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JAMES MCISAAC,

Editor & Proprietor.

Please don't delay your subscriptions for 1907. We need the money, we have earned it and shall esteem it a great favor if you remit now.

The Legislative Session.

The seven weeks Session of the Provincial Legislature came to a close, with almost dramatic suddenness, on Wednesday last. The Leader of the Opposition and his followers in the House had got the Government so completely on the run, that the Premier was evidently completely at sea as to the date of prorogation. This was the condition of things in the House up to midnight on Tuesday. At that stage the Leader of the Opposition asked if the business could not be finished on the following day. This came as a relief to the Government, and arrangements were at once commenced for winding up. It was quite evident that the Leader of the Opposition was master of the House, and that the Government were completely at sea, during the last few days of the session. This is the position to which the Government brought themselves by their arbitrary conduct, during the earlier stages of the session. The conduct of the Government was contemptible and abject in the extreme. Whenever they found their position untenable they had recourse to the despicable resort of hiding themselves behind their officials, their own employees. Of these they made scape goats, to shield themselves from the consequences of their political sins. This is particularly true as regards the Provincial auditor and the assistant Provincial Secretary. The public accounts were falsified, and all information regarding certain statements therein made, was refused the people's representatives. When the public accounts committee was called to investigate these matters, the officials possessing the necessary information were summoned; but, on the advice of the Premier, they were not allowed to tell. If the accounts were not falsified; if statements were not improperly entered therein, why refuse the information? Before the end of the session most of these manipulations were laid bare, and these exposures placed the Government in such a false and untenable position, that they were afraid even of some of their own supporters. Truth never suffers by investigation and the brutal conduct of the Speaker and the Government, in refusing to allow Mr. Newbery to be cross examined by the Leader of the Opposition, showed the Government's false position in that case. All these matters were brought home to the Government in the most forcible manner, by the Leader of the Opposition and his followers. The evidences of graft in connection with the Summer side Court House and Jail; the expenditure of large sums of money without authority of the Legislature or Governor's warrant; the evidences of crookedness, and squandering of public money in the Public Works Department, and numerous other derelictions of public duty were pressed home to the Government so strongly that there was no chance of escape. What was the answer? An attempt to apply the closure.

This is what they had recourse to, in the hope of shutting off discussion and preventing further exposure of their scandalous mismanagement of public business. When the resolution to appoint a committee to press our claims on the Federal Government was before the House, the Leader of the Opposition pointed out how this matter was delayed and mismanaged by the Government. Instead of having the committee embrace members from both sides of the House, or men from outside the House, who might be eminently qualified, the Government made it a purely party affair, and put no one on the committee except some of themselves, and some of the members supporting them in the House. Mr. Mathieson's able presentation of this matter and his exposure of the Government's improper and partisan method of appointing the committee, had the effect of eliciting from M. D. P. Irving, one of the Liberal members, an expression of opinion against the Government. He disapproved of the manner of appointing the committee and considered that broader lines should have been followed. He backed up his statements by voting with the Opposition when the House divided on the question. All the other Government members popped up like jumping jacks, to support the Premier. There were a number of other questions before the House during the session that should be reviewed; but our space this week will not permit of this. The Opposition steadily gained in power as the session advanced and at the close, as we have already stated, had the Government on the run.

The Budget Debate.

MR. MORSON'S SPEECH.

Mr. Morson took a retrospective view of the financial conditions and showed that the large indebtedness of the province at the present time is due to the actions of the present government. By calculating the interest on the \$51,000 left as a debt by the Davies Government in the same way that the Premier has calculated the interest on the balance left by the Conservatives it will be found that the amount would have been raised to \$103,000 by the time the Conservatives left office in 1891. Subtracting this amount from the \$128,000 which was the balance when the Conservatives left office, it will be found according to the Premier's method of calculation that the Conservatives had really added to the debt only \$24,000 or \$25,000. But the Premier says the Conservatives drew two hundred thousand dollars from capital. The interest on that would reduce our subsidy by \$10,000 a year. The Premier forgets to state that the Conservatives obtained an additional subsidy of \$20,000 a year for all time to come; and that this left \$10,000 a year in their favor. That's how the case would stand as to the Conservatives, if the Premier's method of calculation were adopted. When the Conservatives went out of office they left the Province ten thousand dollars a year better off than when they went into office. This statement cannot be successfully combated.

Mr. Morson contrasted the capital payments of the Conservatives with those of the Liberals and showed that those of the Liberals were but little more than those of the Conservatives. He ridiculed the government's capital account. They had put into ordinary revenue this year \$5,000 received for insurance and had charged the amount paid for rebuilding the Prince County jail to capital account. When they came into office they were pledged to make revenue and expenditure meet, and there has not been a credit balance shown at the end of any year since they came into power. But it is said there will be a surplus next year. The Patriot talks of a surplus of \$33,000. The article is misleading from the beginning. The Patriot editor must know, or ought to know, that of the estimated receipts

\$40,000 are to be borrowed. According to the Patriot the more money you can borrow the better. The deeper the government goes into debt the better for the Province. When the Conservatives got that twenty thousand dollars a year from the Dominion Government in 1887, they obtained an increase of net revenue to the amount of \$10,000 a year. And the minute of council on which it was based contained words of hope. It set forth that inasmuch as Public Works had been constructed on the mainland of Canada which would not be beneficial to this Province, the Dominion Government recognizes our rights to a larger subsidy on that account. Upon this principle when large expenditures are undertaken by the Government of Canada, for which this Island will receive little or no benefit, we can get a quid pro quo. Has the government tried to obtain this? No, they never got one cent on account of Public Works that have been undertaken throughout Canada in recent years. House adjourned.

Mr. Morson resumed the Budget debate. He compared the records of the two parties and declared that he could come to no other conclusion than that the affairs of this Province were not now conducted in the same straightforward, honest and economical manner as they were when the Conservatives were in office. He briefly reviewed the facts. Beginning with the report of Mr. F. W. Hyndman, which set forth that when the Davies Government left office the liabilities of the Province were \$51,740.87, Mr. Morson compared the financial conditions of the two periods.

When the Conservatives left office there was a provincial debt of \$128,000. This included the \$51,000 left by the Davies Administration for which Conservatives were not responsible. That amount at interest up to the time the Conservatives left office would have amounted to \$103,000. Therefore all that the Conservatives were responsible for was about \$24,000. This was according to the principle adopted by Premier Hazard. But it would be said the Conservatives drew \$200,000 from our capital at Ottawa. If they did there is no doubt that the Liberals who had a majority in the Legislative Council at that time could have voted against the bill if they had chosen to do so. But in the circumstances of the Province at that time the Liberals were quite willing that the sum of \$138,000 should be withdrawn from capital. They were unanimous for that. But the Government of that day stood out for authority to withdraw \$250,000—and they got it. Afterwards they withdrew only \$200,000. It is to be remembered that the Conservatives received an average revenue of only \$265,659. Their expenditures amounted to an average of \$275,785, so that their average deficit was little less than \$10,000 a year. The Conservatives imposed no taxation. But it will be said they collected amounts from the Land Office. So did the Liberal Government under Premier Peters and others. In point of fact the Liberals obtained nearly as much money from the Land Office as the Conservatives—and all went into current revenue. There was then no such thing as a so-called capital account. But the Liberals, after they got into power, despoiled the Land Office. They passed an act which set forth that debtors to the Land Office should have a discount of 12 1/2 per cent. This was taken advantage of by those who were wealthy and could command the money. But the poor man who owed the Land Office got no benefit whatever. At the same time the Royal Gazette was full of nothing but precept sales. The Liberals oppressed the poor man and gave the advantage to those who were well off. When the present Government party came into office in 1891, they said, "We'll have no taxation, we'll make ends meet." But the first thing they did was to apply taxes and they have collected taxes to the amount of more than three quarters of a million of dollars. The taxes have been getting bigger and bigger every year, and they have been imposed by the party who got into power waving the flag of "no taxation," and repeating the cry that there would be no more deficits. This year they claim a surplus. It was the first year they could even make pretence of doing so. To show their surplus they took \$5,000 insurance money, hid it away under casual revenues, and placed it to the credit of current account—and then charged the

amount they had expended in the repair of the burned building to capital account. If it were right to charge the one amount to capital, it is also right to credit the other to capital account. For the current year the Premier anticipates a deficit of something over \$7,000. But the Patriot says that he will show a surplus of \$33,000. But it neglects to say that he is going to borrow \$40,000. Why doesn't he borrow \$100,000 more and show a surplus of \$133,000. This is to be an election year and the Government will require a large amount of borrowed money, if any surplus at all is to be shown. Every election year is marked by its own heavy deficit. They have the unique distinction of piling up the biggest deficits and imposing the heaviest taxes. These are the results of the reckless expenditure they have made in times when it was necessary for the preservation of their party.

Last session the Leader of the Opposition proposed a resolution with reference to the prices of school books. The Opposition have indeed done all that they could do to impress upon the Government the necessity of obtaining school books at the lowest possible prices. Mr. Morson then criticised at length the conduct of the Government in taking credit for \$35,000 two months before it was received and so falsifying the accounts and deceiving the people. He also criticised at length the folly of the bargain made at the Ottawa Conference with reference to increased subsidy. He regretted that P. E. Island had been represented at the last Conference; for if our delegates had not been there this Province would have been bound by the bargain arrived at. We should have got just as much as we have obtained. They could give us no less, and we should not be bound by the acts of the delegates present at the Conference. Why did British Columbia get a million dollars more than her share under the scale adopted? British Columbia got the money because her representatives stood out for the rights of their Province. The greater part of this session has been marked by a struggle on the part of the Opposition to obtain information which the Government would not give. Witnesses before the Public Accounts Committee were instructed not to answer the questions put to them. What is the good of a Public Accounts Committee of that kind? The Opposition had no recourse but to put questions on the Order Book. For many of these questions the Premier has himself to blame. Mr. Morson then directed his attention to the Commissioner of Public Works, criticizing severely the unbusinesslike methods and careless acts of his department and denouncing his system of letting public works and public supplies without public tender. He referred particularly to Mr. Hinton's accounts and to the Commissioner's statement that as no tender had been received the goods had been obtained under the contracts of the previous year. In point of fact the contractor of the previous year was the Tryon Woolen Factory Company, the head and body of which was the hon. the Commissioner of Agriculture. Why, he asked the Commissioner renew a contract which had never existed. In 1896 Mr. Hinton had no contract with the Government. Yet the Commissioner says that the goods he supplied last year were supplied under a renewal of the old contract.

After recess Mr. Morson devoted his attention particularly to the criticism of the contract and report in connection with the construction of the Prince County Jail and Court House. He pointed out that shortly after the occurrence of the fire, Mr. H. O. Love had reported the walls of the building to be all right, and had given an estimate of what the repairs would cost. In the face of that report the Commissioner of Public Works called for tenders to tear down the old walls and to build up new ones. The plans and specifications were drawn requiring that the walls be torn down to the spring of the arch of the first floor windows. Two tenders were received; one from Schurman & Morrison. The Commissioner refused to bring down the original of these tenders and got his majority to vote down a motion that he be required to produce them. Afterwards, he laid these tenders on the table and they are now before the House. Mr. Love says, in his report that the probable cost of making the repairs would be about \$7,500. Afterwards the words seven were changed to eleven. If Mr. Love had made the change he could have easily struck out the words seven and written in the word eleven. Mr. Love said that the repairs should be made for about \$7,500 and the cognate

try has paid upwards of \$14,500. Why was Mr. Baker instructed to draw plans and specifications setting forth that the walls should be pulled down while Mr. Love's report that the walls were perfectly sound was in the office of the Commissioner of Public Works? Yet this was done and tenders were obtained. Afterwards, by private arrangement, eleven hundred dollars were taken off the amount of the contract price and the walls were allowed to stand. Mr. Morson had been informed by competent men that the saving of the contractors on this account was from \$4,000 to \$5,000. This would agree with Mr. Love's statement that the repairs could be made for \$7,500. That is a point that requires explanation on the part of the Commissioner of Public Works. Almost double the amount estimated has been paid. Mr. Love says: "I have made an examination and find the necessary work can be done for about \$7,500." But it cost \$14,660. The contract required that all the broken stone and brick in the walls should be replaced by new ones. But they were instead, covered with cement. In a few years, the frost and rain will take this cement peel off, and the fraud will be revealed. Mr. Morson said also that he had been informed that the gutters were to be of lead. The lead was replaced by zinc. In a few years the gutters will be corroded; and the staging which will be required before they can be replaced will alone cost, as he had been informed, about \$600. He hoped that the Commissioner would be able to make satisfactory explanation of the fact stated to him that some of the posts which were to have been of hard pine were replaced by hemlock. If that statement should be correct there is another slighting of the contract. Mr. P. J. Clarke, a son of the member from Summerside, was one of the contractors and the Hon. member himself was the witness to the contract. It looks very much like a family compact or at least like a family contract. If the Commissioner of Public Works can give an explanation of the matter he ought to do so. Mr. Morson then directed his attention specifically to the fact that the tender of Clarke & Morrison was dated on the first of July, and that it was all written in one hand, except the amount, \$14,456, written in another and different hand. It looks as if the tender had been put in with a blank, and the blank afterwards filled up. The tender of Messrs Schurman is all in one hand writing. These are the facts which anyone who examines the tenders can see and judge for himself.

Mr. Morson then reviewed the report of the Commissioner of the Stock Farm, commenting particularly upon the Ontario steer show, and the report of the Commissioner that the cattle in this Province have deteriorated in recent years. This, he said, is not creditable to the province and least of all to the Department of Agriculture. He thought that the Province would be better without a stock farm than with stock farm as it is at present mismanaged. The stock on the farm has become diseased. Hon. Mr. Reid said that there was no disease now on the Stock Farm. He contended that the disease had come in under the Conservatives. Mr. Morson—the Conservatives did it, twenty five years ago. If so, the Liberals have kept it there and disseminated it throughout the Province ever since. This shows the great want of men of capacity at the head of affairs. Mr. Morson concluded his very able speech by summing up the facts of the financial situation.

Ottawa Weekly Letter.

The Marine Department.

This week we have the printed copy of the Royal Commission report on the Civil Service, and with it the notes and memoranda by which Messrs. Fyfe and Basin (the two Liberal commissioners) justify their charges against the Marine Department. Some of the charges are that "work proceeds in a lumbering, haphazard way," with "constant blundering and confusion"; that there is "no sign of a directing head or intelligent purpose except that of spending as much money as possible"; that there is a "lack of conscience"; that officers must be "assisting the traders to get better prices from the Government than he can get anywhere else," and that some officials "are serving two masters."

TOO MUCH KANTSLIP.

The Commissioners find an official statement that \$25,000 could be saved in the Quebec agency alone by a change of methods. They find supplies ordered that were not required, and officers uncertain whether the goods were received. "A substance used on leather belts was supplied by an agent introduced to the officials by the Minister of Justice and commended by the Minister of Marine. This youth unloaded so much goods on the agency that the department could find no use for it, so the minister instructed the agent 'to try and get rid of them to the best advantage.'" (Page 77).

RECKLESS PRICES.

It was found that the department was buying goods at one agency, including \$10,000 worth from one firm, at extremely high retail prices. A comparison by the director of the Royal ship

yard, between prices paid at Quebec and those for which goods were supplied at the Royal works contains the following: (page 85):

Table with 3 columns: Articles, Paid at Quebec, Paid at Royal Shipyard. Items include Manila rope, Patent nails, Wire rope per ft., Lantern globes per doz, Cotter pins, Galvanized nails, Brass screws, Hammer handles per doz, Enamelled paint, Lamp Chimneys per doz, Washing soda, cwt., Deck brushes, doz, Copper wire lb, Cold blast lanterns, Whiting lb, Glass squee washers, Coal shovels, doz, Case lb, Emery cloth, doz.

A CRAZE FOR EXTINGUISHERS.

In 1904-5 the department had a mania for buying chemical fire extinguishers, and paid \$2,000 for a large order, of which 142 were sent to Quebec, and a large quantity stored in Montreal. This supply was forgotten, and the next year one Mr. Perreault was selling extinguishers, and the department at Quebec was instructed from Ottawa to buy from him. He bought heavily. Then Perreault was taken into the service, and the Quebec chief officer wrote that Perreault "has a ton of fire extinguishers on hand, which he would like to sell to the department, as he is a poor man with a family." It is added that "the late lamented minister was Perreault's friend and fully recognized the worthlessness of the said extinguishers." So the goods were bought. Afterwards there was a great struggle to dispose of the vast accumulation piled up in Montreal and Quebec. (Page 76.)

THE ACETYLENE BUOY EPIDEMIC.

Since the beginning of 1905 the Department of Marine has paid \$1,000,000 to the International Marine Signal Company, formerly T. L. Wilson, of Ottawa. This concern makes and sells acetylene gas buoys, which the department has bought in prodigious numbers, discarding expensive and serviceable appliances. Commissioners Fyfe and Basin show plainly their belief that the department bought these goods for other reasons than the good of the service. They point out that the first sample was offered for test in August, 1904. Only two months later the department decided that these gas buoys would now be used exclusively. No less than 46, costing \$48,000, were immediately ordered, and Wilson was allowed to import the material free of duty. The Commissioner says: "This was a good beginning for Mr. Wilson and with the splendid facilities extended to him by the department he has not been slow to better it. It may seem that in taking up with the new idea so largely and so suddenly the department was being misled by the practice required by these gas buoys. New ideas are not apt to reach a perfect development all at once, and the most ordinary consideration would seem to have called for more caution."

PROGRESSIVE IDEAS.

The Commission sarcastically observes that the official was "animated by very progressive ideas," and in July, 1906, got in recommendations for \$800,000, some buoys at \$15,000, some at \$8,500, some at \$5,000. The Commissioners assert that these were ordered before the officials knew what they would do with them. They find Wilson addressing the Marine and Fishery agent at Quebec "as if the latter was an employee of his own." (Page 153.) They charge that large orders were made for buoys of a class never tested, that the \$300,000 contract was made without authority of council, and while the department at Ottawa was always satisfied with the goods, the officers on the spot and the sea captains were continually pointing out their defects and trying in vain to learn how to handle them. The captain of the Lady Laurier beaught the department not to send out any more of the large and costly class, as they were unsuitable, but the Commissioners "bludge that the department 'pretended' to misunderstand." (Page 159.)

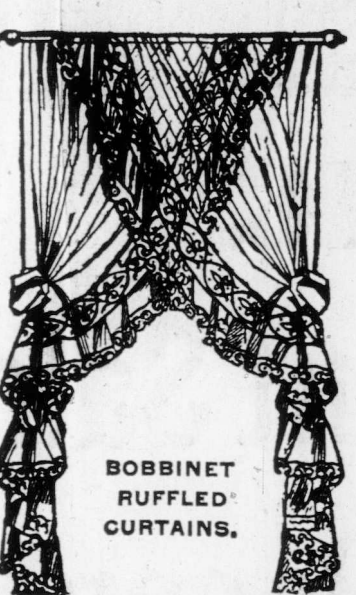
DUMPED ON B. C.

From east and west the agents of the department began to represent that they had not room to store the buoys as fast as they came, while the department at Ottawa kept insisting that there should be numerous spare buoys at the stations. The British Columbia agent hoped "more buoys would be shipped to the coast mill we are in a position to place them." Nevertheless more were sent, as to quote the Royal Commission report, "the department is evidently determined to make the B. C. agency the dumping ground for all the buoys Wilson can wheedle them into buying, whether they are wanted or not." (Page 168.)

SAGER TO SERVE THE COMPANY.

Meanwhile some buoys were going astray, some were out of order, and some were lying at the depot. At one time the Victoria agent had six of Wilson's gas buoys and four of his buoys on a C. P. R. wharf, with only one steamer to handle them, and begged that no more be sent. (Page 162.) Yet seven days later he was instructed that nine more buoys were about to be forwarded. In another three months orders were given to ship 10 more at \$5,000 each. The department paid \$5,550 for a buoy, which was sent to Prescott and remained there, apparently, for a year. Wilson then had an order from Brazil for one of that type and had none ready. The department kindly traded off this one for two \$5,000 buoys, which Wilson had on hand, and paid him the difference. The Commissioners say that the Government got neither discount nor bonus from this deal, and add "the sagerness of some of the officials of the department to serve the company in this matter without consideration for the Government was quite remarkable." (Page 165.) By June 15th, 1907, the department had paid \$325,050 to Wilson's company for 201 gas and whaling buoys, and \$27,000 additional for 18 buoys, with other payments for material and numerous orders ahead.

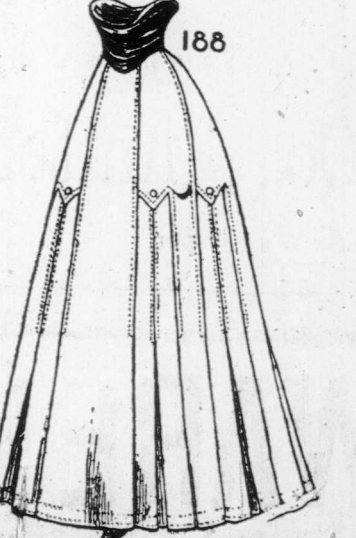
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