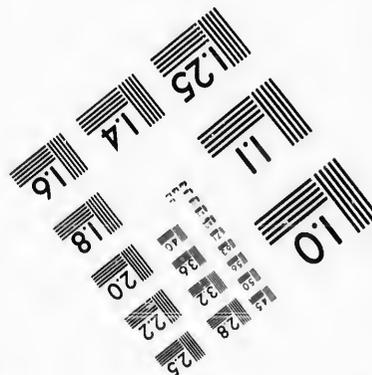
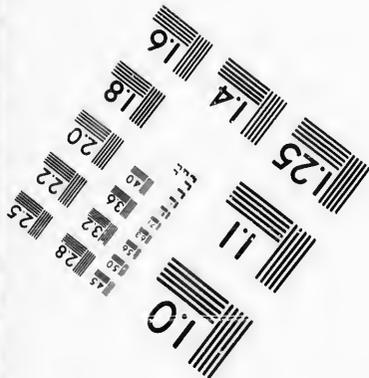
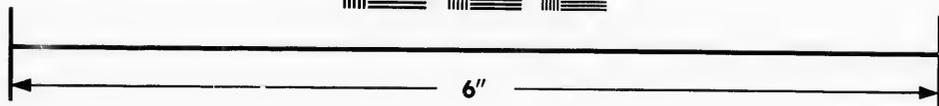
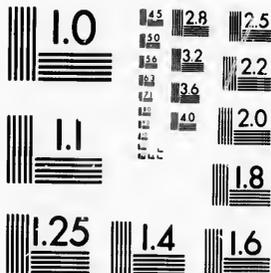


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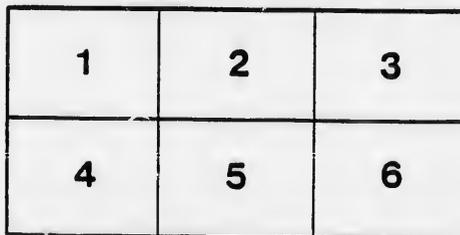
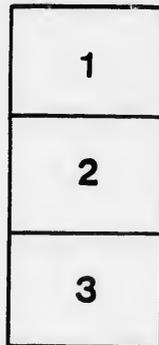
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Presented by  
Hon. J. S. Hall  
March, 1906.

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# A SCATHING EXPOSURE

OF

THE MISMANAGEMENT

OF THE

# PROVINCIAL FINANCES.

---

MR. JNO. S. HALL EXCORIATES THE TREASURER.

PROMISES CONTRASTED WITH PERFORMANCES.

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GAZETTE PRINTING COMPANY,  
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1890.

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# A SCATHING EXPOSURE

OF

## THE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL FINANCES.

**Mr. JNO. S. HALL Excoriates the Treasurer—Promises Contrasted with Performances.**

*From "The Gazette," Dec. 18, 1890.*

The following important speech was delivered in the Quebec Assembly on the 9th inst. by Mr. Jno. S. Hall, jr., member for Montreal West:—

Mr. Speaker—I feel that representing one of the divisions of Montreal I should say a few words with reference to the financial position of the province, as revealed by the estimates submitted to the House and the Budget speech delivered by the hon. Treasurer on Friday last. I might say the House has had a rare treat to-day in listening to the Hon. Mr. Robertson in his criticism of the Treasurer's speech, assuring us that he has lost none of his former vigor and leaving it quite evident, from the Treasurer's excited reply, that the thrusts have been driven home. Mr. Robertson aptly charges the hon. Treasurer with inventing and carrying into effect a new double-barrelled breach loading gun in twisting and manipulating his figures. I am not much of a sportsman now, but as the hon. Treasurer delivered one speech on Friday and one to-day I may conclude that both barrels of his gun have gone off and I can approach the figures with a certain degree of safety. I cannot concur in the method of the Treasurer in dealing with his subject. I have just read over his last four Budget speeches, and one thing strikes me as peculiar. In all these he labors hard to throw all the responsibility of his administration upon his predecessors, and nothing pleases him more than to abuse his predecessors. I should think that, now that we are dealing with his own administration, it might be well for him to defend and explain, in view of his promises and those of his party, his own acts and expenses. It is ex-

traordinary also for the Treasurer, in view of his flattering speeches on the bright financial situation of the province, to now say that he is

### POWERLESS TO MEET THE EXPENSES

without a loan, because the House has voted various sums. I contend it was and is his duty when the House is attempting to pass votes of money, if there are not sufficient moneys to meet the votes, to tell the House so plainly. Not only has he not done so, but both he and the Premier, by their speeches in and out of the House, have all along led the House and the country to believe that all these sums of money that had been voted could easily be paid. On this I will speak a little later on. Now, what my friend the Treasurer is charged with by the Hon. Mr. Robertson, is violating previous promises as to economy, in increasing expenditure in every department and in manipulating figures to throw discredit on former administrations to show that he had a surplus each year, while as a matter of fact none ever existed. Now, one of these manipulations consists in placing under the head of extraordinary or special expenditure amounts which should not be so included, and by eliminating these from current expenses endeavor to show a surplus. I will not weary the House with details of these items, but let us take some of them. Let us take for 1890-91, Court house, Sherbrooke, \$3,000; Court house, Iberville, \$3,000, and \$20,000 for night schools. Now, what does this mean? Take it in a business way, it means an expense to these court houses last year, but it also means, and every one knows it means, that next year a similar or like amount is required for other court houses. For these repairs and im-

provements we should provide out of ordinary revenue. Well let us see how the hon. Treasurer defined expenses of this nature in 1887, when he made his first Budget speech, and when he was

FREE FROM POLITICAL EXIGENCIES

or fetters. The Hon. Mr. Robertson had a vote passed of an extra and special expense of \$100,000 for colonization over and above the amount usually voted. Here is what Mr. Shehyn said at page 10 of his speech:— "I have included in the ordinary expenses a sum of \$100,000 applied to colonization roads. This sum, although specified in the Budget as to be taken from a loan, really falls into the category of ordinary expenses. It is quite true that it is exceptional on account of its figure, but not so on account of its use, since expenses of this nature occur every year. How now can he come back on this definition and pretend that these expenses of repairs to court houses, gaols, and night schools, etc., should not be considered as expenses of 'a nature occurring every year.'" If he can do this we will find practically everything come under this heading and then how is it to be paid for? Are we to borrow money to do so, and if the latter, how are we to pay the interest? It seems to me useless to try and hide the situation by a transfiguration in the accounts.

MR. SHEHYN'S ESTIMATES.

Now let us take the Treasurer's speeches for the last few years and examine his political or financial prognostications. He always preached economy and retrenchment. In his speech he promised, with the assistance of the Premier, who was then Attorney-General, to reduce the expenses of the administration; reforms were also promised in the Department of Crown Lands, and, to a certainty, the expenses of legislation and civil government were to be materially reduced from their extravagant figure. I cannot take up the time going through every year, but let us take his speech of 1887. The following are his estimates, and also the actual result:—

	Estimates. 1887-88.	Actual Expenditure 1887-88.
Public debt.....	\$1,074,363	\$1,103,700
Legislation.....	181,785	228,994
Civil government.....	192,850	208,677
Justice.....	471,122	554,155
Education.....	371,085	375,458
Agriculture.....	155,150	192,500
Public works.....	58,906	145,903
Asylums.....	230,000	241,000
Charities.....	39,316	39,316
Miscellaneous.....	226,250	274,130
	<u>\$3,000,829</u>	<u>\$3,365,026</u>

This you will see, Mr. Speaker, was not a good beginning, but still they are facts. Perhaps now it would be well for the Treasurer to think over these figures, and see if he is right in attacking the hon. member for Sherbrooke, and also to see if he has kept his promise. I need not go into other years; they are on the same basis, but let us take the facts in other years, and show the general expenditure, and I will take as a commencement and average year 1885-1886, the last year of the Ross-Taillon Government. I must also ask the House to bear in mind that these expenses are within the control of the Government. The following were expenses in the various departments during the years given.

CROWN LANDS.

1885-1886.....	\$130,000
1886-1887.....	154,111
1887-1888.....	128,750
1888-1889.....	201,200
1889-1890.....	250,032

In the year 1887-88 there appears a wonderful diminution, but in this year the new invention of giving letters of credit arose, and the result of these appears in the year 1888-1889. Let us now take expenses of the administration of justice. Of course my friend, the present Attorney-General, is not responsible for this; but in view of the special declaration made by the Treasurer of the extravagance in this department and the determined and combined intention of his and the Premier's to reduce it, the figures are interesting and perhaps testimony of promises.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

1885-1886.....	\$454,173
1886-1887.....	497,369
1887-1888.....	555,310
1888-1889.....	559,124
1889-1890.....	599,883

This shows an increase over the administration, of which the hon. member for Sherbrooke was Treasurer, of \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually. Coming now to the question of legislation, which is so largely under the control of the Government, we find the expenditure to have been:

LEGISLATION.

1885-1886.....	\$181,987
1886-1887.....	278,169
1887-1888.....	228,994
1888-1889.....	231,812
1889-1890.....	312,948

I will take up but one more heading to again show that we have a right to complain and accuse the Government of extravagance:—

## CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

1885-1886	.....	\$183,675
1886-1887	.....	193,904
1887-1888	.....	208,677
1888-1889	.....	236,987
1889-1890	.....	255,144

Now, Mr. Speaker, candidly and fairly, have we not good cause and justification to charge the Government with reckless and useless expenditure, and especially so when we find no beneficial results? Can we not use the Treasurer's own words and accuse him of extravagance and incompetency, and as having violated all the party's pledges and promises?

Let us now come to another feature of the hon. Treasurer's speeches, and as an illustration I will take the expenditure by him on

## THE QUEBEC COURT HOUSE

and the Parliament buildings. It has special bearing on account of the charges that the Treasurer made against his predecessors on this score, charging them as he did and as I will show from his own speeches with incompetency, imbecility and practically criminal negligence. Now, sir, I don't wonder my friend, Mr. Robertson, resent'd these charges, and I do, too, and I am here to-night to put these charges not on Mr. Robertson, but on Mr. Shehyn. Let us see with what apparently but now simulated righteous indignation Mr. Shehyn qualified the conduct of his predecessors. Take his speech of 1887, and in order that I may do him full justice and let the country pronounce the verdict, I will take his own words. He makes an assault on the general expenditure on these buildings and then continues:

"Nevertheless this is not all. \* \* \* We shall thus have still more to pay for them in addition to the \$157,042.94 due on the 1st February, in excess of the estimate of the hon. member for Sherbrooke. According to an estimate prepared with the utmost care by the architect of the Department of Public Works, and by Mr. Lesage, the assistant commissioner, the works that will be executed between the 1st February and the 30th June, 1887, will necessitate an outlay of \$52,823.15 for the court house, and of \$40,113.91 for the Parliament buildings, making a total of \$92,937.16, and when this sum is added to the increase of expenses already noted for the 1st February, it will be found that my hon. friend the member for Sherbrooke's estimates for these works, \$128,120, will be exceeded by \$250,000."

In this quotation note that estimates have been made "with the utmost care" and these by the architect and also that the hon. Treasurer emphasises the fact that the Hon. Mr. Robertson is astray \$250,000.

This is a large sum but we must bear it in mind to compare it with more than double the amount the Hon. Mr. Shehyn was astray later on. Let us continue Mr. Shehyn's quotations:—

"Mr. Speaker, let me say this is rather inexplicable. If my hon. predecessor did not knowingly and deliberately mislead the House the late Government gave proof of an incompetence, of a recklessness which I cannot refrain from characterizing as inexcusable. That there was inexcusable carelessness on the part of our predecessors in the direction of the undertakings in question we have ascertained beyond doubt."

Further on, the same subject in the same speech, he says:—

"If the hon. member was sincere, if he was not deliberately misleading the House, what should we think of his competency and that of his colleagues? His 'large enough' figures to fully complete these buildings and the furnishing and heating form a total of \$289,740. He made this positive declaration to the House on the 7th May, 1888." \* \* \* \* \* "The statements supplied by the officers of the Public Works and Treasury departments establish that when completed the Quebec Court house will cost \$528,210.71 and the Parliament buildings \$379,584.14. \* \* \* \* \* As will be seen the two buildings were to have cost, according to the original contracts, \$320,160.84; but thanks to the unpardonable carelessness with which the works were supervised and directed by our predecessors these two undertakings are going to cost \$1,107,794.95 or \$787,634.21 more than their contract price.

"I ask you in all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, whether it was possible to give more absolute proof of want of competence and administrative capacity."

Now, Sir, this is strong language and we can well imagine the assumed indignation of the Hon. Mr. Shehyn. But, after all, there are two things clear. Mr. Shehyn knew the state of affairs about these buildings. He knew, as he styled it himself, the incompetency, the carelessness and the recklessness of his predecessors. He had also before him reports made with the "greatest care" by his officers and let us see what he has done and what he, with his eyes open, has spent upon the buildings.

## QUEBEC COURT HOUSE.

1887	.....	\$193,212
1888	.....	210,000
1889	.....	42,733
1890	.....	155,000
		\$600,945

## PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

1888	.....	\$ 250,000
1889	.....	125,729
1890	.....	162,780
1891, estimated	.....	20,000
1892, estimated	.....	32,000

\$590,489

In other words, Mr. Shehyn complained bitterly that these buildings were going to cost \$1,107,794, while as a matter of fact this sum was spent and an additional sum as above stated of \$1,245,471 has been spent by him or more than was recklessly, he says, spent by his predecessors. Every one knows the condition these buildings were in in 1887, both

PRACTICALLY COMPLETE AND IN USE

and occupation. I think we could safely apply Mr. Shehyn's strictures to himself and transpose the names.

Let us come to the next question of the surpluses declared to exist by Mr. Shehyn and none existed before. In his speech of 1887 his surplus was to be \$80,193.23, or if he got an increased revenue, as he actually did from the Crown lands, it was to be \$157,927. What are the facts? In this speech he never calculated on receiving during that year, as he did receive:—

From Ontario.....	\$100,000
From arrears commercial corporation taxes .....	558,000
Current tax of corporations.....	125,000
	<u>\$783,000</u>

Yet he took in this large sum as an ordinary receipt and paid it out generally.

Hon. Mr. Mercier—Does the honorable member know that the surplus that year was really \$373,196?

Mr. Hail—Yes; I know that the Treasurer claimed that as a surplus, but Mr. Shehyn had to admit the charges made by Mr. Desjardins that this surplus was not according to Mr. Shehyn's promises, but was made out of these very unusual receipts which Mr. Shehyn never contemplated, and if he had not received them he would have been \$500,000 to the bad—that is he promised a surplus of \$157,927; but this was not realized, and he spent besides \$410,000 out of the \$783,000 received as above, which left him with the \$373,000 as a surplus. But, sir, I don't ask the House to take my view of this, but I will take Mr. Shehyn himself. I have before me a speech said to have been made by Mr. Shehyn on 8th March, 1889. I don't know if the speech was delivered, but, anyway, it has been printed and circulated, and here is what the Treasurer says in answer to the bullets of Mr. Desjardins:—"The \$100,000 from Ontario and the \$558,393 from arrears of taxes are entered in the public accounts for 1888, and it is with these sums that I obtained a surplus of \$373,196." So much for the surplus of

1888. Going on to the other years I will only give his promises, and show generally the realization:—

1888—Promised surplus.....	\$88,413
1889— " " .....	52,502
1890— " " .....	34,877

In his second speech this year the paper reign with a surplus disappears and he announces now quite grandly we have

TO MEET A FLOATING LIABILITY

of \$6,700,000. Well, sir, was the hon. gentleman misleading the House in promising and prophesying a surplus each year? Strip the Public Accounts of all verblage, set aside the fine distinctions of capital, of ordinary and special expenditure and come down to hard facts. What ever was said or prophesied we have spent right and left without regard to principles, and at the end of a four years' reign we have \$6,700,000 floating liabilities, no revenue to pay them and no asset to represent them. Surely in this state of affairs Mr. Robertson is right in charging the Treasurer, though it may not be Parliamentary, with a great deal of audacity. We come now to the Treasurer's apology. This we must divide into two parts: (1) He says he had to pay the debts of his predecessors; (2) he says the House voted these various sums and he must now provide for them.

On the first point this is an old story, and now threadbare; but examining some of these debts one can see the ludicrous side of it. I have not time to go into them all, but take one for \$10,000—the Lockwood claim. Imagine the Treasurer putting that down as a debt of his predecessors. This was a claim that had been rejected by several prior administrations, including the Joly administration, as having no existence. Yet it remained for the men now in power to resurrect it and pay it, notwithstanding we on this side of the House opposed and condemned it.

Why does he not tell the country he has to pay for useless and unnecessary expenditures and increased cost of administration? Why not say he had among other sums to pay \$10,000 for an interprovincial conference out of which nothing came; \$15,000 for a commission on agriculture that made two reports that were never acted on, and the same thing for \$15,000 odd paid for commission respecting the asylums; or \$15,000 he is now going to pay Messrs. Gilmour, whom he and his friends so fiercely on every occasion condemned for their costs in the Paradis suits, and in which they were unsuccessful?

I might go on further, but the above will be sufficient samples. Secondly, his excuse is the House has voted these sums and payments. Well,

THE MINISTRY IS RESPONSIBLE

for this, and further, it was the duty of the Treasurer to warn the House, and when we offered motions of want of confidence and of warning to the extravagances the Treasurer was not only silent, but voted in favor of these expenditures. Further, the Treasurer and the Government were, to use strong language, but applicable, obtaining money under false pretences. Has not the Treasurer in holding figures showing surpluses each year led his party to believe there were ample funds for all these expenditures? Why, sir, what did the Treasurer say in his last Budget speech on the 21st February, 1890, not ten months ago. I will give his own words:

"If, on the one hand, the services just enumerated (and he has been alluding to some items of general expenditure) have cost us more, no one, I am sure, will attempt to blame us for having increased for objects so useful and so necessary to the province the expenses of those services, and, on the other, we have succeeded by a wise and firm administration in finding the means to meet the requirements of our policy."

And again, in the conclusion of his speech, he adds:

"As for the financial situation I think I can safely assert, without fear of serious contradiction, that it is infinitely superior to what it was when we came into power. With our present resources we have succeeded in covering past deficits, meeting the increase in the interest service, providing for unavoidable expenses and in showing a respectable surplus. This is certainly the best proof that our exertions have not been unsuccessful."

On the same evening after Mr. Desjardins had exposed the Treasurer's figures and openly stated they were wrong, and that notwithstanding the increased revenue the figures showed enormous deficits, a floating debt of about six million dollars in round numbers, and that a loan was necessary, what did the Premier say. Let me give you his words also. After alluding to the railway subsidies he says:—

"We have paid a fourth or fifth of these subsidies without borrowing a cent; we have paid \$400,000 to the Jesuits; we have paid \$100,000 for the construction of iron bridges; we have paid the \$50,000 for seed grain; we have paid all these sums, which you know of, and yet these gentlemen have the audacity to tell you that we are leading the country to bankruptcy. \* \* \* \* And he (Mr. Desjardins) asserts with infallible knowledge that the treasury is empty and we must borrow. Well, Mr. Speaker, let him say so; the province of Quebec is not the less in a prosperous

state and the treasury in excellent condition."

Now, sir, how can we characterize these declarations and statements made, not on the hustings, but from the responsible places of the Premier and Treasurer in the House. They must have known the true situation, and the Treasurer has just told us. In less than four years he has a floating indebtedness of \$6,700,000

WITH NOT A CENT TO PAY IT,

nor any asset to pay it. For 1890 our ordinary expenses were \$800,000 more than in 1886, taking Mr. Shebyn's own classification of the accounts.

The Treasurer's statement shows for years of 1889-90 a deficit of \$551,963, or that amount more paid out than received from the ordinary revenue of the year, and his estimates show for the current year a larger deficit. And all this has taken place during these years when he received as special sums—\$100,000—for education from Ontario, which should have been invested but has gone into the ordinary cost; \$556,000 arrears of tax on commercial corporations; \$125,000 in settlement of a debt for prisoners from the city of Montreal; \$150,000 from the proceeds of two sales of Crown lands, or a total of \$931,000, and also annually each year in revenue \$125,000 from the commercial corporations; \$150,000 increased dues from ground rents and timber dues, and from \$40,000 to, during the last two years, \$130,000 increase from licenses. The expenditure can be taken from the Treasurer's own figures and classification:—

1885-1886—Ordinary .....	\$3,088,163
Special .....	1,052,903
Total .....	\$4,141,066
1886-1887—Ordinary .....	\$3,289,697
Special .....	1,608,917
Total .....	\$4,798,615
1887-1888—Ordinary .....	\$3,365,082
Special .....	2,851,710
Total .....	\$6,216,793
1888-1889—Ordinary .....	\$3,543,618
Special .....	1,580,518
Total .....	\$5,124,136
1889-1890—Ordinary .....	\$3,839,839
Special .....	1,473,967
Total .....	\$5,312,907
ESTIMATED BY THE TREASURER.	
1890-1891—Ordinary .....	\$3,425,945
Special .....	1,452,183
Total .....	\$4,877,828

1891-1892—Ordinary .....	\$3,558,894
Special.....	1,826,581
Total.....	\$5,385,475

There is but little doubt these estimates for these two will be exceeded very largely, as they have been in the past years. Yet the Treasurer's estimates for receipts in these years is \$3,528,677 80 for the year 1890-1891, and \$3,602,835. I know, sir, that figures are very tedious to listen to, and I will not, as I might, go into the question of the

#### INCREASE IN THE PUBLIC DEBT,

and the question of these trust funds. Suffice the calculation of our funded debt on 30th June, 1887, according to Mr. Shehyn's figures, was \$18,155,013, with certain assets on hand reducing "the net figure of the consolidated debt or the excess of that debt over the assets was \$8,161,813. It has now been increased \$3,500,000 by the loan in 1887 and will be increased by six or seven million more with the present floating debt and no assets to show or an increase by the present administration in less than four years of at least \$10,000,000 more.

Over \$2,000,000 of trust funds and railway deposits received and paid out indiscriminately for ordinary purposes; and hundreds of thousands of dollars of the Municipal Loan fund remitted in counties for the sole purpose of assisting Government candidates in elections.

It does appear to me the situation is

not salubrious, the treasury is not in excellent condition, the age of a surplus does not exist nor is there any diminution in the extent of the expenditure. We are willing to see the country develop and assist in its progress, but we should all require the Treasurer to show us how we are to pay the debts we have and bring our expenditure within our income. It is bad principle without assets to have recourse to loans to meeting floating indebtedness. To me it would seem to indicate we will soon have to borrow to pay the interest. I sympathize with the Treasurer on account of the demands made on him and it is time the people of the province should be educated to the point of assisting themselves in the development of the country and not be running every minute to the Treasurer for subscriptions and aids to horse-trots, damages from hail storms, deepening rivers, building piers, etc.

In conclusion, I hope the Treasurer will not feel that I have sometimes used hard language, but he must remember he condemned my friends, his predecessors, and more particularly my friend, the Hon. Mr. Robertson, and I thought it only well to criticise his own figures and to say that the questions of misleading the House by manipulating figures, the charges of extravagance, recklessness, incompetency and lack of administrative capacity might be properly charged to others, but not on my friend, the Hon. Mr. Robertson.

