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VICTIMIZED BY OUR SO-CALLED REPRESENTATIVES.

The public of Victoria has doubtless waited patiently as the session of the Legislature dragged its slow length along for a word from the representatives of this city indicative of their deep interest in the well-being of their constituents. The debate on the address passed without a sound being heard. Still the people bided their time, feeling that when the budget came up for discussion, that being the one other occasion upon which latitude is permitted members, either the first, second, third or fourth member for Victoria, perchance all of them, would display some degree of interest in the cause of the city he represents, or they represent.

The budget debate is closed. Mr. Thompson had the floor yesterday, and we felt that at last the time had come for the public to hear of something to its advantage in regard to the charges committed to the keeping of the valorous four. The third member talked discursively upon many matters of abstract interest, but he made not a single allusion to the many subjects which have been pressed upon his attention and the attention of his colleagues by deputations and private individuals having to do with the promotion of Victoria's interests.

We confess that nothing was expected from the Premier as the senior and the most influential of the muzzled quartette. Mr. McBride had early made his position clear. He had stated as plainly as a politician whose principal qualification is "side-stepping" (to use a figure of speech he will most readily comprehend) that as a representative of the province at large he could not be expected to discharge, either before the executive council or before the legislature, his proper duty as the representative in a special sense of the city of Victoria. He did not care what the effect might be from a political or a party point of view, he was indifferent as to whether or not his decision should be to his political advantage, the request of a delegation which recently waited upon him could not expect a single particle of his sympathy or his support. That was the Premier's way of putting the case. But the transparent fact is that the senior representative of Victoria thinks more political capital is to be gained by snubbing and chastising the city he so patently misrepresents than by carrying out the pledge upon which he was elected—that if chosen as our representative he would strive to the utmost of his power "to do something for Victoria." Mr. McBride has represented Victoria for three years: what has he done to implement the terms upon which he purchased support? We doubt not that after he had administered his severe rebuff to the deputation which recently waited upon him, the Premier was warmly shaken by the hand and congratulated by his political master, the Attorney-General.

Nor was the instance under consideration the only opportunity Mr. McBride had to serve his constituency. If it were he might properly plead that Victorians had no right to ask for special privileges. There is the matter of the position of the city in respect of a future water supply. There is no question whatever that the city was given the right in 1873 to all water within a radius of twenty miles of its boundaries. That right has been usurped by a private corporation under cover of an act of the legislature of a subsequent date, it is true. But there is no question as to the moral rights of the city in the premises. The legislature, while giving the Esquimalt Water Company certain rights, unequivocally made such rights subject to the prior rights of the citizens of Victoria. The matter has become so complicated by legal chicanery that we are denied our plainly expressed rights. Now the legislature stands between the city and justice, again under the influence of legal quibbling and hair-splitting. We are not asking that the shareholders of the water company should be dealt with unjustly or robbed of a single sou of their investment; but we are contending that the city should not be placed in the position of being held up by this concern. The Premier has the power, if he would but exercise it, to put an end to this interminable squabble, precipitated by the legislature and capable of being remedied by the legislature. Has he raised one of his little fingers to help us as our representative? He sits comfortably in his chair, twiddles his thumbs, while his creatures murmur sentiments about the rights of capital. The rights of the public are of small moment in the estimation of these factotums when weighed in the balance against the interests of the citizens of Victoria.

As far as the people of this city are concerned, they might as well be represented in the legislature by the gargoyle upon the ceiling of the legislative chamber as by Messrs. McBride, Davey, Thompson and Behnen. The sole concern of these complacent gentlemen appears to be the selection of representatives of the government upon the license and police commissions and the distribution of public offices amongst workers in the great Conservative party. Mr. Ellison, the member for Okanagan, a gentleman whom we fear is without honor in the councils of the party, has had the courage to get up in his place and state his conviction that the government owes a duty to the city of Victoria. The leading members of the opposition have taken similar grounds. But the men whom we elected have been as dumb as oysters in every case in which they might have been expected to be our advocates. It is no wonder a suggestion has been made in all seriousness that Mr. Ellison should be asked to accept a nomination as representative of Victoria.

HOUSE GOES INTO SUPPLY

BUDGET DEBATE HAS BEEN DISPOSED OF

John Oliver Reviews the Government's Lack of Policy

—H. B. Thomson Speaks.

Legislative Press Gallery, Feb. 24.

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The chief speech made during the debate to-day was that of John Oliver. He reviewed the government's policy, or lack of policy, at considerable length, gave it credit in one or two points where it was possible, and pointed out wherein the best interests of the province called for a change.

H. B. Thomson, resuming the budget debate, complimented the government on increasing the vote for horticulture. British Columbia was to be congratulated on its immunity from fruit pests. In the United States there had been a falling off in the apple crop from 69,000,000 barrels in 1896 to 25,000,000 barrels in 1908. This was due to the ravages of fruit pests in the orchards. The immense market of the United States would have to look to Canada and the Pacific States for its supply.

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The great timber resources of the province and the manner in which they are attracting American capital was dwelt on by Mr. Thomson. He suggested that in order to enable farmers on Vancouver Island to clear off the land they should be allowed to form land clearing associations and borrow from the government to purchase logging and clearing outfits. If this was done the land would be cleared and made fit for agricultural purposes in ten years or less, instead of from fifty to seventy-five years, as it would at the present rate.

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John Oliver said he had no excuse to offer for taking part in the debate, as no time was wasted which was spent in discussing the business of the province. The member for Cowichan had hit the nail on the head when he said the province was more rich than lucky, though lucky in having the present finance minister in that office. That minister was the most conscientious, painstaking member of the government but he (Mr. Oliver) could not recede from the position that the government was a great deal more lucky than wise in the handling of the financial resources of the province.

In his estimate of the revenue for the last fiscal year the minister of finance had been \$2,839,000 under the facts, the actual revenue had only exceeded the estimate by 80 per cent. It must be admitted that the minister was more lucky than wise in framing his estimate last year. Any finance minister that could not come within 30 per cent. in his estimates was to be congratulated on his luck when he found a balance on the right side—sheer pure luck and nothing else. It was the same in his estimate of the income from timber licenses and Chinese head tax.

In the matter of the loan the results had justified the position taken by the opposition at the time the matter was before the House. Instead of paying 5 per cent. for ten years the opposition by resolution declared that the loan should only be made for three years, as financial conditions would improve and enable the minister of finance to borrow at a lower rate. The fact that the conditions had so improved as to result in that loan being paid off was a justification of the opposition's stand.

Wisdom of Government.

"I suppose we should believe that it is the wisdom of the government which caused the trees to grow up so that it should have a revenue," continued the member for Delta. "It was probably the inspiration of this government which induced the Dominion government to make arrangements for another great transcontinental railway. Possibly the great demand for the timber of British Columbia, this great speculative demand, has been caused to some extent by the construction of this railway, which will be able to haul with one locomotive five times the amount of freight the C. P. R. can haul. It may possibly be that the successful settlement of the prairies as a result of the policy of the Ottawa government has helped to create a demand for this timber."

Turning to the use made of the surplus, Mr. Oliver first dealt with the principle of expenditure, and condemned the spending of money without the consent of the House as unconstitutional. Special warrants to an aggregate of \$700,000 had been obtained during the recess and on this authority \$360,000 had been spent. It was claimed that this was necessary for the development of the province.

How Surplus Was Used.

"The chief work of development the government was engaged in last year by this great expenditure was the development of the opposition to the Dominion government in the late Dominion election," Mr. Oliver commented.

"We find that in the constituency of my fellow-farmer from Richmond, the president of the council, there was spent the large sum of \$58,000. That is in the immediate vicinity of Vancouver, which it was very important for my friends opposite to carry."

"And they carried it," was the quiet remark of Hon. Mr. Carter-Cotton.

"At a great cost to the province," retorted Mr. Oliver.

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Money Was Wasted.

Discussing the manner in which the money had been expended, Mr. Oliver asserted that much of it had been wasted. Road work was done at the wrong season of the year, with the result that it was not only not as well done, but cost far more than it should. There had been an expenditure on painting the bridges at New Westminster so large that it would be cheaper to let the iron rust away and build a new bridge when necessary than keep it painted at such a cost.

It was time for the abolition of tolls on this bridge. There was collected last year \$10,000 at a cost of \$3,400—the collection of tolls was done at a cost of 34 cents on the dollar. The existence of tolls was doing more to retard settlement on the Fraser river south of New Westminster than any other cause and the premier could confer no greater boon on the Royal City than their abolition.

"I am anxious to give the government every word of credit I can," declared Mr. Oliver, "it is so seldom I can give them a whole-hearted word of praise. I might quote the Colonist as praising the government, but the Colonist is no more authority. I understand, in fact."

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