

close upon the heels of the hon. gentleman opposite. The story is of a hunter telling his friend how the hunter and his dogs chased a rabbit. The dogs, said the hunter, chased the little quadruped out of the alder cover across a swamp, dashed through a river and at last came so close upon the rabbit that the rabbit ran up a tree. "Why," returned his friend, "a rabbit cannot climb." "Well," said the hunter, "this rabbit had to climb." After Mr. Howlan got that telegram from the Minister of Railways the hon. gentleman had to come three days later with a telegram from his own leader. I will entertain the House with that telegram to show you how these gentlemen propose to make up for the loss of the fifteen millions of revenue. I will read the first letter, signed by Wilfred Laurier, addressed to the Hon. L. H. Davies, Charlottetown, as it is published in the *Island Guardian*, and dated at Arthabaskaville, 9th February:

"MY DEAR DAVIES,—I enclose you a copy of the letter which I have just sent to Mr. Higgs. I suppose it will be satisfactory. I have no time to write at length. We are deep in the fray, and things are looking remarkably well."

Now, let me read the letter to Mr. Higgs, sent by the same gentleman, and which appears in the same issue of the *Guardian*:

"ARTHABASKAVILLE, 9th February, 1891.

"B. D. HIGGS, Esq., Charlottetown, P.E.I.

"DEAR SIR,—I have your favour of the 2nd of February instant. I hardly would have thought that an expression of opinion as to the construction of a tunnel to connect the Island of Prince Edward with the mainland, should be required from me. Every man who has given any attention to the condition of things and to the necessities involved by the entering of the Island into Confederation, must admit that such a tunnel must be constructed, if the thing is reasonably practicable. The first requisite is to have an accurate survey and reliable estimates. I am only sorry that these were not obtained long ago."

I am sorry the hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) who has loaded our files with interesting Bills, and the hon. gentleman from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), who last year brought in interesting Bills in the interest of electoral purity, are not here, because their missionary work might be very well directed to that hon. gentleman himself; before they try to convert us hardened sinners, they would do well to try their prentice hand upon him. Now, I do not mean to say that I endorse in the slightest degree the letter or the spirit of the Bills of the member for West Huron and the member for North Norfolk. For my part I think that when hon. members of this House can be led to bring in such Bills, it indicates simply a hysterical and panicky condition of the public mind. I am not saying one word in condemnation of the position taken by the hon. member for Queen's, but I am simply showing what they propose to do as an initial step in meeting this tremendous loss of revenue.

Mr. DAVIES (P. E. I.) I am afraid that the tunnel has a poor chance at your hands.

Mr. WELDON. I do not know about that.

Mr. DAVIES (P. E. I.) Will you vote for it?

Mr. WELDON. I will not commit myself. I certainly will not take such an extreme and unreasonable position as the member for Centre Toronto (Mr. Cockburn) took the other day, who, I think, has got this same contagion of the narrowness of parish politics as the member for South Oxford. That is not all, neither is it the largest

nor the worst. I wish now to call the attention of the House to a matter of much greater importance. The tunnel project if carried out would involve an increase of \$10,000,000 to the debt with the additional interest charges; but there is a much greater charge which I desire to press upon the attention of the House, and I do so with much gravity and with a very imminent sense of present danger. The hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) was not the only man to whom letters were sent by the Opposition leader, and I am deeply disappointed that the leader of the Opposition is not in his place so that he might correct me if I am charging him with acts he has not done. I only know the facts as they are contained in the record, in *La Patrie*, a Liberal paper in Quebec, the *Toronto Globe*, the leading Liberal paper in Canada, and another Liberal paper in Quebec. The charge is this, that the member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), the leader of the Liberal party, speaking as he must have spoken and as he did speak in the name of the Liberal party, is alleged by his colleagues to have made very great and dangerous promises. It is within the memory of all, that some years ago Mr. Mowat, Mr. Mercier, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Blair met in the city of Quebec at what is known as the interprovincial conference to consider the scheme to amend the British North America Act, but which was merely a scheme to get the provincial subsidies largely increased and thus enhance the burden to the borne by the Canadian Exchequer. I have in my hands the record. They proposed to add, making their calculation on the census of 1881, \$1,500,000 to the subsidies of the provinces as an additional charge on the consolidated fund; and their scheme was, without entering into details, that when the census of 1891 was taken the subsidies were to be enlarged, and assuming the proposition that the population would grow 600,000 in ten years, which I hope and think is below the mark, there would have been an addition this year to the subsidies of \$480,000. So that next year if the scheme of the promoters had been carried out the revenues of Canada would be charged with an additional burden of \$2,000,000 per annum. This I think is a staggering proposal, in fact the most staggering demand made on this country since the Act of Union. There some anxiety regarding the Better Terms for Nova Scotia, and with respect to the readjustment of 1873, and some grumbling occurred on minor readjustments since then, but a proposal to increase by about one-half the entire subsidies paid to the provinces is a radical disturbance of the whole Terms of Union and is a scheme certainly of great moment, and I think of great danger. To those hon. members who have not had their attention called to the fact, it would be a matter of surprise to them to learn that the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) is declared by his good friend and colleague, Mr. Mercier, to have pledged to him, Mr. Mercier, that if he, Mr. Laurier, was elected, the financial terms of the interprovincial conference would be carried out, and those gentlemen with their deficit of \$15,000,000 at the outset and contingent liabilities in the shape of a tunnel were pledged to impose an additional annual burden on the exchequer of \$2,000,000. Those were indeed rapid advances in the way of settling the question of the finances of the country. I desire to place on record these statements of facts. The *Toronto Globe* of 10th February last