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Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions

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1980

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No. 3.

INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE.

THE HISTORY
OF THE
LAST FOUR YEARS.
—
1887-8.

The Parliament which has expired was the sixth since the union of the colonies. After the elections of February 22nd, 1887, the first Session of the new Parliament was opened on the 13th April.

The principal characteristics of the session were :

1st.—The strengthening of the National Policy by the revision of the Tariff and the imposition of duties, with the object of developing the Iron Industries of the country.

2nd.—The further attempt, in continuance of previous efforts, to develop the country's resources by means of practical encouragement to railways.

3rd.—The encouragement given to the more scientific and profitable pursuit of farming by the establishment and maintenance of experimental farms at various points in the several provinces.

To the first proposition, *i.e.*, for developing our Iron Industries, Sir Richard Cartwright objected: "To my mind, if we can produce charcoal iron for export at all, we could do it just as well in the past as we are likely to do by reason of anything the honourable gentleman proposes to do in that direction."—Hans., 1887, p. 417.

Mr. Charlton objected to the iron duties on the ground that, as in the United States, they "gave an undue stimulus to the iron business of that country," &c.

RAILWAY SUBSIDIES.

With regard to the railway subsidies, \$1,027,041, Mr. McMullen, one of the most active and trusted of the Opposition, said: "I have to express my regret that the Government have decided to continue, in a new Parliament, the policy of subsidising short lines of railways," &c. Sir Richard Cartwright said: "It is quite true that if I had the power I would have stopped these proceedings from the start," *i.e.*, that he was opposed to all such railway subsidies.

To the proposition for the establishment of Experimental Farms (\$90,000), the Opposition did not offer any protest as to the principle.

During the year ending 30th June, 1888:

1st.—The interest on the gross debt of the Dominion was still further reduced, the rate in 1867 having been \$4.64 per cent., in 1887 \$3.54, and in 1888 \$3.45.

2nd.—A loan of £4,000,000 sterling was placed on the market at the high figure of £95.1.0 at 3 per cent. This was the first 3 per cent. loan ever placed on the English market by a British Colony, and so good was the credit of the country that whereas we wanted only £4,000,000 the sums offered amounted to £12,000,000.

3rd.—The trade of the country showed the following satisfactory condition:

EXPORTS.

1887.....	\$ 89,515,811
1888.....	90,203,000

IMPORTS.

1887.....	\$112,892,236
1888.....	110,894,894

The decreased imports being yet higher than those of 1885 and 1886.

1888-9.

The Principal Features of the Parliamentary Year 1888-9 were as follows :

1st.—The treaty entered into with the United States for the settlement of the vexatious questions regarding the fisheries.

2nd.—The improvement in the means of government in the North-West Territories of the Dominion.

With regard to the treaty, the Opposition in Ontario were disposed to rest their objections to it on the ground that it was entered on at a time of political excitement in the United States (Sir R. Cartwright, in Hansard, p. 846) when Canada could not expect fair play—an objection which would forever close all negotiations, inasmuch as there is always political excitement in the United States, and one presidential campaign begins as soon as the previous one closes.

But Mr. Davies, of Prince Edward Island, objected to the treaty and declared that the British plenipotentiaries had given everything away, although, as Sir John Thompson reminded him, the cry in the United States was that the Canadian and British envoys had captured the Americans.

The action of the United States Senate and of President Cleveland rendered all further discussion on this question useless for the present.

During the year ending 30th June, 1889, the accounts show a surplus as follows:—

Revenue.....	\$38,782,870
Expenditure.....	36,917,834
Surplus.....	<u>\$1,875,036</u>

The sum \$4,420,313 was expended on Railways, Canals and Public works; and the sum of \$846,721 on subsidies to railways under the plan of opening up the country so much objected to by Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. McMullen.

The trade of the country shows as follows:

EXPORTS.

1887	\$89,515,811
1889	39,189,167

IMPORTS.

1887	\$112,892,236
1889	115,224,931

1889-90.

The year ending June 30th, 1890, was a year full of most interesting public events, every one of which is well calculated to win public respect and confidence for Sir John Macdonald's administration.

1st. The seizures of Canadian vessels by American cruisers in Behring Sea for alleged violation of American laws, gave rise to what is publicly known as the Behring Sea question; the discussion of which has been conducted by Lord Salisbury with ability and vigour, aided by the industrious and vigilant Minister of Marine of Canada, Hon. Mr. Tupper, who has followed with care and ability the course of the correspondence. No political issue is involved in this correspondence, and the

Government will of course have the fullest support that the public can give them in maintaining a just view of international law and the just rights of Canadian sealers.

2nd. The report of the Royal Commission on Labour, the appointment of which Sir John Macdonald had promised in his address to the workingmen in Ottawa in 1883, was brought before Parliament. It forms a magna charta of the labouring classes in Canada, and shows the care with which the Veteran Premier safeguards the interests of all classes in the community. No political issue was involved in either the appointment of the Royal Commission or in the preparation of its report.

In consequence of the report of the commission, an Act to establish a Bureau of Labour Statistics was passed in the session of 1890. This Act was supplementary to the census, the schedules of the latter embodying many important questions relating to Labour, the answers to which will form a basis from which the Bureau can start further investigations into matters of interest to the Labour of the country.

The finances of the year ending June 30th, 1890, were especially favourable.

The sum of \$1,678,195 was paid as subsidies to those railways to which the Opposition so much object.

The rate of interest on the gross debt fell from \$3.52 to \$3.37; the net rate from \$3.07 to \$2.99.

The surplus of revenue over expenditure was \$3,885,893.

A TEN YEARS' RECORD.

Since the present Government came into power in 1878, their record with regard to the consolidated fund is as follows, the financial year 1880-81 being the first for which they were responsible, as the estimates and expenditures for 1879-80 had been prepared by their predecessors:—

SURPLUS.

1880-81.....	\$ 4,132,743
1881-82.....	6,316,351
1882-83.....	7,064,492
1883-84.....	754,255
1886-87.....	97,313
1888-89.....	1,865,035
1889-90.....	3,885,893

Total Surpluses.....\$24,116,082

DEFICITS.

1884-85	\$2,240,058
1885-86	5,834,571
1887-88	810,031

Total Deficits\$8,884,660

Total Surpluses.....\$24,116,082

Total Deficits 8,884,660

Total Surpluses.....\$15,231,422

SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT OF SURPLUSES.

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