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October 20, 1906.

Great Speech OF Solicitor-General Jones.

In the debate on the budget Hon Mr Jones spoke as follows:—

"I have listened with much interest to the speech of the financial critic of the opposition, but I felt disappointed that in dealing with great questions of public policy he confined himself to a criticism of the accounts of the auditor general. I quite agree with him in his praise of the secretary's speech, which from the large views which he expressed, and his hopeful tone, was very able and interesting. His statement of the charge which is about to take place in the lumber policy of the government, will make his address a memorable one. Mr Fleming now admits that he does not look upon the province as bankrupt, although he and his colleagues have been preaching that for some years past. We have all been told by the opposition that the finances of the province were in a deplorable condition, but the hon gentleman has to admit that this cry can no longer be raised. He says that the reason of this is that the lumber lands of the province are too valuable but he gives the government no credit for the policy that has made them valuable. I think that the opposition ought to admit that the government deserves the greatest credit. If we contrast the territorial revenue of twenty years ago with the present we will find that there has been an increase of about \$125,000, with a prospect of a continued increase in future years. Before the accession of Mr Blair to power in 1883 there was a disposition on the part of the government to get rid of our Crown lands, but the policy has been changed, and now they are being conserved for the benefit of the people of the province. I may mention the fact which has already been referred to, that a government which was in power 30 years ago gave away 1,600,000 acres of our best timber lands to assist in building a railway. They evidently did not realize that these lands would become so valuable. Our forest lands are worth at least \$15,000,000, and this province is wealthy for its debt is insignificant in comparison with its assets. The cause of all this is that these lands have been conserved by the government, yet their policy with respect to them was opposed by the opposition. As an instance of how this policy has worked I may mention that in 1897 we received from game licenses \$1,983.00, while last year it has risen to \$20,468. This shows that this province has been erected into a great game preserve by the policy of the government.

The expenditure on account of the New Brunswick Coal and Railway company has been criticised by my hon. friend, but without just cause, for if this province is wealthy, and if there is a practically inexhaustible supply of coal in the county of Queens, the policy of developing it by the construction of a railway is surely a good one. We have undertaken to build this railway for the purpose of giving access to these coal areas, and there is no doubt that our policy will be justified by the result. It cannot be shown that any of the money that was expended on this road has been wasted. On the contrary it will be found that the premier has exercised the greatest prudence with regard to the contract. It is the policy of the government generally to develop all the natural resources of the province, and the time will come when the success of this policy will be admitted. We have every reason to believe that this road will have enough revenue to pay interest on its entire cost. Indeed the road is already paying. When the Grand Trunk Pacific is built, whether it goes by the St John river valley or by the Central route, it will go to Chipman, and be brought into connection with this line, so that it cannot fail to have a large profit.

Many of the objections of the hon. member are simply directed against the system of keeping accounts which has been adopted by the Auditor General and which has prevailed since the time of confederation. Yet he has to admit that after the most cursory examination of the accounts he had no difficulty in finding what he wanted. He objects to the \$10,000 of interest charged the Public Works Department yet he apparently does not know that the law requires it to be charged in this way. He also has criticised the attorney general and asked for what services his salary of \$2,100 was paid. If he had had the pleasure of being as closely associated with the attorney general as I have been he would not have asked this question. The attorney general has charge of all the criminal business of the country and though he may only try a few cases all the depositions are sent to him

and he consulted with me in regard to almost every case which I tried. He is also the advisor of all the public officials and advisor of the government. He is charged with the preparation of all important government despatches and papers. As to the other payments made to him it is no part of the duty of the attorney general to do the civil business of the government. The only question then would be whether to employ the Atty Gen or outside counsel. If outside counsel were employed they would have to be eminent in their profession and therefore highly paid, and if it cannot be shown that the attorney general has charged too much for his services the criticism of the Opposition falls to the ground. My hon friend also has objected to a payment made to a road superintendent in Carleton County but it ought to be explained that this man took a road machine and operated it and received for this service \$2 a day in addition to his commission at 10 per cent. With regard to his criticism on the public works accounts the system which he criticizes is the same which has prevailed for years. All the accounts cannot be closed at the end of the fiscal year so that there is always a balance to be carried over. But for the purpose of making up a big deficit the hon gentleman has put the balance of last year and the balance of this year together although he must know that a balance of about the same amount is always carried over. But I will leave a fuller explanation of this matter to the Chief Commissioner of public works. I can also safely leave the commissioner of agriculture to answer the attacks that have been made on his department. But it seems to me that our friends opposite, have acted a very improper part in seeking to make political capital out of matters which ought to be removed from the sphere of politics. It cannot be denied that they have worked against the Highway act and against the agricultural policy of the government. They have endeavored to stir up the people against the Highway Act although when the law was introduced, it was admitted by every one that a new tax was required. They have done the same with regard to our agricultural policy. We have obtained no assistance with respect to it from them. Yet this policy is one which has commended itself to public favor and which has produced beneficial results. It has been an educational policy, and it has encouraged and trained the young men of the country to better educational methods.

I now come to a local question. The Hartland Bridge. The people of Hartland wanted a bridge, but as there was a very expensive bridge at Woodstock and another at Florenceville, and the government had many other claims upon them, they felt that they could not build one at that time. The people of Hartland were so anxious for a bridge that they were prepared to do almost anything and they proposed that if the government would build a bridge they would pay tolls upon it. Well the people got what they wanted but soon after the bridge was built they began an agitation to abolish the toll. As soon as I became a member of this house I pressed the government to make the bridge free and since I have been a member of the government I have continued to press it upon them. I have now the pleasure of being able to announce that some time before the opening of the session it was decided to make the bridge free at the end of the present term. (Applause).

The honorable gentleman has added \$24,000 over expenditure of the provincial hospital to the deficit, but he seems to forget that this over-expenditure is carried over from year to year and that at the beginning of the last fiscal year there was an old balance to be paid. The honorable gentleman's statements would carry far more weight if he would deal fairly with these questions.

Hon Mr Pagel—He is only \$17,000 out.

Hon Mr Jones—The honorable gentleman has referred to the amount paid for interest but not to the public debt. Therefore, I presume that he was not discouraged about that. Our debt is indeed small in comparison with the resources of the province. It is smaller, I believe, than the debt of the city of St John. The people of that energetic city are constantly increasing their debt for the purpose of making necessary improvements and the debt of this province has been incurred for necessary works which tend to the development of its resources. In every city, town and village in this Province

(Continued on sixth page.)

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