is sacrificing our forest domain? Is he ignorant of the fact that the last sale dates back to June, 1906, that the Government has none this year, and that we have openly proclaimed our intention to sell no more in future. This announcement by the Prime Minister has been favorably received; but the conclusion should not be jumped at that our past policy on the subject has been bad or improvident. Whether in the Federal or in the Provincial field, I know of no public question in regard to which more errors, prejudices, and false information prevail than on that of leasing timber limits. The working of the law is well known. The Government advertises in the Official Gazette and the leading newspapers that, at a certain determinate time, it will offer for sale at public auction such and such limits. This law is not of yesterday, but dates back to Confederation. It was the work of a Conservative government, and was applied by all the Conservative administrations, but its best feature, that concerning the principle of publicity and of sale by public auction, has been inserted in the Statutes upon the representations and thanks to the efforts of the small Liberal minority in the Legislative Assembly in 1872-73.

But Mr. Bourassa and his friends claim that there is no real publicity, that the advertisements are insufficient; that intending purchasers have not time, during the thirty or sixty days given them, to properly ascertain the value of what is to be sold and that, consequently, there is no competition. This objection seems to have impressed those who are not in the timber trade or who have only a superfi-

cial knowledge of the matter. The last sale by the Government was in June, 1906, when about 10,000 square miles were advertised to be sold. Now, of what did those 10,000 square miles consist? In the first place, 7,000 of them were advertised for sale in June, 1905, and a certain proportion of these—a proportion which gradually decreases as one goes further back—had been advertised in previous years; so that the trade was in possession of accurate information—not for weeks or months—but for years and years regarding what was offered for sale. This argument applies equally to the new advertisements and to the old ones, since the former relate to adjacent limits, the natural prolongation of existing ones. I will show that the Breakey limits sold in 1905 were offered for sale in 1904, 1903, and even in 1902.

NEEDS OF THE TREASURY MUST BE CONSIDERED

Moreover, the needs of the Treasury had to be considered, the necessity of finding from \$300,000 to \$350,000 every year to meet wants and pressing obligations that could not be set aside.

The Government may have committed, and certainly has committed some errors in the past, for we are only human, but our adversaries have never ventured to accuse us of having been extravagant. The Liberal Government has administered the affairs of the Province with the strictest economy; and has guarded it against foolhardy ventures and schemes.

How was it possible to levy yearly the \$300,000 or \$350,000 that were absolutely needed for the administration of public business? The Government and the Legislature had to choose between direct taxation and the leasing of the public domain. They did not wish to tax the people and to retain the forest for a more or less lengthy period, while awaiting an eventual and always problematical increase in its value, for the best of calculations would be at fault were a substitute found for pulp-wood in the manufacture of paper, or were our forests destroyed by fire, as had too frequently been the case in the past. To our adversaries—to the adversaries of the Government, the Conservatives, I would further say that they themselves were the partisans, the first supporters of that policy and they leased the greater portion of our public domain at prices far below those obtained by the present administration. This has been proved on many occasions, but never so thoroughly as by the Premier recently at Chateaugay.