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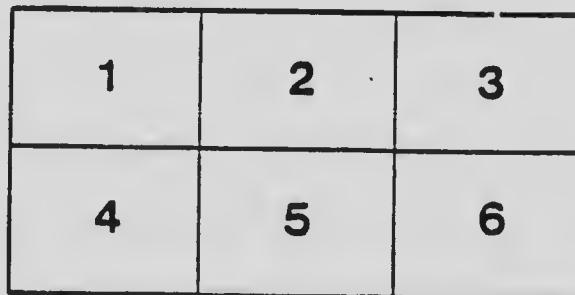
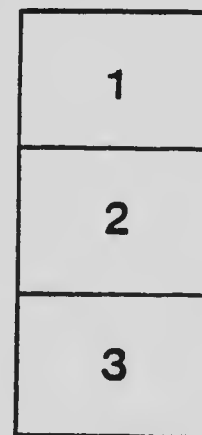
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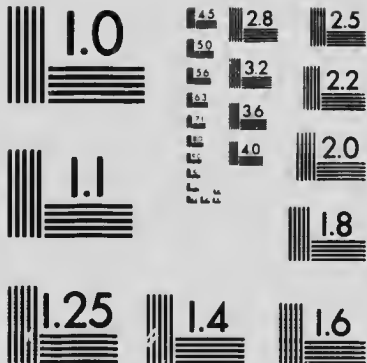
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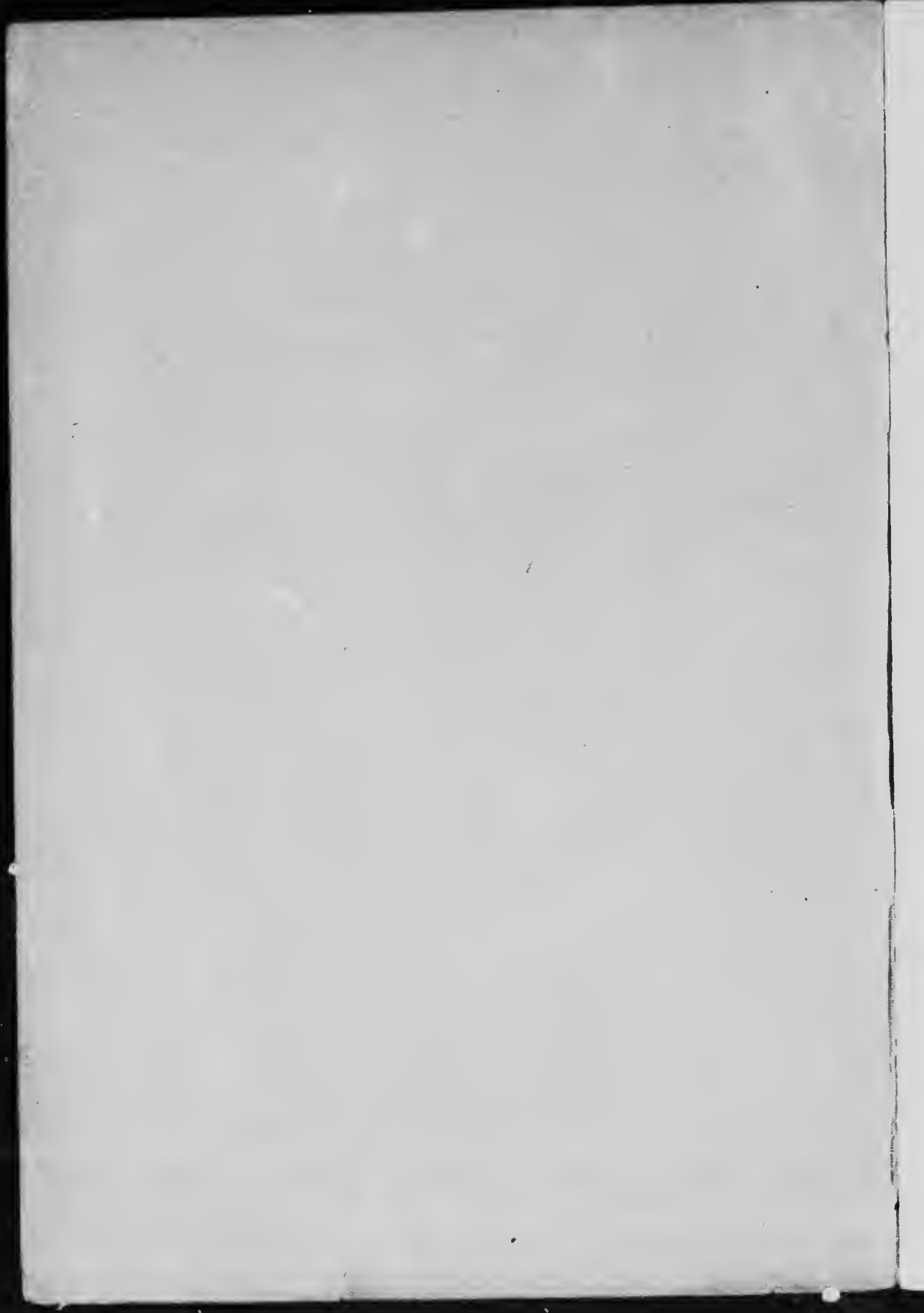


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The
Ontario
Budget
Debate



Speech of
Col. Matheson, M.P.P.



The Ontario Budget Debate

SPEECH OF COL. MATHESON, M.P.P.

COL. Matheson (S. Lanark) on rising to follow the Premier was received with loud Opposition applause. He said, "I do not propose, Mr. Speaker, to follow all the subjects dealt with by the Premier. The House and the people of the Province are anxious to find how the Province pays its way. Whether the ordinary revenue we receive will meet the ordinary expenditures which we know must be incurred. That we have not learned from the Premier but he, instead of giving the required information, diverts himself to a discussion of Kindergarten and Cooking Schools, and things of that nature with which perhaps he is better acquainted. Now sir, I propose briefly to comment on the state of the finances of this Province for this year.

Taking the receipts and expenditures of the year 1903 we find that the receipts amounted to \$5,466,000 and the expenditures to \$4,888,000. But in addition to that it is well known that this province through its government has incurred a liability at Sault Ste. Marie of some \$250,000 which will have to be paid by the Province, making the year's disbursements over \$5,100,000. The Government had no right to incur the whole of that liability, although perhaps they were justified in incurring part of it. But the manner in which the Government supporters undertake to vote through everything which it does, no matter how iniquitous it may be, is such that they will certainly support the meeting of this whole liability. Our receipts were \$5,466,000 which include the receipts of \$1,335,000 as bonus on timber sales and a reduction of capital in Drainage Debentures of \$21,000. These two receipts from capital accounts deducted from the \$5,466,000 leave the actual ordinary receipts of the Province for the past year at \$4,109,000 against which we have expenditures of \$5,100,000. Therefore this province actually paid or incurred a liability of \$1,000,000 more than the ordinary receipts. It may

be said of course that part of this expenditure had to be made on capital account. It has been contended in past years by the Opposition that all our receipts from Crown Lands including the timber dues should be considered as Capital receipts, for the reason that it is a source of revenue that must be constantly diminishing. We cannot count on its extending over perhaps the next ten or fifteen years and it may be diminished to perhaps \$200,000. Therefore all receipts from Crown Lands in the shape of dues should go to Capital Account and be used for payments on Capital expenditures such as public buildings, good roads or any payments of that sort. That was a proper view to take, but making every allowance, as to bonus received on this timber sale there is no question whatever that it ought to be considered as Capital Account only to be used in payment of debts, or on some special capital expenditure.

However we might look upon the Sault Ste. Marie payment of \$250,000 as being an exceptional one, as also the payment for the building of the Normal School and the school of Practical Science at Toronto amounting to \$158,000. Take these from the total expenditure, we have \$4,730,000 ordinary expenditure against ordinary receipts of \$4,109,000, so that the deficit, after all allowance for possible expenditure on Capital Account, between the ordinary receipts and ordinary expenditures was \$621,000.

I wish to say a few words as to the receipts. It is evident, notwithstanding what the Premier has said, that we did not receive the full payment from the Dominion of interest on money in the hands of the Dominion.

The Premier: I have a statement now. We received the full \$142,800 for the whole year on our increased subsidy and a half year's allowance on interest on trust funds, making \$262,000, while the balance of the payment is in dispute.

Col. Matheson: It is evident that this account is very complicated. \$142,800 of that money put in as interest is not in-

terest but is increased subsidy given to this province under the Act of 1884. Deducting that we received last year a half year's interest on the Trust Fund, some \$30,000. The interest on this Trust Fund was running and owing for a year, and we did not get the other half year's interest. The Provincial Treasurer (Hon. G. W. Ross) has not looked after the Dominion Government sufficiently to make his friends there pay up.

The Province owes the Dominion much more than the \$1,800,000 stated by the Premier. There is the claim on Treaty No. 3 which may be \$1,000,000, and there is also a claim in connection with the school fund. Last year I pointed out an award made against the Province of \$250,000 or \$300,000 in connection with the Common School Fund. The Premier thought the statement of account included that, but I found this \$1,800,000 as our debt to the Dominion does not cover the Common School award which may mean \$300,000 more. So the Dominion is keeping money back from us towards meeting that award and this partly explains their action.

Then there is another item I would like to comment upon—the succession duties. This is an item that varies from year to year. Last year owing to the number of deaths it was nearly \$400,000, but this year it may be much less than the \$300,000 estimated for it. I would again assert that the injustice of the succession duty tax, if it is to be levied, lies in the fact that it is not graded. I can put the case shortly of the man who has to pay duty on \$15,000 and another who has to pay duty on \$50,000. Take the case of strangers who have to pay 10 per cent. It is much harder on a man getting \$15,000 to pay \$1500 than it is on a man getting \$50,000 to pay \$5000. It is a proper principle to grade it as is done in England by levying the higher duties on those more able to pay.

Then the woods and forest account is not sufficiently in detail. It should show receipts from pulp lands and from timber bonuses. We of course can get these from the Crown Land's report, but this is not seen by the majority of the public, and this statement should be given in detail.

Another point I would like to make in connection with the succession duties is that it is bad financing to appropriate any particular revenue to any particular ex-

penditure. The succession duties are supposed to be devoted to the purposes of hospitals and charities. As a matter of fact they are not. If they were we would have to pay this year \$150,000 more to hospitals and charities than we do, because the receipts from the succession duties are \$150,000 more than the amount paid to hospitals and charities. All the receipts of this province should be held to go, as they do go, into one consolidated fund. And all the disbursements should be paid regardless of the source of revenue. It is a very popular idea doubtless to make the other fellow pay and say you are giving so much to hospitals and charities, but it is the rich men who are taxed for it—whereas the fact is if we devote to hospitals and charities and roads, or to any other purpose, any sum of money, it comes out of the general consolidated funds and increased expenditure must result in extra taxes. For this reason the proposal of Mr. Graham, Brockville, to devote to free school books the extra succession duties tax or any other special revenue is wrong, because the argument is used that the people who don't pay the succession duties or the other revenue are getting this advantage at the expense of other men which is not true. All revenues should go into the one fund, and all expenditure should be made regardless of the source whence the money comes.

I will not go into the details of the expenditure. What we contend on this side of the House is that it is not any special expenditure that should be cut off or reduced, but that there should be a general re-organization of the whole of the expenditure of this province, that large savings may be made by cutting off useless officials and by cutting down expenses of a nature which it was never intended at Confederation that this Province should incur. We have increased our expenditures in various directions in a manner which was never contemplated at Confederation. I will take one case—the surveyor's commissions. If we had the money to pay the surveyor's commissions it is all right to pay them if the Legislature considers it proper to spend surplus so in that way, but it is expenditure of a nature never contemplated for the Province, and no such expenditure should be made unless we are prepared to say to the people that we may put on an extra tax which must be

collected to meet such payments. If we cannot justify it to the people in this way we should hesitate on going into it. In fact if this sugar bounty business had to be done again I doubt if the Government or the Treasurer would again advocate the payment of such bounties.

Then there are some items that should be cut down. There is our old friend the Penetanguishene Reformatory costing \$30,000 a year for less than 100 boys—over \$300 a year a piece. The coal bill for the Reformatory is greater than that for these Legislative Buildings. There is another payment that I do not object to so much as to the manner in which it is paid in connection with the University. There should be a fixed annual payment to the University instead of the system of meeting its deficits. One year we pay a deficit of \$7,000, another year \$14,000 perhaps another year it is \$31,000. The men who are making these deficits are not checked in their expenditures when the grant is made in that way. There should be a fixed grant decided upon by the Government and an end put to this sliding arrangement to pay whatever the University owes.

As to the Sault Ste. Marie payment of course it was irregular, but it was a proper thing to a certain extent and this House has repeatedly justified the Government when a great disaster happens during a period when the Legislature is not in session if it goes to the rescue in a moderate degree. Take a city swept by fire. It would be a proper thing to devote a certain amount to relieving the distress, or in a country district ruined by storm it would be proper for the Government, even if the Legislature were not in session, to go to the assistance of the people. But that was not the case at the Soo. No such payment was contemplated by the people as the sum of \$250,000 and I say that no such payment would have been made by the Government had it not been that an election was on there. (Applause) A matter of \$50,000 or \$100,000 might have been all right. I am told that accounts were paid and that men with large salaries and other men who by no possible argument could be brought within the case of needing relief, were paid unjustly and yet the House will be asked to ratify that payment and the Liberal members will certainly support the Government when they are told to do so.

As to the estimates for the coming year—a suggestion was made last year, but not carried out, that the statutory payments should also be shown in any statement of estimates. We have for the coming year a statement of the estimated expenditure and receipts of the Province which certainly should cause grave alarm to the people of Ontario. The first expenditure provided for was \$4,457,000. There will certainly be supplementary estimates amounting to \$100,000. There are railway certificates, a great part of which payment is interest, of \$114,000, annuity certificates of \$102,000. There is a grant for sugar bounties of \$75,000, iron bounties, \$25,000, statutory grant for Kingston, \$22,500. I do not include the statutory grant to the University because it is in the estimates. This makes the total estimated expenditure \$5,097,736. Against that there is an estimated revenue of \$5,384,372, but \$1,500,000 of that estimated revenue will be from bonuses on last November timber sale so that the net receipts other than these bonuses will be \$3,884,000. Deducting that from the estimated expenditure, very little of which is made on Capital account, we are faced to face with a deficit of \$1,213,000 for the coming year.

Now, Sir, the Province cannot go on in this way. We cannot have the timber sale to pay the expenses every year so as to bring in such special receipts. The timber left in the Province would not suffice for more than two or three such sales at the most and yet we have an ordinary expenditure of over five million dollars—considerably over one million dollars in excess of ordinary receipts.

I have been accustomed in past years to compare the expenditure with that of ten years previously. I do not think on this occasion we need go back so far. I propose to refer to the expenditures under the Mowat and Hardy administrations, and then take a record of Premier Ross for the past four years. In his own speech the Premier took six years to average the expenditures, knowing that in the two years previous to his assuming office the expenditures were far below what they have been during his time. In 1894 under Sir Oliver Mowat the Province expended \$1,800,000—incurring a deficit of nearly \$400,000. That state of things was continued for the next three years. Then in 1899 the then Premier, Mr. Hardy, determined to meet

that deficit and put new taxes on brewers and distillers and other companies to raise \$350,000 a year. The expenditure in 1899 were \$3,710,000 and this increase in revenue nearly made ends meet. That \$3,710,000 was \$100,000 less than Sir O. Mowat spent in 1894, five years before.

In the fall of 1899 the present Premier took office taking the Cabinet position of Provincial Treasurer. We find that he has increased the Province expenditures in those four years to such an extent that the ordinary expenditures have grown from \$3,700,000 to \$4,730,000, (Hear, hear). In four years this reckless and spendthrift administration has increased our ordinary expenditure in this Province by over a million dollars a year while in the previous five years Mr. Hardy succeeded in reducing it by \$100,000 below what it had been in 1894. That is the policy of development that this Government has inaugurated.

During the same period the Government has increased our railway debt from \$3,053,000 to \$4,022,000, an increase of \$970,000. In the same time they received from timber bonuses on sales \$636,000 in 1900; \$599,000 in 1901; \$227,000 in 1902; while in 1903 they received \$1,335,000, making a total in four years of \$2,798,000. I wish to be fair and point out that in the same time out of this money they have increased the amount of cash and drainage debentures on hand by \$1,042,000, so that they have spent, nearly all for ordinary expenditures, during these four years \$1,756,000 of capital obtained from bonuses on these timber sales, which has gone into the ordinary Provincial expenditures. That is the way they have developed Ontario. It is such a reckless administration as I might almost say no Province in the Dominion has witnessed before.

In addition they have added to the railway debt \$970,000, so that with increases of the debt and diminished timber resources the Government in four years has expended \$2,746,000, over two and three quarter million gone, wasted out of the resources of the province.

As to this debt some of the members on the other side, notably the member for South Brant (Mr. Preston) say that the Province has no debt. But it is admitted that we have a debt of \$4,000,000 for railways and annuity certificates, a

debt to the Dominion of \$1,800,000 which the Premier has admitted, and have also guaranteed the cost of the Temiscaming Railway which will be some \$6,000,000 by the time present extensions are completed. In view of this I cannot conceive any member, feeling his responsibility as a member of this House, getting up and saying that this Province has no debt, yet we have heard this repeated time and time again, although no explanations are given as to how it is arrived at.

While the Provincial expenditure has been increased by \$1,000,000 annually during the last four years, practically no effort has been made to get additional revenue to meet this extra expense. I do not say there should have been no increase—it is a natural tendency in the expenditures of any growing province. But if the expenditure does increase further resources should be obtained to meet such increase. The only increase in Ontario during the last four years however has been \$200,000 in the succession duties which is not a permanency, and indeed next year may be found not to exist. Then in the Provincial Secretary's Department there is an increase of \$54,000 and under the Supplementary Revenue Acts an increase of \$40,000, but with the exception of these there has been hardly any increase in revenue. Of course the dues on timber have been raised to \$2.00 a thousand and we are told that the railways are to be taxed. Supposing they bring in \$200,000 or \$300,000 a year that will not go far to meeting the \$1,000,000 required. I do not know to what extent the Attorney General proposes to go in this direction, but I fancy it is quite possible that he will deprive the municipalities of their just share in that revenue from the railways.

Then I must refer to the reckless way in which the Government has wasted the Province's resources. In pulp concessions they have given away, without competition, to their own friends, large tracts of pulp lands which I believe had they been put up at public auction as was done with the pine timber, might have brought at least one or two million dollars to the Province.

Hon. Mr. Stratton: Do you say we have given away pulp lands.

Col. Matheson: That is a mere technical quibble. You may not have given

the land, but you have given away the valuable wood upon it. Had these concessions been advertised for sale instead of being given to the friends of the Government I believe that from one to two million dollars would have been raised. Out of these seven concessions given—not including the Clergue concession—only one is being worked to-day, that at Sturgeon Falls, while another at Spanish River is partly under way. Even these two concessions are not being worked by the people to whom the original grants were made. Friends of the Government got these concessions, peddled them to their own advantage and made hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the transaction, all of which should have gone to the Provincial treasury.

Then as to Fisheries. I do not see any payment for rent for these fishing concessions. Nepigon Lake with its white fish and trout is supposed to be a privilege without rival in the world. It is given without competition by Order in Council for a nominal sum of \$15,000 a year and for that sum the Licensees can take out 1,000 tons of fish a year worth \$140,000. This fish could be taken out for \$25,000, so that after paying all expenses and rent there is a clear profit of \$100,000 a year to be made out of that lake, and I have been told that the people who got this concession contemplate turning it into a company at half a million dollars capital. No such concession should ever have been made by Order in Council without open competition. (Applause)

It is the same with the Niagara Power Companies. Power privileges worth from one to two million dollars have been given by Order in Council without competition. And this is not the only way by which the Province is being robbed. We find the Crown Lands Department honeycombed with a system of giving away timber lands to friends of the Government without proper compensation to the Province.

Take the infamous Shannon deal, in which Cap Sullivan got a \$9,000 timber limit for \$250, and divided the spoils with a clerk in the Government office giving him over \$4,000. Then there is the Cane Bros. case where constituents of the Commissioner of Crown Lands were allowed to exchange islands in the Georgian Bay worth two or three thousand

dollars for other valuable concessions. How Mr Davis did not give them the value in money because this would have required a vote of the House, so he gave them a million feet of pine timber on another island twenty miles away which on the evidence of the Assistant Commissioner was worth \$7 or \$8 a thousand standing, so that Cane Bros. got five or six thousand dollars profit out of the deal at the expense of the Province.

There were other cases. Chew Bros. had a limit on Georgian Bay Islands. It was suggested that the timber on these islands should be preserved so as not to mar the beauty of the spot which was visited annually by a vast number of tourists. Some compensation of course had to be given. Chew Bros. got this timber for a few thousand dollars. They were allowed to retain the timber on the largest island and in lieu of the balance they were given one quarter of the whole township of Capreol from which there has been cut some fourteen or fifteen million feet of lumber worth \$4 a thousand standing and they got all this in return for about \$2000 cash and \$8000 worth of timber on their islands. This deal also was engineered by Capt. Sullivan, and Chew Bros. were quite willing to make a deal which would give them some \$60,000 or \$70,000. But Chew Bros. could not get that quarter of Capreol township for that \$10,000 worth of limits and cash until they agreed to sell it to the late Mr. Munro for \$28,000. They were held up and compelled to sell for \$28,000. In justice to the memory of Mr. Munro I will say that at that time he was not a member of this Legislature.

The whole circumstances in connection with this case would not have come out so that we could not have proved that the exchange of these islands was not permitted to be ratified by Order in Council until the limit had been assigned to Mr. Munro had it not been for the kindness of the Minister of Public Works. There were a number of papers in the matter we had not time to examine but we would probably have put them in if we had looked over them. The Minister however unwittingly, perhaps blunderingly, the Attorney General would say, said he would put in the whole lot and there they are in the

Journals of the House proving beyond question that before Chew Bros. get the Order in Council ratifying the exchange of these islands for the quarter of Capreol township they had to assign it to Mr. Munro's agents. Mr. Munro paid Cap Sullivan \$4,000 in addition to the \$28,000 to Chew Bros. and half of that \$4,000 was paid to Taylor the clerk in the Crown Lands Department. In making that investigation we were obstructed by the Government right and left, in fact the matter came out by accident almost. Mr. Munro we are told sold for \$70,000.

Now we were told there were four cases, perhaps more, in which Cap Sullivan and Taylor shared in the profits of such deals. The first was the Shannon deal which Cap Sullivan told us about. He said there were no other such deals. Then Taylor was put in the box and after considerable pressure he confessed that there was a division in the case of Chew Bros. and he said there were no more such cases, and we were not able to get at the other cases. I have had similar cases brought to my attention this session but I have not the information to permit me to make the charge on my responsibility as a member of the House that these cases really occurred. But judging by past experience I believe that these charges are true. But neither myself nor any other member of the Opposition can successfully criticize the work of any department from the Opposition because our investigations are blocked, and I say that for this reason it is absolutely necessary that there should be a change in Government. In every attempt to get at the facts we have been systematically obstructed and no opposition in dealing with this Government has any chance to find out what is really going on (Applause.)

We have had a statement as to the debt of the Province. We are told that there is a surplus of two and a half millions. I have dealt with this matter in past years and will not do so again except to state that amongst the assets given in 1884 the sum of \$2,848,000 is not an asset available to pay the debts of the Province. Take that out and the whole surplus is gone. There is an increased subsidy of \$142,000 given the Province in 1884 which the Ontario Government wrongfully capitalizes; I say wrongfully because it is an annual payment from the Dominion Government which can

not be made to pay the principal. As to the Trust funds mentioned they are all provided for specific purposes.

The real state of the province is that we owe the Dominion at least, \$1,800,000 and on railway certificates and annuities \$4,000,000 more which makes \$5,800,000 admitted debt and the only asset to pay it is cash in hand and Drainage Debentures to the amount of \$2,200,000. So there is a debt of \$3,600,000 owing by the Province, altogether apart from its liability of three to six million dollars on the Temiscaming Railway.

I wish to say that I consider it is a proper thing for the province to invest \$2,000,000 in the debentures of this railway. We are told that the value of the timber in the districts to be traversed by the road will be increased by a million dollars. The railway cannot be sold at cost, and that million dollars could be applied in wiping off that much of the charge so as to make the railway a cash asset. If this \$2,000,000 were invested in that railway it would mean that it would be set apart so that those who seek to spend the money of the Province and run it into debt could not do so and the money would be put in a position where it would not be wasted at pleasure.

I have in my hands a report for the current year containing a statement as to the expenditure on the railway, and I wish to say that there is a strong feeling throughout the Province that all is not right on that railway, that money is being squandered and given to friends of the Government. It was asked in this House last Session whether the Engineer for the Contractors of the road was not a brother of the Chief Engineer in charge of it, but the only answer given was that so far as the Government knew there was no relationship. I say it was the business of the Commissioners and Ministers to find that out and that this was not a proper answer. There is a feeling that owing to that relationship grades and measurements on the railway made to the contractor may be more liberal than they should be. This cannot be investigated because the measurements of the Engineer have to be taken and there is no record kept afterwards. Would the C. P. R. or G. T. R. for one moment consent that the Engineer or Contractor on any road they were building should be a brother of the Chief

Engineer? These men should be above suspicion and this state of things should not be continued.

The Premier says that \$30,000 a mile is a low cost of a road and compares it with the cost of the C. P. R. and C. A. R. But the \$65,000,000 of stock issued by the C. P. R. was sold at 45c on the dollar. The stock taken at par is put against this road for which cash was paid and we are told it is a cheaper railway than the C. P. R. But with the C. P. R. stock taken at 45c on the dollar you have to divide the cost as given by 2 which brings it down to less than what is asked for the Temiscaming Railway.

Then this report does not contain satisfactory returns. For instance Engineers construction \$1,356,000, ties \$65,000, rails, switches and frogs, \$326,000. That is not a return which would explain the expenditure to the people. The whole of that expenditure should be given in detail just in the same way, as the public accounts of the Province. The quantities of earth and rock excavated and how much was paid for removing it should be stated so that it could be compared with the Engineer's estimates for construction. These figures should be given separately in sections of 10 miles and details should be given as to every person who got money out of that road and what it was paid for. The whole report is extremely unsatisfactory.

Now I have compared the financial record of the Premier with that of Mr. Hardy showing that in four years the ordinary expenditures of the province have been increased by \$1,000,000 resulting in a deficit between ordinary revenue and ordinary expenditure of \$600,000 in the past year and a deficit in the current year of over \$1,000,000. During that time he has wasted \$1,700,000 received in bonuses in timber sales and also added \$1,000,000 to the railway debt—that is Premier Ross' financial record.

Then as to the Educational system of the Province. The whole thing from the Universities down to the common schools requires re-organization. We have children going from our schools who cannot spell or write decently. In every town and village in the province there are springing up commercial colleges established to make up for the deficiencies of our common schools, while as against High Schools we have the growing use of private proprietary schools.

We have in the whole thing that machine system which the head of a great university once told me leads to the cultivation of fads. Perhaps owing to this central examination system we have that growing feeling of self assertion so conspicuous amongst the young people of this province—that feeling of absence of regard for their duties to their fellows. We have of course many men who have distinguished themselves after graduating from our provincial schools and colleges, but I contend that they have distinguished themselves despite our educational system and not because of it. Then in connection with the Treasury Department and the Attorney General's Dept. we have another matter which I must speak upon and that is the defalcation in the succession duties. That shows the utter absurdity of the investigations of the much vaunted financial commission. These defalcations commenced in 1896 and I say Sir, that the absence of any prosecution against Mr. Macdougall is not out of regard to him but because the Government dare not expose their own dishonour. Why, Sir, no bond even was taken until April 1902, just prior to the discovery of the defalcations. That bond is not paid and I understand that the company refuses to pay it on the ground that the Government was aware at the time of these defalcations.

Mr. Gibson: Do you say the action of the Crown prosecution of Mr. Macdougall is not being continued?

Mr. Matheson: I did not say so.

Mr. Gibson: Well how do you put it?

Mr. Whitney: Nine out of ten people believe that; they cannot help but believe it by what they see.

Mr. Matheson: I have no animus against Mr. Macdougall. He did what many men have done before him—used funds which he should not have touched and the result I have no doubt is that his present condition is such that perhaps a prosecution is not justifiable.

Mr. Gibson: I would think so.

Mr. Matheson: But at the same time when he was first arraigned that was not the case. Compare the course of Mr. Macdougall's case with that of Callaghan. (Applause) I must do the Attorney General justice. I believe he is anxious that his own record should be clean, but I say that there are two points in which he has failed in his duty. One was in not prosecuting Returning Officers or at

least somebody in connection with the ballot stuffing in West Elgin and North Waterloo.

Mr. Gibson: These men were prosecuted by your friends who took criminal proceedings against them and my predecessor wrote to the Crown Attorney that it was his duty to afford them all assistance in the matter.

Mr. Matheson: But he did not do it: Now as to Callaghan, it is no part of the Crown's duty to secure a conviction unless a man is guilty. In the Callaghan case 17 jurors were challenged by the Crown simply because they were Conservatives (Opposition applause). The Attorney-General is responsible for that peculiar proceeding until he dismisses the Crown Officers who conducted it. No man's liberty or property is safe if the whole power of the Crown is to be exercised against him as in that case. Never in the history of the administration of justice in Canada has there been a case where the Crown undertook to secure a conviction by challenging 17 jurors, and I say the officers guilty of such a proceeding should be dismissed.

Then the Minister of public works is shirking his responsibility in appointing a commission to build 200 miles of railway—it looks very like a confession of incompetence.

I might go through the whole list, but I think enough has been said to show that the present ministry is unworthy of the confidence of the people of this Province and yet we have men, not the ministers, but those speaking for the Ministers, who with coarse and blatant insolence undertake to assert that they alone are fit to govern this province and that the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have no object except to

secure office and the miserable patronage that comes with it—that they have no high purpose to give the best that is in them for the service of this province and its people. I say, Sir, without fear of contradiction, that there are hundreds of men in this province, on both sides of politics, who are as capable for honesty of purpose and business capacity to hold the departments in this Government as well as the minister now in office and in many cases far more capable. Yet there is this disadvantage for those on the Liberal side that no matter how capable a liberal member of the House may be, if he takes office he has to go in with his hands tied by all the traditions of barnacles, office holders and other things which must be kept hidden, so that no matter how he desires to do his best he is bound hand and foot. It would be better for the Liberal party in the province that the Government which during the past 4 years has had such a miserable record for squandering the resources of the Province and mis-government should be swept from power. Then at some future time after passing through the fire of purification in Opposition they may again get new men worthy to take charge. Otherwise there is no hope for the Liberal party in the Province, it must be simply dragged down day by day with election after election going against them in spite of their efforts to capture constituencies by Machines. That is the melancholy spectacle we have witnessed to-day and I am confident that as soon as the people have an opportunity to pronounce upon this Government that they will declare that the time has come for it to leave office. (Prolonged Opposition applause.)

