

ready existing. These railways served, too, to facilitate the settlement of our unoccupied lands, to promote commercial and social intercourse, and in various ways directly and indirectly they have added to the wealth, the comfort, and the general well-being of the people. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Our railway expenditures, leading as it did to so many direct and incidental advantages, constituted a very important factor in the causes of the comparative freedom which this Province enjoyed from the distress that prevailed in other countries.

THE SURPLUS DISTRIBUTION.

But our railway expenditure was not the only expenditure of Provincial funds which contributed to that condition of things. I have already stated that in the settlement of the Municipal Loan Fund Debt question we relieved, either wholly or partially as the case required, important sections of the country from debts which for years had been weighing them down, and in various ways interfering with their prosperity. But besides that relief, we made a large expenditure in order to compensate indebted municipalities. If the Legislature relieved the latter, it was simple justice to all those municipalities that were not in debt, and had long been assisting in paying the debts of others, that they should receive some compensation; and the compensation provided by the Legislature on our recommendation was an allowance to every municipality in the Province of \$2 per head of their population, and an additional allowance on a fixed principal to those municipalities that had already spent money on railways. Under this head we paid out, up to the end of December, 1877, to the municipalities more than three millions of dollars (\$3,117,325), and this money has been employed by the municipalities in various objects of public utility selected by themselves. The statute setting the money apart required that it should be employed in the respective localities either in the payment of debts, or in objects of permanent usefulness, so that it might not be frittered away in the current expenses of a municipality. And how did the municipalities expend the money? They expended it as follows:—

In Road and bridges	\$1,137,716.31
Paying debt caused by granting aid to railways	987,731.50
Paying other debts incurred for permanent works not provided for in the original purpose, including schoolhouses, built school debts, and investments for school purposes	25,729.36
Building and improving town halls	62,008.32
672 town halls have been built or repaired, and 100,000,000 of markets and public buildings	115,111.22
Town and village improvements by construction of sewers, planting shade-trees, and buying steam fire-engines	76,127.63
Marking and improving highways	10,917.19
Drainage	27,922.27
Paying share of cost of county buildings and adding in the erecting of mills and manufactories	11,382.50
Buying and laying out public markets and agricultural societies' rooms	4,309.00
Aid to unorganized districts for making roads and bridges, and building schools in 1877	6,332.50
Purchase and improvement of electric wires	1,917.02
Total	\$3,117,325.07

This large amount has thus been employed in works of or for purposes which either would otherwise not have been undertaken, or else would have been undertaken by an increase of public burdens, and by the direct taxation of the people of the municipalities making the expenditure.

EXPENDITURE FOR DRAINAGE PURPOSES.

Another item of Provincial expenditure which contributed something to lessen the depression among the people affected by the expenditure, was the sum of \$228,380 advanced from Provincial funds for municipal drainage purposes, and the purchase of drainage debentures. This sum, together with the amounts previously mentioned as paid to railways and in surplus distribution, make a total of upwards of \$5 million dollars (\$5,539,955) expended since 1871 in these ways for the direct benefit of the people. No one can say that these expenditures should have come, or were intended or supposed to come, out of the annual revenue. Our whole scheme of surplus distribution was founded on the fact of possessing an unexpected surplus. And so with regard to the railway expenditure, whether as projected by Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's Government or as carried out by the Government which succeeded him. The aggregate sum under the three heads which I have specified exceeded by upwards of a million dollars Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's unexpended surplus, so that if we had no surplus now, and if that respect we were now no better off than any other Province is (for not one of them has a surplus), the mode of expending the surplus was such as to outlive my friends and myself to look for a renewal of the confidence and support of the people. (Loud cheers.) We did not think it a good thing to hoard up the money that is coming into it, and we therefore employed it in ways that were far better, and more beneficial to the people, than hoarding it in banks would have been. (Hear, hear.) If we had not only employed every cent of the old surplus and had nothing of it now remaining, but if we had also used up the whole annual revenue in necessary or useful annual expenditures, we should have been justified in asking you for your continued confidence, on the ground that the expenditure was wise and proper—was such as the country has derived more than corresponding benefit from, and will continue to do so for years to come. (Cheers.) Apart from the items I have mentioned, our average annual expenditure for other purposes has been within our average revenue, and the result is that there is a surplus, and a large surplus, still. Newspaper writers and stump speakers talk occasionally about our having annual deficits, and they make a show of proving it by mixing up figures which ought to be kept separate, and those who do not know ought to know that in doing so they are making deceptive statements. If we had paid away the old surplus, and had also been expending more than our revenue since, how is it that we have the surplus still?

THE ASSETS OF THE PROVINCE.

For we still have on hand untouched of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's investments in Dominion stock and Dominion bonds, about two millions of dollars, notwithstanding our surplus distribution, our railway payments, our drainage investments, and the large annual calls for public buildings, colonization roads, other public works, and the hundred necessary or useful purposes to which public money is annually voted by the people's representatives. At the end of December, 1877, we had investments and other assets (omitting the debt) as follows:—

Stock, bonds, and drainage debentures	\$27,014
Special trust funds with the Dominion of Canada, and paying us five per cent	2,500,000
Cash deposits in the banks	2,500,000
Value of land in the Province of Canada, in hands of Dominion, or other, as found by the arbitrators, Col. Gray and Hon. D. L. Macpherson	30,541
Due to the Province on account of the Municipal Loan Fund debt, not yet paid, and which should be added to the total	14,333
Total particulars of these	\$6,395,554

Or, including the debts, the amount is \$2,322,374.82. In giving you these figures I have mentioned Mr. Macpherson's name. I understand that the *Mod* of this morning contains an elaborate attack by the Senator on the Local Government, and on myself in particular. I was greatly surprised when I heard this; and I have not yet read his paper. I dare say that it contains many things which it does it wrong to answer. I have given you a statement of assets amounting to \$6,395,554. As to our debts:—The debt due to Quebec for school lands, in which, though situated in Ontario, the same arbitrators gave Quebec a share, amounts to somewhere about \$270,052. Another item is for the Rockwood Asylum, which the Province bought from the Dominion for \$96,500, our other institutions unfortunately not being large enough to accommodate the increasing number of lunatics. These two debts make \$366,552, thus leaving a balance of \$6,029,002. Of this sum we had before December, 1877, appropriated to railways—if they should be built, as I presume they will be—about \$840,789, over and above the two millions we had paid as before stated; and there are still at the date mentioned, of the sums appropriated on account of the surplus distribution balances not yet called for amounting to about \$202,234. These two sums amount together to \$1,043,023. Taking that sum from the six millions (or in exact figures \$5,855,822) which I have before mentioned, there is a clear surplus of \$4,812,799, or about four and three-quarter millions of dollars, as matters stood on the 31st of Dec., 1877; and there are debts due to us in respect of Crown lands and timber dues, etc., not taken into account in the statement which I have given to you. Thus, after all the large and beneficial expenditure for railways, and in surplus distribution after the investments in drainage debentures, and after carrying on the whole government of the country in a most efficient and vigorous way, we still have left to be disposed of as the people of this country may from time to time think best,

A SURPLUS OF NEARLY FIVE MILLION OF DOLLARS.

The figures of expenditures which I have given to you do not include large sums voted, on what would be treated elsewhere as capital account, but has been paid by us out of current revenue, for many important objects of a permanent nature. Thus, up to the end of 1877, we had expended, beside all the figures that I have given you, on public works and buildings no less a sum than \$1,870,962, and on colonization roads through the unsettled territory, from which we derive a very large territorial revenue, \$583,681. These expenditures also have helped, both directly and indirectly, to promote the prosperity of the country and lessen the distress already referred to.

WHY THE EXPENDITURE HAS INCREASED.

Having funds in hand beyond actual necessities, and having to consider from year to year how best to employ these funds, beside all the expenditure that I have mentioned, the Legislature have thought it right to increase, for instance, the expenditure for purposes of education. The annual average expenditure by the Government for educational objects up to 1871, Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's last year, was \$367,923; the annual average expenditure since has been \$491,618, for we believed that we could not employ public money more usefully than in promoting the education of the people. (Cheers.) Education is to the general interest in every way—economically, socially, politically, morally, and religiously. The educated people is in fact the most important object that can receive public attention, and there is nothing, as I rejoice to see, which our people more prize than educational facilities for their children. (Loud applause.) They have shown that in many ways, and amongst others in this, that while we have been assisting in this great work with larger grants than before, the expenditure by the people for the same object has increased far more than ours; and they expend year by year far more money on educational purposes than such sums as they have received from Government. For example, the whole expenditure on Public and Separate Schools and High Schools for 1877 was not far from four millions of dollars, viz., \$3,699,546. Of that sum the Province only contributed \$549,792. The people have built and are building better schools, they are paying better salaries to their teachers, they are getting better teachers, and they are availing themselves of school appliances of all kinds of an improved description. Our expenditure on education has increased from \$313,887 to the amount in 1871—Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's last year—to \$491,772, the amount in 1877. But the people's expenditure for the same object has increased in respect of teachers' salaries from \$1,191,476 in 1871, to \$1,828,329 in 1876; and in respect of school sites, buildings, repairs, &c., from \$611,819 in 1871, to \$1,168,134 in 1876. I name 1876 here because I have not at hand the figures for 1877. Education is one of the objects for which, since we had the money, we have felt it a duty to recommend a more liberal expenditure than previously. I shall mention some others (for time does not admit of a full enumeration) that you may judge whether, having money to employ, we were right in giving to a larger extent to the various objects of expenditure which were within our control than had been given to them previously. Thus, upon colonization roads, the average annual expenditure up to 1871 was \$41,848; the average annual expenditure for the subsequent period up to 1877 was \$97,280. So for public works the average expenditure up to 1871 was \$270,779, and for the subsequent period \$411,832. In the maintenance of asylums and public institutions the average annual expenditure up to 1871 was \$158,558; and the average annual expenditure since has been \$315,353, because new institutions had been established since 1871, and additions had been made which increased the accommodation afforded by the old building. There was a larger number of unfortunate occupants of these institutions, and of course an increase of expenditure necessarily followed. All the

institutions referred to are conducted with the greatest possible economy, consistent with their efficiency, and now compare favourably with similar institutions in other countries, both for efficiency and economy. In all respects they are a credit to our Province, as visitors competent to judge are constantly testifying. Again, in regard to agriculture, literary, and scientific societies, the average annual expenditure up to 1871 was \$73,736, and the average expenditure since, up to 1877 inclusive, was \$99,282. I do not know any purpose that we could have employed this amount of our extra funds in (as we have them) more properly than in the increase we have made in that item. In the same manner I am prepared to account for, and to justify, every particular of increase which has taken place since 1871. Some increases have been from causes beyond government control, and every increase of that kind we have to regret. The position of the Province was this: We had a surplus from other years, and it was upon that surplus we were drawing. But what has been the practice of these opponents of ours, who talk and write so glibly about our so-called annual deficits? I have a memorandum here which has been taken from a return made by the officers of the Dominion Government during his day. And what does this return show? Why, for the year ending 31st December, 1858, he spent more than the revenue by \$2,075,317; in 1859 by \$1,494,744; in 1860 by \$1,752,909; in 1861 by \$1,999,008; in 1862 the excess was \$2,064,331; and in 1863 the excess was \$270,490. For this last year my friend Mr. Sandfield Macdonald was the Premier, and he and his Government were responsible. The reference of our opponents is made chiefly I suppose, to our credulous followers of their own; and the figures which I have given ought to convince even them of the fallacy of the talk about our deficits. Indeed, one cannot but wonder at the simplicity of those who make it a charge against the Provincial Government that we have sometimes to expend more than we received during the year, though we had it to spend, while their own friends used to spend far more than the revenue, when they could only do so by borrowing the money. (Cheers.)

AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION.

Some of our expenditure and our legislation have had to do in a special way with the farming community. Our general expenditure benefits all classes equally; but our increased expenditure on matters which have a special interest for farmers has been a portion of that general increase with which we are already charged as manifesting extravagance and incapacity. In 1871 the vote for the agricultural associations, etc., was \$65,100; in 1878, our last year, it was \$97,000 for the same object. As we had extra money, why should we not give some of it to these objects? We have made an advance of 50 per cent in the vote which I have mentioned. Let us look at some of the particulars included in this item. The Legislature voted for dairy associations in 1874, \$700, and since 1874 \$2,000 a year; in 1872 there was voted for the first time for sundry services in connection with the agriculture and the arts, such as the investigation of the diseases of animals and crops, the ravages of insects, and other objects of that kind, provided for, the sum of \$1,000, and ever since 1874 we have been voting \$2,000 a year for the same objects. Last year we appropriated for a bureau of agricultural statistics, \$1,000. We have divided the amount voted before our time to the Fruit Growers' Association. We have added 50 per cent to the customary grant to the Entomological Society established for investigating the habits, etc., of insects—a subject unfortunately so important to our farmers. We have provided for the expenditure of \$200,000 in the purchase of drainage debentures to encourage the draining of portions of the country, through the Municipal Councils, by buying from the debentures issued for this purpose at the low rate of interest of five per cent. The sums which we have paid in that way for the purchase of drainage debentures under an Act of our own, and for drainage work which has been executed in different localities under an Act which was passed in 1871, and which provides for the repayment of these sums to the Province, amounted up to 31st December, 1877, to \$228,380. There have been 269 miles of drains built, and the area drained has been 205,160 acres.

THE DEBENTURE.

Last session the Legislature went a little further in the same direction, and appropriated the further sum of \$200,000 at the instance of leading farmers in the House and out of the house, connected with agricultural associations and otherwise, the money to be expended in the drainage. The sums advanced are to be repaid to the Province in twenty years, and are lent at the low rate of five per cent.

EMIGRATION.

Then we have for some years paid nothing towards immigration in the way of bounties, except to farm laborers and domestic servants. There has always been, with the exception of a short period being during the present year, a demand among our farmers for a much larger number of farm laborers than could be supplied; and all of you know the difficulty of obtaining domestic servants, particularly in the country.

FARMERS' FRANCHISE.

We have also made provision for giving the franchise to farmers' sons, and the reason of doing so will be obvious to those who are acquainted with agricultural life in Ontario. We had already provided an income franchise, by which residents in cities and towns were chiefly benefited. Now, it is the well-known custom in this country for one or two of a farmer's sons to remain on the homestead, after coming of age, to assist their parents in working and managing the farm; an extremely desirable arrangement, and one to be encouraged both for the comfort of the old people and the benefit of the sons themselves. These farmers' sons are, as a class, well educated, and quite as intelligent as those who give on farms of their own, having had the advantage of our excellent school

system, which perhaps their fathers had not. The Legislature thought, therefore, that a sufficient reason existed why that class of persons should not be permitted to vote, though they should have no separate property. We have also, in the interest of farmers, an Agricultural College and a Model Farm, etc.

COST OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

In connection with the matter of expenditure, Opposition journals have pointed to the cost of civil government as having been greater since Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's time than it had been in my time. But it is manifest that as a country advances, as its population increases, its wealth increases, and as its public affairs extend and become complicated, the cost of civil government must increase, and always does increase everywhere. (Hear, hear.) To illustrate this, take a single fact connected with the expense of the governmental departments in the old Province of Canada. In 1853, the year before Sir John A. Macdonald and his friends obtained the power which they held so long, the expense of the governmental departments was only \$144,415, but it ran up the following year by year until in 1862 it amounted to more than three times that sum, or \$486,620, and it cannot be pretended that our has even doubled in amount. You see, therefore, how absurd it is for those who believe in the men under whom this increase took place to cry out against the Government, or to make any argument, or any argument, against a Government that there has been an increase in the expense of civil administration. There are various reasons why some increase should have taken place in Ontario, even if there had been no increase in the business done; but, without dwelling upon these, and supposing that there had been no increase in the cost of living, that we had been able to retain in the service every officer without any increase in his salary, and that there was no reason why the same amount of work should not be done without any additional expenditure, I affirm that the increase in the work has far exceeded the increase in the expenditure. If you farmers, or merchants, or other employers have to get double the work, you expect, other things being the same, that the cost of doing it will be increased likewise. If you could manage to get double the work done, while only increasing the expenditure one-half, I think you would consider yourselves pretty fortunate men. To what extent has the work of civil government in this Province increased? You will see from the figures that the amount of work at the Executive Council. You will easily understand that there must have arisen a large amount of new business from our surplus distribution, in addition to all the old classes of work. All the municipal by-laws had to be examined to ascertain that they corresponded with the Act, and this entailed a great deal of consideration and correspondence. Then the aid given from time to time to railways was the result of an examination of every case in which aid was asked for, and the examination of the condition of the road, and all other facts which bear on the propriety of assisting it. Many railways apply to which we give aid, but the rejected applications as well as the successful applications involve labor to several of the departments, including my own. From various other causes the work has greatly increased, both to the head of the department and to the officers; to what extent you may understand from one or two facts which I will mention. There is a separate office kept for every important matter which comes to my department. One file embraces a large number of documents and papers. In 1871, the last year of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's administration, the number of official files in this department was 806; the next year it was 1,454, and in 1877 it had risen to 1,707. Orders in Council in 1871 numbered 237; the following year 238; in one year of my time the number was 703; and the average during the period subsequent to 1871 has been double what it was before that time. The comparative number of letters written in a department of business in successive years is generally a very good index of the comparative amount of business done. In 1871 the official letters of this department covered 230 pages, in 1872 it covered 1,133 pages, and in 1877 it covered 2,294 pages. These figures demonstrate if anything can demonstrate that the amount of business done in the office of the Executive Council and Attorney-General has more than doubled since Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's time. Now has the expense doubled? Far from it. In 1871 the expense of the department was \$10,241, and in 1877, instead of being \$20,000, it was only \$14,600. (Cheers.) In other words, though the business had more than doubled, the expense had only increased by one-half. Again, the administration of justice is another head of expenditure in which there has been an increase; and that is one of the matters which to a large extent are not under the control of a Government; but, on the contrary, the expense incurred depends on circumstances which the Government cannot influence in the slightest degree. That the work has enormously increased the comparative number of commitments to the goals will show. In 1869 the number was 3,655; in 1870 it was 4,379; in 1871, 6,615; and it has gone on increasing year by year, till in 1877 the number had reached 13,481. This increase, I may observe, is no doubt partly owing to the hard times, for it is found by experience in all countries that during hard times the number of crimes of all kinds greatly increase. I have said that in 1877 the number of commitments was 13,481, being more than double the number in Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's last year. From this you will see how impossible it would be to administer justice under such circumstances without some increase in the expenditure, and you would not be surprised if the expense had doubled. Other facts which I might mention would lead to the same conclusion. But has the expense doubled? Far from it. In 1871 the expense for the administration of justice was \$132,921, and in 1876, instead of being double that amount, \$265,990, it was only \$286,591. I will give you another illustration from the Provincial Secretary's office. From a variety of causes there has been a great deal more work to be done there also than there formerly was. Some of the Legislature which has taken place, which has received the approbation of the country, involved a considerable amount of additional labor on the part of the Provincial Secretary and his Department. In the matter of municipal statistics, which was formerly in charge of the Dominion Government, they abandoned it in 1874, and it has since come among the duties of the

Provincial Secretary. Then there was a change of the law with regard to marriage licenses, which were also formerly attended to by the Dominion Government. The subject was taken in hand by the Provincial Government in 1874, and 431

EXEMPTIONS FROM TAXATION.

Since the last election we have now disposed of almost every subject that has been suggested as an impending legislation. We have done so either by legislating or by making clear that the subject did not at present demand legislation. There is but one agitated subject which we have not yet dealt with, and that is the existing exemptions from municipal assessment. The present law on that subject has stood on the statute book in nearly its present form for over a quarter of a century. The party of our opponents was in power during a large portion of that period, and they did not attempt to put an end to the exemptions or even to modify them. Even supposing we should fail to do so, even supposing that we have been wrong in not having given due attention to it hitherto, certainly no point can be made against us on that account, since our opponents had been very much longer in power than we have been, and they did not dispose of it. The question of exemption is a difficult one. It is one of especial interest to cities where Government property is situated, and to towns within which county property lies. But there are other aspects of the question which are of more extensive interest, and which we are now considering. A Committee was appointed by the House last session, at the instance of the Government, to collect information from Municipal Councils and from all persons taking an interest in the subject. This Committee has obtained information with regard also to what has been done in other countries, and I hope that we may be able to devise and submit some measure which may meet the difficulties of the case, and give satisfaction to all parties. But when there is but one general measure which it is said we ought to have brought forward, besides those which have already been placed on the statute book, this fact is a pretty clear indication that we have not hitherto been neglecting our duty as legislators. I have touched on some of the most important of the affairs which the present Government has had to do with, and I do not feel that I have the strength to occupy much more of your time to-night.

PERSONAL.

It continues to be sometimes said that I did an unjustifiable thing when I gave up the office of Vice-Chancellor in order to take upon me the Office of premier of Ontario; and my acceptance of this office is still spoken of occasionally as a descent, but the contrary. Political life indeed has been spoken of in this connection as a slough of inquiry if some who attack me on account of having left the Bench for public life. It may be a sink or slough to those who make the charge (hear, hear), but in my judgment there are no duties more important than those that belong to one occupying the position which I now occupy. I left the office of Vice-Chancellor with great reluctance, because I liked its work and it was a permanent office, a good salary was attached to it, and a pension for old age, and it was an office which secures for its holders the respect of the people. For personal reasons as well as these, I left the Bench with reluctance; but I feel now that I did well in leaving it. (Loud applause.) If the position which I took involved, as it did, some personal sacrifices, I think that by good fortune I have been enabled to do a larger amount of good to my country than I could have done had I remained Vice-Chancellor. (Great cheering.) It is a country of great promise, this Ontario of ours—(cheers)—and its good government is of great importance. It is my own native Province, it is the Province within which all my interests and all my affections are. It is the largest, the richest, the most populous of all the Provinces of Canada. It extends from the Ottawa on the east to the Lake of the Woods on the west. It reaches from the St. Lawrence and the great lakes on the south, away back to Hudson's Bay on the north. (Cheers.) Its extent from east to west is upwards of a thousand miles. Its area is more than twice that of Great Britain and Ireland together. It has unbounded undeveloped wealth in its woods and forests, its fields, its fisheries, and its mines. (Cheers.) Its population is increasing with a rapidity that is almost wonderful. At the time of the union with Lower Canada our population did not equal half a million. In ten years it had doubled; in another ten years it had trebled; in 1871 it amounted to the large number of 1,620,851, and it has been increasing since. Its population is from nearly all the countries in the world. A large proportion are natives, like myself, of Ontario; a large proportion also are natives of the world better adapted than Ontario is for developing a thrifty and hardy race. Our Province has a glorious future before it. An enormous population is yet to occupy its territory. In the position in which your confidence and the confidence of the people of Ontario have placed me, I have done my best, in conjunction with my colleagues, and with those who have given us their support in the Legislature, to develop the resources of this country of our affections, our pride, and our hope. (Cheers.) To administer efficiently the public affairs, to provide good laws for the government of its people, and the prosperity of all its interests, I venture to think, that in the judgment of our friends, and in the judgment, too, of a good many who are not our political friends, we have not been entirely unsuccessful in this work; and, for myself, I have only further to say that, with whatever increased efficiency experience has given me, I purpose, with God's help, to pursue in all respects the same course in the future which I have followed in the past. (Loud cheers.)

The amount is paid partly by the municipal counties and partly by the Government, and in proportions which have met with approval.

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Since the last election we have now disposed of almost every subject that has been suggested as an impending legislation. We have done so either by legislating or by making clear that the subject did not at present demand legislation. There is but one agitated subject which we have not yet dealt with, and that is the existing exemptions from municipal assessment. The present law on that subject has stood on the statute book in nearly its present form for over a quarter of a century. The party of our opponents was in power during a large portion of that period, and they did not attempt to put an end to the exemptions or even to modify them. Even supposing we should fail to do so, even supposing that we have been wrong in not having given due attention to it hitherto, certainly no point can be made against us on that account, since our opponents had been very much longer in power than we have been, and they did not dispose of it. The question of exemption is a difficult one. It is one of especial interest to cities where Government property is situated, and to towns within which county property lies. But there are other aspects of the question which are of more extensive interest, and which we are now considering. A Committee was appointed by the House last session, at the instance of the Government, to collect information from Municipal Councils and from all persons taking an interest in the subject. This Committee has obtained information with regard also to what has been done in other countries, and I hope that we may be able to devise and submit some measure which may meet the difficulties of the case, and give satisfaction to all parties. But when there is but one general measure which it is said we ought to have brought forward, besides those which have already been placed on the statute book, this fact is a pretty clear indication that we have not hitherto been neglecting our duty as legislators. I have touched on some of the most important of the affairs which the present Government has had to do with, and I do not feel that I have the strength to occupy much more of your time to-night.

PERSONAL.

It continues to be sometimes said that I did an unjustifiable thing when I gave up the office of Vice-Chancellor in order to take upon me the Office of premier of Ontario; and my acceptance of this office is still spoken of occasionally as a descent, but the contrary. Political life indeed has been spoken of in this connection as a slough of inquiry if some who attack me on account of having left the Bench for public life. It may be a sink or slough to those who make the charge (hear, hear), but in my judgment there are no duties more important than those that belong to one occupying the position which I now occupy. I left the office of Vice-Chancellor with great reluctance, because I liked its work and it was a permanent office, a good salary was attached to it, and a pension for old age, and it was an office which secures for its holders the respect of the people. For personal reasons as well as these, I left the Bench with reluctance; but I feel now that I did well in leaving it. (Loud applause.) If the position which I took involved, as it did, some personal sacrifices, I think that by good fortune I have been enabled to do a larger amount of good to my country than I could have done had I remained Vice-Chancellor. (Great cheering.) It is a country of great promise, this Ontario of ours—(cheers)—and its good government is of great importance. It is my own native Province, it is the Province within which all my interests and all my affections are. It is the largest, the richest, the most populous of all the Provinces of Canada. It extends from the Ottawa on the east to the Lake of the Woods on the west. It reaches from the St. Lawrence and the great lakes on the south, away back to Hudson's Bay on the north. (Cheers.) Its extent from east to west is upwards of a thousand miles. Its area is more than twice that of Great Britain and Ireland together. It has unbounded undeveloped wealth in its woods and forests, its fields, its fisheries, and its mines. (Cheers.) Its population is increasing with a rapidity that is almost wonderful. At the time of the union with Lower Canada our population did not equal half a million. In ten years it had doubled; in another ten years it had trebled; in 1871 it amounted to the large number of 1,620,851, and it has been increasing since. Its population is from nearly all the countries in the world. A large proportion are natives, like myself, of Ontario; a large proportion also are natives of the world better adapted than Ontario is for developing a thrifty and hardy race. Our Province has a glorious future before it. An enormous population is yet to occupy its territory. In the position in which your confidence and the confidence of the people of Ontario have placed me, I have done my best, in conjunction with my colleagues, and with those who have given us their support in the Legislature, to develop the resources of this country of our affections, our pride, and our hope. (Cheers.) To administer efficiently the public affairs, to provide good laws for the government of its people, and the prosperity of all its interests, I venture to think, that in the judgment of our friends, and in the judgment, too, of a good many who are not our political friends, we have not been entirely unsuccessful in this work; and, for myself, I have only further to say that, with whatever increased efficiency experience has given me, I purpose, with God's help, to pursue in all respects the same course in the future which I have followed in the past. (Loud cheers.)

OUR LEGISLATION.

I have already referred to our legislation, and have spoken of some of the subjects which have occupied our attention. I had some thought of giving you to-night an enumeration of our principal measures and explaining some of them, but it would be tedious to do so now. We have not, I think, been charged with inactivity as legislators; we have not been afraid of large questions; we have not refused to deal with important subjects; we have not shrunk from difficult ones; the whole history of our legislation shows this. At the last Provincial general election, so thoroughly had we exhausted the subjects which our people had therefore been interested about, that I think the only charge of legislative omission which our opponents pretended to make was, that we had not up to that time passed a law for the payment of Crown witnesses in criminal cases. It was a rather strange charge to bring against us a reason why the people should not place confidence in us, for our opponents, and their leaders had had the Government of the country in their hands almost continuously from 1854 until 1872, and they had failed all that time to deal with that subject. But after we had obtained power they represented such a law to be so urgent, so anxiously demanded by the people, that it should be thought out by us, and framed and passed at once. But one can account for their eagerness. There was nothing substantial to make capital out of; and for the sake of not admitting, or seeming to admit, that such was the case, they brought the charge that we had not provided for the payment of criminal witnesses. The Legislature has since passed such a law. We framed a Bill for the purpose as soon as we had thoroughly considered what was necessary and collected the needed information, and our Bill provided such safeguards and restrictions that though considerable apprehension had already been entertained that a very large sum would be required for the purpose, the sum required was turned out to be so moderate that nobody has felt it a burden.