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The Government and the People.

As intimated in our last issue, the Farquharson Government have ordered a general election for this Province, to take place on Wednesday, December 12th. Nomination will be Wednesday, December 6th. The Government's reason for springing the elections on the people at this unfavorable season of the year can be none other than the hope of stealing a march on them under cover of the glamour resultant from the recent Dominion elections. It therefore behooves the electors of this Province to be on their guard and not allow themselves to be deceived by the tactics or special pleading of the Government. Apart altogether from the trouble and inconveniences of contesting elections at this unpleasant season of the year, the Government are guilty of the most glaring injustice in bringing on the elections so close to the end of a year of whose public transactions the people know nothing. The Government's financial year ends on the 31st of December; yet they bring on a general election within a fortnight of that date, well knowing that the electors have no cognizance of how the revenues of the Province have been spent or mis-spent for the past twelve months, as no public accounts are issued or will be issued till some time after the beginning of the new year. The Government may have run the Province a hundred thousand dollars in debt since they last reported to the people; yet they come before the electors and ask for a renewal of confidence without affording one scintilla of evidence as to how they have administered public affairs for the last twelve months. They simply attempt to impose upon the people and ask the latter to support them blindly without asking any questions as to how the Government has conducted the business of the Province. Are the intelligent electors of this Province prepared to accord their support to a Government that insults them in this fashion? In the absence of any official statement of the Government's transactions for the current year, now almost closed, we must only refer to their past record as the next best evidence of what they have been doing for the last twelve months. There is every reason to believe that whatever worse than the record the year coming to a close has been, it has not been any better. We must, therefore, conclude, that the financial affairs of the Province are in a very bad position. Here is the record: On the 31st day of December last, according to the statement of the Provincial Auditor, the debt of the Province was as follows:

Balance against the Province.....\$136,756.77
Due on debentures..... 230,000.00
Provincial loans..... 160,464.80
\$527,221.57

Regarding the debenture debt, the Public Accounts contain two items amounting to \$16,832.86, which are credited to debenture account under the head of sinking fund; but according to a statement of the Provincial Auditor, submitted to the Legislature on the 23rd of May, 1900, the sum of \$11,000.00 of this amount has no existence as a sinking fund. The amount was said to be on call in the bank; but it is well known the Government's accounts was at that time overdrawn at the bank; therefore the amount in question had no existence except in imagination. This is how matters stand, according to the public accounts, on December 31st last. On the 22nd day of May, 1900, a statement was submitted to the Legislature by the Government, showing that the amount due on the bonds on that date was \$23,000.00 over what the public accounts showed to be due on December 31st, 1900. This would bring the debt up to \$23,000.00. The public are allowed to suffer during the

lens account and debenture account remained the same as they were on December 31, 1899. This is the last statement the public has had from the Government regarding the finances of the Province. At the last session of the Legislature, the Government passed an act empowering them to issue debentures to the amount of \$48,750.00. If these debentures have been sold the debt of the Province has been increased by that amount, bringing it up to \$68,579.89. Should it so happen that they have not been sold, we may be sure the deficit on the year's transactions equals the amount of the debentures and more. Whether the debentures have been sold or not, we may take it for granted that the Government, in accordance with their past record, have this year added to the Provincial debt considerably more than these debentures amount to. Placing the quarter salary due the teachers on December 31st at \$28,000, and the half-year's interest on the public debt falling due on the same date, and adding these two items to the above figures we shall have in round numbers the sum of \$624,000.00, which we may be sure is a moderate estimate of the debt of this Province at the present time, or in a few weeks hence when the year closes.

The Government say they are not responsible for all the debt; that there was a Provincial debt when they assumed the reins of power. Well, we do not wish to accuse the Government of any political crimes of which they are not guilty, and will admit that they inherited some debt from their predecessors in office. During the discussion of the budget in the Legislature last session, the Premier placed the debt assumed by the Liberal Government, from their predecessors at \$128,429. We are not disposed to controvert these figures; but will assume they are correct. When the Conservative Government came into power they, too, inherited from their predecessors, in office a debt of \$51,740. Subtracting this amount from \$128,429, we have \$76,689 as the correct amount of debt chargeable to the Conservative Government. If we divide this by the twelve years they held office, we shall find that they increased the debt at the average yearly rate of \$6,390. Let us now see at what rate our Liberal friends increased the Provincial debt. Subtracting the \$128,000, assumed by them, from the present debt of \$624,000, we see that the Liberals increased the Provincial debt to the amount of \$496,000, or a yearly average increase of \$55,112. This, in brief, is the statement of the public debt and the amount of it, for which the Liberal Government are responsible, as well as the rate per year at which they increased it. When the Liberals assumed power they proclaimed it as part of their policy to make revenue and expenditure meet. The figures of the enormous public debt under which we are now groaning as shown above, exemplify the Government's method of carrying out this part of their policy, and the sacredness with which they regard their promises to the people in this particular. The following list of deficits will afford our readers some idea of the facility with which the Liberal Government have rolled up our Provincial debt:

Taxes imposed 1895.....\$45,152.81
Taxes imposed 1896..... 47,661.00
Taxes imposed 1897..... 46,674.50
Taxes imposed 1898..... 44,995.97
Taxes imposed 1899..... 55,668.68

Taxes imposed in six years.....\$288,649.06

All will surely admit that this is a considerable amount of tax to be extracted from the people of this Province by a Government that declared on their advent to power, that the day of taxation was far off; by a Government that declared they would not resort to direct taxation without first consulting the people.

A debt is fairly measured by the amount of interest paid upon it; therefore the magnitude of our Provincial debt may be approximately gauged by the interest charge upon the same. The extraordinary growth of this interest since the Liberals came into power will be shown by comparing the interest charge for 1890, the last year for which the Conservatives are responsible with that of 1899 the last year for which we have the public accounts. In 1890 the interest paid by the Government, as shown in the public accounts, amounted to \$2,697.44. From this modest sum paid by the Conservatives in 1890 the interest charges against the Province have gone on increasing under Liberal rule until the enormous amount of \$19,075.51, was reached in 1899. At this rate of increase we may be very sure the interest paid this year will be considerably over \$20,000.00. In connection with this interest, the Liberals say they are paying a lesser rate than was paid by the Conservatives. If that be the case it only shows that they have accumulated a larger debt than is apparent to the public. Surely this question of interest is sufficient of itself to condemn, most emphatically, the Government that preached economy and promised to make revenue and expenditure meet. Their actions have most glaringly belied their words; and in by their actions they must be judged.

Having scandalously deceived the people and falsified all the promises of economy made in 1893, the Government found it necessary to invent a new shibboleth when they again appealed to the electors in 1897. This time the people were told the matter of our claims against the Federal Government were to be submitted to arbitration, with the confident expectation that our Provincial treasury would benefit thereby, to the extent of a million dollars or two, in actual cash. This, the people were told would be the means of obviating direct taxation for all time. Events have proved that these rosy statements had no foundation in fact, and that they were simply made for the purpose of deceiving the electors; for the then Premier, who embodied this alluring language in his election address, knew he would be starting for British Columbia as soon as the election should be over. The trick accomplished all that was intended; the people were deceived; but from that day to this we have heard nothing about arbitration. No money has been recouped to the Provincial treasury in virtue of our claims at Ottawa; the deficits have gone on as usual, the taxes have been extracted from the pockets of the people and the Provincial debt has been piled higher and higher. The people now have an opportunity of resenting all this falsehood and deception. Will they avail themselves of the opportunity; or will they condone all this wrong-doing and allow the Government to deceive them once more?

The above enumeration of facts does not by any means embrace the full catalogue of the Government's political crimes. They have set at naught the provisions of the constitution and have trampled under foot the principles of responsible government, by retaining in the office of Attorney-General, for the space of about a year, a man who had been rejected by the electors when he appealed to them for confirmation of his office. During of the years they have been in office they have squandered the public revenues and continue to squander them in the matter of our roads and bridges. Necessary repairs on our roads are not let to public competition; not is the work done on the roads at a season of the year when it would be most beneficial, from the viewpoint of convenience of economy. The public are allowed to suffer during the

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