

much favor by the representatives of the island. The cry of "Justice to Cape Breton" in the matter of railways was stilled by the measure. No Cape Breton man has attempted to show that any more liberal railway policy could in justice be asked from the local government. I am satisfied that the intelligent and thoughtful people of the island will see in these liberal grants, which can be used to aid branch lines if the Dominion government construct the main line, the most ample guarantee of the desire of the local government to deal fairly with the claims of Cape Breton.

It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of railway legislation in our provinces that the act making the provisions in relation to railways east and west, to which I have just referred—a measure of the largest character and utmost importance—after a thorough discussion in the house of assembly, after the most searching examination that could be given to it, was carried unanimously. Only one or two opposition members spoke against it, and before the discussion closed they evidently changed their views and concluded that they could not afford to record their votes against a measure so wisely devised and so well guarded. The result of the railway debate was a crowning triumph of the Liberal party's four years of valuable legislation.

AN UNASSAILABLE RECORD.

The closing session of our parliamentary term is always the crucial one. On the eve of the appeal to the people, the opposition call the government to account for their errors, and place before the country the grounds on which the government are to be assailed. What is the record in this respect of the session just closed? Our opponents made the most searching enquiry into the government's acts. Information was asked and given on every point in which the opposition saw the faintest hope of finding a ground of attack. And what was the result? The government were found to occupy an unassailable position. Not a charge was brought against them for enquiry. Not a motion was tabled challenging the uprightness or the wisdom of their course. A partisan press may sling charges broadcast and persuade the ignorant that there is something in them. But the intelligent and right-thinking elector looks to parliament for the enquiry into matters of this kind. If charges can be made with truth they will have ad-

ditional force, because they are made in the presence of the government, with all the public documents at hand and all the facts available. When the constituted and well organized opposition fail to bring in the proper way any charge against the government, when in the most trying session, on the eve of the appeal to the people, not a resolution is tabled assailing the conduct of the administration, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the government's record is a good one, that the attacks of irresponsible writers are unfounded in fact, and could not safely be made in the legislative halls.

The government might with the utmost confidence have appealed to the country on the record which I have thus hastily reviewed. But another issue of paramount importance has forced itself upon the attention of the country.

REPEAL.

In the opinion of the government the time has come when the people of Nova Scotia should once more make an effort to obtain a release from a union into which they were forced, and which has been productive of little good and much evil. There was once a party in Nova Scotia which was satisfied with confederation. To-day no disinterested man can be found to say that he is satisfied. Dissatisfaction is so wide and deep that many are heard to say that no change could be for the worse. Some of those who were the warmest advocates of confederation in 1867 are now the most outspoken in their expressions of hostility to it. After the failure of the repeal agitation of 1867-9 to accomplish its main purpose, the people settled down, not very cheerfully it must be admitted, to make the best of the situation. "Give the union a fair trial," said some. It has had a long and more than fair trial, and the verdict against it is more emphatic than before.

We were assured by the fathers of confederation that the affairs of the Dominion could be carried on for twenty years or more at an annual cost of eleven or twelve million dollars, equal to \$3. or less per head of the population. The expenditure in the first year was nearly thirteen and a half millions, and it has been increasing by leaps and bounds until it now exceeds the enormous sum of thirty-five million dollars. The interest and charges in connection with the public debt alone absorb nearly as much as we were told would pay the total expenses