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RICHIBUCTO, N. B., SEP. 14, 1899

RETRENCHMENT.

So much has been said and written in the past three years of the wonderful advance which Canada has made under the progressive trade policy of the Laurier Administration, that the opposition press seeing the futility of any further attempt to mislead the public on that score, are devoting their columns to charges of extravagance against the government. In our last issue we took occasion to speak of these charges and showed, we thought, that the course of the administration in opening up the Kootenay and Klondyke gold fields, and accepting the other new burdens which have arisen since 1896 was true economy. Lest it might be supposed that we have evaded the direct charge we now propose to show that not only has the Government been guilty of no extravagance, but they have reduced the items of expenditure in every direction.

As we have shown, the revenues in the past three years have increased from \$34,000,000 to \$46,000,000, and it is a conservative estimate that the income of the people of Canada has increased in that time by at least \$50,000,000. If the Government has expended that extra revenue wastefully, then are they open to reproach, but it is wisely and to the best interest of the country, then they deserve the support and approval of the electorate. We have fairly shown, and it must be admitted by our opponents, that the Laurier Administration has been called upon to provide for many expenditures for which there was no call up to 1896. These may be set down as extraordinary expenditures such as no previous administration had any necessity of providing for. But the ordinary expenses of the country vary little from year to year and it is concerning these that we propose to speak as showing a comparison between the present and former administrations by which the extravagance or economy of each may be fairly judged. When the Liberal leaders previous to 1896 promised an era of retrenchment in case they were returned to power, they were of course speaking of the governmental services then existing, for not being gifted with the power of prophecy they could not foresee that gold would be discovered in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory necessitating entirely new and unlooked for expenditures.

Even with the Civil Service Act preventing the government from ridding the country of useless officials, the economy and good management of the various departments since 1896 has made reductions on every hand in the amount of the public expenditure. In the Post Office Department the reduction in expenses has amounted to

hundreds of thousands of dollars, although even the opponents of the government must admit that in every Province there has been a great increase in the efficiency of the mail service. It was not increase of postal revenue alone which wiped out of existence the enormous annual deficit in the Post Office Department, for combined with intelligent management to produce increased revenue was a stringent economy which did away with all the old time jobbery for which this department was notorious under Conservative rule. If examples are required, we can point to numbers of them in every section of the Province of New Brunswick, where, in the mail carrying services particularly, public money was used in a shameless manner prior to 1896 to fatten political favourites.

But the economy of the present administration has not been confined to the postal department. The item of civil government has been reduced from \$1,422,000 to \$1,399,000, while the charge for legislation has been reduced over \$212,000. In the matter of the cost of managing the penitentiaries, the Liberals have proven conclusively the justice of their claim that these institutions were the hotbeds of political boodling. In the item of penitentiary management alone the present administration has made a reduction from \$449,000 to \$336,000, besides stopping the bare-faced robbery going on within these institutions as brought to light in the investigations of both the Vincent de Paul and Dorchester penitentiaries. In the Customs Department 23 per cent. more revenue has been collected with less than 6 per cent. additional expense, while the charge for public works administration was reduced from \$1,742,000 to \$1,701,000, although a great deal more work was obtained for the smaller amount.

The Conservatives in 1895, the last full year in which that party had their swing, spent \$38,132,000 on the general services of the country, while in 1898 the Liberals with a greatly increased revenue and greatly increased services, only spent \$700,000 more. This increase is more than accounted for in one item of extraordinary service, namely \$800,000 spent in the Yukon services. Moreover in 1898 there was \$357,000 additional placed in the sinking fund, \$345,000 on railways and canals, \$105,000 on agriculture and \$65,000 on immigration, all increased or additional services.

If then the last year of Conservative rule is compared, service for service, with the last year of Liberal rule, it will be found that with \$972,000 less money spent, the Laurier Administration has given very much better service in every one of the public departments, and has been able with that large decrease in expenses to bring the country out with an increase in revenue of \$6,000,000.

THE PUBLIC DEBT.

Our Conservative contemporaries are inclined to be humorous over the increase of the public debt of Canada, endeavouring to instil into their readers minds the idea that the Liberal surpluses must be bogus or there would be no increase of the public debt. It is scarcely necessary to say that such a claim is incorrect as the consolidated fund account and the capital account have no connection whatever. The former denotes whether Canada has been living beyond its income for the current year, while the latter denotes what amount of money Canada has invested in permanent form and for which the present alone could not be fairly charged. To take an example from everyday life: If a merchant build a house this year for \$2000 and give a mortgage on

it, he would not feel that he had gone behind \$2000 this year on that account, or expect out of his ordinary living revenue to pay the \$2000 in one year. He would consider that the \$2000 of debt was balanced by the house; that he had borrowed that amount and placed it to capital account. So in the case of the country. Last year and the year before last there was a surplus of revenue over ordinary expenditure of \$4,600,000 and \$1,722,000 for the respective years, yet there has been in the past three years an increase of the public debt amounting to \$6,000,000. Let us see how this latter amount has been spent and what Canada has to show for it.

The expenditure made by the government in deeping the canals alone was \$9,000,000, and that on the Crow's Nest Pass Railway over \$3,000,000. Could there be any expenditure more fairly charged to capital account than such items as these, and yet these two items amount to twice the whole sum that has been added to the public debt, the balance being paid out of the surplus in current revenue. When Mr. Geo. E. Foster was Minister of Finance it was not only customary to add five or six millions yearly to the debt, but he had a perfect genius for annual deficits in the current revenue. In his last three years of control of the public finances, Mr. Geo. E. Foster showed deficits of \$1,210,332, \$4,153,875, and \$330,551. Contrast this with over \$6,000,000 of a surplus for the past three years of Liberal rule, and the Conservative Napoleon of finance would seem to be a good man for the country to keep permanently in opposition.

Will any Canadian doubt the wisdom of the \$9,000,000 spent in deeping the national canals even if a portion of the expenditure had to be placed to capital account as an addition to the public debt? In the same way the money being spent in providing suitable harbours at Montreal and at different points along the Atlantic seaboard is money well spent, and if the same intelligence and care had been exhibited in years gone by in the expenditure made for this purpose, the present work would be unnecessary. The Crow's Nest Pass Ry. cost the country \$3,300,000 and has been the means of adding between thirty and forty millions to the wealth of Canada. As Sir Richard Cartwright showed in his speech at Toronto the other day, the interest in this Crow's Nest Pass Ry. expenditure would not exceed \$90,000, while the increased customs receipts arising out of its construction amount to over half a million dollars. The people of Canada must agree with Sir Richard when he said, "I call that a wise expenditure. I say that if I am able to spend \$90,000 and put \$500,000 or \$600,000 a year in the treasury, I do a good thing for the people of Canada. I only wish it were possible for us to invest not three millions, but thirty millions of your money equally profitably, and if I could I would do it to-morrow."

Not one dollar has been added to the public debt of Canada since 1896, which cannot be justified and which moreover cannot be proved to be a good paying investment for the Canadian people, bringing them enormous returns in the increased revenue and business prosperity of the country.

THE RAILWAY WRANGLE.

Last week we referred at some length to the difficulties between the I. C. Ry and C. P. Ry, and the attempt being made by the latter to force the hand of the Minister of Railways by the threat of withdrawing the winter export shipments from St. John to Boston. This has occasioned considerable natural agitation in Saint John

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where, with a spirit of progression uncommon in municipal governments, facilities have been provided by the city to enable the business to be carried on. These wharves, warehouses, elevator, &c., costing nearly \$1,000,000 beside the value of the land and water privileges, have been presented by the citizens as a free gift to the C. P. Railway. It would undoubtedly seem most unfair to St. John if the railway company after accepting this enormous gift on a specific understanding should now refuse to carry out their part of the arrangement. It seems doubly unfair in view of the fact that no good reason has been offered for such conduct. The claim of the C. P. R. that they cannot profitably carry on this winter export business through St. John unless they have control of the section of the I. C. R. between that city and Halifax has been shown to be a mere subterfuge for several reasons which we need only mention in a very few words. The C. P. R. claim is that unless the freight originating at points on the I. C. R. is diverted to the former road at St. John, it will have to haul the grain east back to Manitoba and the West in an empty state. As a matter of fact that is what has happened for the past two seasons and would happen whether the C. P. R. got the freight which properly belonged to the I. C. R. or not; what in fact will happen if the C. P. R. uses Boston as its terminal point. The second answer to this claim is that the Minister of Railways has offered to haul these grain empties over the I. C. R. free of charge, and deliver them to the C. P. R. either at Montreal or St. Rosaie whichever the C. P. R. prefers.

It is quite evident that the C. P. R. authorities are holding a pistol, whether loaded or empty time alone will show at the head of the city of Saint John in the hope of forcing better terms out of the government with regard to running rights over the I. C. R. from St. John to Halifax. The Minister of Railways is showing his strength, in the face of the hysteria which has been occasioned in St. John by the C. P. R.

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threat, in refusing to be a party to this system of highway or railway robbery. He is acting in the best interests of the system under his control when he refuses to make it merely an adjunct to the C. P. R. or allow it to pass into the hands of the latter. Time will moreover show that his firmness and business insight has been used throughout this transaction, as in others, for the best interests of the Province of New Brunswick and of the whole Dominion. As we go to press the matter is still unsettled, but there seems to be more hope expressed of a compromise arrangement being reached. We venture to think that these reports are but the first signs of the C. P. Railway's withdrawal from what, in the eyes of all good Canadians, must be regarded as an entirely untenable position.

GALLOWAY NOTES. The people of this vicinity are very busy with their harvest. Miss Maud McLean has returned home after having had a very pleasant visit in Galloway. Mr. Scott visited Mr. Thomas Girvan's last Sunday. The people of Galloway will be very lonesome soon, as all the girls are returning to Boston, after spending their vacation here. Rumor says there will be a wedding in Galloway soon. Miss N. Smith and Mrs. Glendenning, are going to the United States next week. Miss Marion Forster returned to Boston last Saturday. BLONDE.

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