

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1912.

ONE PROVINCIAL DEFICIT.

In 1901 the Provincial Government received from the Dominion Government \$275,292.18 in settlement of the Eastern Extension claims. This large sum was placed in current revenue, the total of which, as given by the Auditor-General for that year was \$1,031,286.94. The total expenditures were placed at \$910,345.80, leaving an apparent surplus of \$120,941.14. Unfortunately the Province owed on the current account \$97,198.21, an accumulation of years. The over-expenditure on public works current account in addition to this was \$102,227.33 and there was an over-expenditure on account of the Provincial Hospital of \$21,543.70, making a total of \$520,969.24. The vote of the Legislature for public works that year was \$184,350.00, but the warrants paid the department totalled \$281,579.41, so that some portion of the over-drawn account was paid in that year out of money got from the Dominion.

At the close of the year there was a balance on hand of \$26,356.56, against which there were suspense accounts, one for \$15,487.26 on account of the royal reception, which took place in 1901, and \$11,738 the expenses of arbitration in connection with the Eastern Extension claims. These two amounts totalled \$27,225.26 or \$68.70 more than the balance on hand. But this was not the whole account by any means as there was still an over-draft of \$14,419.94 on account of the Provincial Hospital and \$88,995.33 on account of public works; together these amounts put up \$103,315.27. While considerably improved by the receipt of over a quarter of a million the financial position of the Province was by no means satisfactory at the beginning of the fiscal year 1902.

In 1901, notwithstanding the payment of the Eastern Extension claims, the Government of the day had borrowed \$2,000,000 on account of steel bridges. In 1902 they made two other loans in connection with the public works of the Province, one for \$100,000 for permanent bridges and the other for \$150,000 for damages alleged to have been caused by freshets in 1901 and 1902. In those days the permanent bridge expenditures were carried on in a somewhat peculiar manner as no detailed accounts were furnished the public accounts committee of the Legislature until the whole amount authorized had been expended, which meant that the accounts were never investigated at all. All the Legislature knew about these expenditures was furnished in a skeleton statement printed in the Public Works Report. From 1896 to 1902 inclusive, there had been several acts passed authorizing the construction of permanent bridges, the cost of which is given in 1902 as \$398,683.18, which was \$2,374.38 more than the receipts on that account.

All of this money was not expended as the law directed or as the Legislature intended. As a considerable percentage was annually used to make repairs on the different structures. Encouraged apparently by the absence of criticism on their methods the Government of the day decided in 1902 to make a clean sweep of all their over-expenditures and obtained legislative authority to issue \$100,000 in debentures for purpose of meeting the cost of permanent bridges, which the Chief Commissioner of Public Works may deem it necessary or advisable to construct, within the Province, and for making other improvements on public highways by work of a permanent character and also a further amount of \$150,000 for the purpose of meeting the extraordinary expense incurred, and to be incurred, by the Board of Works by reason of recent freshets.

That the Government intended to have things pretty much their own way in expending this money is shown by section three of the act, which is as follows: "No portion of the proceeds of the said debentures first authorized in section 1 shall be used to pay for the construction of any bridge, or bridge, except to take the place of bridges which have heretofore existed, unless by special authority of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council." In short, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council could do whatever they pleased with this money and they did as \$97,459.57 of the \$250,000 seems to have been dumped into the current account of the Board of Works for that year, mainly for the purpose of wiping out the deficit of \$88,895.33 of the previous year. It was certainly a great clean up that they made in 1902, but the law was stretched to the breaking point to do it.

The actual revenue of the Province on current account for the year 1902 was \$762,458.52 and the expenditures \$1,095,637.15, showing a deficit of \$333,178.64. To cover up this enormous over-expenditure the method of keeping accounts was changed and bonds were issued to the extent of \$250,000 on account of public works, and \$60,000 for smallpox expenses, although nothing like that sum had been expended when the bonds were issued. In view of such financial methods it is rather amusing to hear Mr. Cope denouncing the present Government for having made an over-expenditure to repair the bridges neglected by their predecessors.

Since the present Government has been in power there has been a genuine surplus every year excepting 1911, and the deficit for that year is less than the surpluses of the other years. Under the old regime there were deficits every year—there never was a real surplus in all the 25 years the present Opposition were in control of the finances of the Province. For fifteen years the permanent bridge account to which access could never be had by the Legislature was used to cover up the deficits of the Government. When this was not available the public works expenditures were not reported upon but hid away in a suspense account. Neither of these methods can be employed in deceiving the public today. Recent acts passed by the Legislature specify the bridges which are to be erected under the law authorizing the construction of permanent bridges. The Commissioner of Public Works is no longer the arbiter of what bridges shall or shall not be built from the appropriation. He cannot charge repairs which should be paid out of current revenue to capital account, and the new Audit Act prevents the hiding of expenditures by means of suspense accounts. Every dollar that is paid out of the public treasury has to appear in the public accounts and the Government is compelled to take the full responsibility for any expenditure beyond the legislative appropriation. It was not so in the good old days when Mr. Cope's friends ruled the roost. They could over-expend a third of a million of dollars in one year and no one would be the wiser until 12 months or sometimes more had elapsed. In two years Mr. Cope's friends expended half a million dollars or more of the people's money in wiping out over-drafts of one kind and another. The expenditures this sum represented may have been for legitimate purposes or they may have been otherwise. No one today can say whether they were or not, but it is doubtful if some of them could be accounted for any more satisfactory than were those expenditures in connection with the Central Railway.

NAMING THE WESTERN WHEAT.

After a spirited but friendly and non-political discussion, the House of Commons in committee on the Grain Bill has decided on the names by which the staple grains of the Canadian North West will in future be known. The decisions are of interest not only to the grain grower and the miller but to all the civilized world which receives and handles the products of Western Canada. Manitoba retains the honor she won years ago of being the first Province to produce the celebrated "No. 1 hard." There will be no change in the name. "Canada," "Canada Western," and "Prairie" were all considered as alternative descriptions, but were voted down. In other grains Manitoba must yield pride of place. In descriptions of oats, barley and flaxseed "Canada Western" will in future be the official title. "No. 1 Northwestern Canada flaxseed" will retain its name because by that it is well known.

The preference of Mr. Foster, as already mentioned in these columns, was to drop the name "Manitoba" in describing the wheat and substitute "Canada" or "Canada Western" as more representative. The change was stoutly opposed by members from Manitoba and other members from the East gave them some support. Western members, on the other hand, welcomed the chance to get rid of Manitoba's preeminence but were not unanimous as to the alternative title. So Mr. Foster took pity on the Postage Stamp Province, which, by the way, with its extended boundaries, will soon belie the title, and decided to allow the old name to stand. "The proposition I made," he said, "was to eliminate 'Manitoba' and substitute the words either 'Canada' or 'Canada Western.' I have not particularly changed my views with reference to it. But I never like trouble in the family, and some of the younger members of the family are very tenacious of the old name. I do not like to inflict any unnecessary pain upon good members of the family by withdrawing from them a name which has been dear to them from their youth up. They seem to have been cradled on Manitoba wheat, brought up on Manitoba Hard and No. 1 Northern, and it has gone to the very root and fibre of their being. I am not so hard hearted as to try to pull it up."

There was a further consideration. Exporters of four have expressed the opinion that to change the name "Manitoba" might have a far-reaching effect in regard to this community. The flour which is made from wheat is sold in countries to which it is exported under the name "Manitoba" of different grades and the large exporters fear that confusion and loss might result if the names were changed. For these reasons Mr. Foster thought it would be just as well to leave the name as at present; and this view prevailed.

But the House was by no means unanimous. Members from the Prairie Provinces were clearly disappointed and did not relinquish their standpoint without a struggle. Mr. Oliver of Edmonton, Mr. Turfitt of Assiniboia, and Mr. Knowles of Moosejaw fought stoutly for Alberta and Saskatchewan, declaring that they wanted a name that would include all the Prairie Provinces. Mr. Knowles humorously remarked that he saw in Mr. Foster's change of view the fine Italian hand of Mr. Rogers, the Minister of the Interior, who, of course hails from Manitoba. Champions appeared in the other side and quoted Dr. C. E. Saunders, "the best qualified man in Canada," to the effect that wheat coming from Southern Manitoba was "the best wheat grown in the world today." An amendment by Mr. Knowles to substitute "Canada Western," and a further amendment by Mr. Schaffner of Souris in favor of "Canada" were both defeated and "Manitoba No. 1 Hard Wheat" stands—stands that is unless the House should change it on the third reading of the bill which is not probable. Then came a discussion with regard to oats, barley and flaxseed and, as already mentioned, the change to "Canada Western" in place of "Manitoba" was agreed upon.

Looking at the disputed question from an impartial standpoint it can readily be understood that Alberta and Saskatchewan are prejudiced against the use of the name "Manitoba," but there are much wider interests to be considered. The class of wheat and flour branded as "Manitoba" has attained a great name in markets of the world. "Manitoba Hard" designates a certain kind of wheat and today has no reference to the particular part of the country in which it is grown. It is more than likely that buyers in Great Britain or even in the Maritime Provinces who asked for "Manitoba Hard" would have grave suspicions aroused if they were sent wheat called by another name.

There is a well established precedent in existence. Indian corn is called Indian corn whether it is grown in Japan or in Asia or in the Argentine. Giving it that name has never prejudiced the corn grown in the United States. It is the name of a certain grain. So in the same way by lapse of time "Manitoba Hard" has come to be the name of a certain species of wheat irrespective of where it is grown. It is generally a wiser course in a matter of this kind to leave well enough alone.

A LIBERAL LEGACY.

Under the caption of "A Costly Bungle," the Toronto News makes the following timely reference to the cost of constructing the National Transcontinental from Winnipeg to Moncton:

"The Government section of the National Transcontinental Railway from Winnipeg to the Atlantic Coast is to cost just under \$250,000,000. That is the official estimate submitted to Parliament by the Minister of Railways. This leaves out of account the \$10,000,000 which the country has to pay the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway as the result of the sale of its bonds below par. Including the national guarantee of the company's bonds on the Prairie and Maritime sections the enterprise will cost the country probably between \$400,000,000 and \$500,000,000 in cash and credit. This is the same railway that Mr. Fielding, as Finance Minister, assured Parliament would not lay a charge of more than \$53,000,000 upon the Dominion. Even today the Ministry is faced with the advisability of buying the company's forthcoming bond issue of \$25,000,000 to avoid further losses to the national exchequer. Certainly the late Government was recklessly extravagant and the public now have to pay the piper. Moreover, reduction of freight rates on a road that is costing so much will be a very difficult task."

Current Comment

(London Advertiser.)

How often glorious names descend upon inglorious wearers! Here is Lord Nelson, who owes his title and his fortune to England's darling hero, announcing that he will drop his subscriptions to charity because of the new budget taxes. The bishop of Willesden courageously rebukes him.

(Hamilton Spectator.)

So little ex-King Manuel of Portugal is likely to be married, is he? No sooner out of one mess than he hustles to tumble into another. In the language of Fuch, what fools these mortals be!

(Montreal Star.)

There may be a man rich enough to afford a set of suspenders for each pair of trousers, but we never heard of a case.

(Detroit Journal.)

Charles W. Morse has left Atlanta to get well at President Taft's political expense.

HERE'S THE ONLY ONE IN BOYS' SOCIETIES

Strathcona Castle of the Knights of King Arthur instituted in St. Stephen's Sunday School Saturday Night.

A most redoubtable company were to be seen in the Sunday school rooms of the St. Stephen's Presbyterian church last Saturday evening, when the first initiation ceremonies of Strathcona Castle of the Knights of King Arthur were held. Among those present were Christopher Columbus, Sir Henry Havelock, and many other heroes of modern and ancient history. No gentle reader, it was not a ghostly scene, but a non-secret society for boys in which each boy takes the name of his most popular hero while in the lodge.

The ceremonies as conducted last Saturday evening were carried out in a most successful manner and nine boys entered the lodge as pages, after having ridden the goat, besides going through other customary stunts. They were then taken before the king where they solemnly promised to keep to the high ideals of the lodge, and serve in the capacity of pages for twelve months and a day. After this period of time they will be initiated into the order of the "squires."

THE FAMINE IN CHINA.

To the Editor of The Standard: Sir—Last year through the kindly co-operation of the press, the attention of the citizens of St. John and of the people of the province was called to the distress in central China in consequence of the famine which prevailed. Today, while the outlook for China as a nation has improved, we regret to say that the same districts in China that suffered so severely a year ago are in a condition just as deplorable as when the former appeal for help was made. The famine that now prevails is partly a combination of the conditions existing last year and partly consequent upon the revolution. This will appear more fully in the information submitted herewith, sent to us by the very representative and thoroughly reliable, "Central China Relief Committee" of Shanghai. The personnel of this committee is all that can be desired. It includes such men as Consul General Wilder, the Right Rev. Bishop Graves, chairman; a number of clergymen, and a large number of influential residents of Shanghai, both native and foreign. The committee express their hope that the appeal for help need not be repeated after this year, but at this present crisis the misery of the Chinese who needs as never before the sympathy and help of the English-speaking people.

We commend to the consideration of the public the statements appended. Contributions may be paid to any of the undersigned members of the committee of the Evangelical Alliance or to the treasurer of the fund, Joshua Clawson, 23 Wellington Row. All contributions promptly acknowledged. This is a case where the words can be fittingly applied, "He gives twice who gives quickly."

W. O. RAYMOND, C. R. FLANDERS, J. H. A. ANDERSON, Committee.

St. John, N. B., Feb. 16, 1912.

Official Statement and Appeal issued by the Central China Famine Relief Committee, Shanghai, China.

The Situation. Two and a half million people in dire need of help.

Appeals received from three main districts aggregating 30,000 square miles with a population of several millions—the Hwai River district in northern Kiangsu and Anhui; the Wuhu district in the Yangtze Valley, and the Han-Kow district in Hupeh. The break up of families and the gradual lapse into a condition of apathy of the people in the Hwai River district with a population of five millions, of whom a million and a half will need relief; severe famine in the case of those unable to work. To make this labor count in preventing future floods. Dykes and canals will be repaired, and all work will be planned by competent engineers, so as to give it a practical place in a larger project of reclamation. To induce the government and local gentry, as far as possible, to give immediate relief and to undertake their own reclamation work. To co-operate with C. D. Cameron, the engineer sent out by the American Red Cross society, and with influential Chinese who are pledged to this work, in making a thorough study of the situation with a view to the formulation of a programme of conservation, which the new government will probably undertake. To make the alleviation of suffering in connection with this famine the occasion of a great expression of international goodwill to the new China. The China of yesterday, feared and hated the foreigner, and not without reason, the new China will respond to friendship.

We appeal to Canada and the United States to give \$1,000,000. Please send your contribution today. It will save life.

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