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RICHIBUCTO, N. B., JAN. 12, 1899

A PROSPEROUS CONDITION.

The statement made by the Finance Minister at Montreal last week, that the surplus for the last fiscal year of total receipts over total disbursements amounted to the handsome sum of \$1,722,319, has awakened considerable enthusiasm throughout the Dominion. When it is considered that this surplus is shown in spite of the fact that the Laurier Government has made a marked reduction in the customs duties, then the financial showing appears almost wonderful, making apparent the lack of sound business management which existed under the various Conservative administrations prior to 1896. It is computed that in this same year in which the present Government show a surplus of nearly a million and three-quarters of dollars, the reduction in the customs duties made a decrease of \$2,000,000 in the customs receipts caused by the lower rate of duties and the special 25 per cent. reduction on British imports. That is to say, if the Laurier Administration had continued working under the old National Policy Tariff, their surplus for the past year would have been 3 1/2 million dollars.

And yet brilliant as is the financial showing for the year 1897-1898, it promises to be even better for the current year, as the Minister of Finance makes the further statement that for the past six months, the revenue from customs duties exceeds by \$2,000,000 the receipts from the same source for the corresponding term in the previous year. Undoubtedly Canada has entered on an era of prosperity.

The thoughtful citizen is apt to ask himself what is the cause of this sound financial statement. While the country will give due credit to the men in control of the public affairs, it is not necessary to claim that the Hon. Mr. Fielding and his associates at Ottawa are heaven sent financiers, or that the surplus to which Canada has been long a stranger, is the result alone of their skill in handling the country's finances. The causes are simpler and more satisfactory to the country than the mere claim of intellectual superiority on the part of our present public men over their predecessors. Good harvests and a more thorough development of our mineral and other wealth have done their share but after all wealth never creates itself, and it is the faith in the sound policy and honest administration of the present Government possessed not only by ourselves but by the world at large, that has helped more largely than any other factor in the increased confidence necessary to build up a nation's business. It is but natural that a fresh impetus should be given to Canadian

interests by a Government which refuses to follow the Conservative policy of bolstering up foreign ports with Canadian subsidies to the detriment of the Canadian Import and Export trade. For the first time in the history of the Dominion we find no subsidies granted to Steamship lines having their terminus in a foreign country. The Liberal party have at last awakened Canada to the common sense policy of looking after Canadian interests instead of worrying over any appearance of unfriendliness there may be in the termination of the Conservative policy of philanthropy towards American interests which for 18 years made Portland, Me., the winter port of Canada.

With a sound, trade, fiscal and immigration policy, the Laurier Administration has given to Canada the two most prosperous business years that the country has enjoyed since Confederation. Even here in New Brunswick, where the marked depression in the lumber trade, caused by years of over-production, would formerly have meant ruin to our people, the improvement in our agricultural conditions, together with the marked increase in our dairying and manufacturing interests and the diversion of the important winter trade to St. John, have brought this Province nicely through this sustained period of lumber depression.

The leakage in the public finances has been stopped, and the public services are in a better condition than they ever were. For these things every good citizen will return devout thanks. Not content with this showing, the Government has undertaken to use up a portion of their expected surplus for 1899 by a marked reduction in the postage. This is along the lines of true liberalism, which demands reduced burthens on the people rather than a heaping up of surpluses, for it is sound liberal doctrine that not a dollar more should be exacted from the people than is necessary for the proper government of the country. The reduction of the postal rate from 5 cents to 2 cents on Imperial letters, and from 3 cents to 2 cents on Canadian and American letters, means a reduction of taxation of somewhere between \$650,000 and \$800,000 a year.

In our opinion the burdens of the people could not have been lightened in a more acceptable way than by lowering the postal rates, as it means in addition to the money saved to the people as a whole, that an impetus is given to the freer intercourse between our own citizens and the outside world. The Conservative papers confidently predict that the Government will be forced to levy a tax on tea to make up the deficit caused by this postal reduction, but they forget that under her present rulers Canada is able to shew a handsome surplus, part of which is simply being applied in reducing the burden of taxation. There will be no duty on tea as a result.

A LOCAL ELECTION.

There is a well defined rumor of an approaching Local Election, but at the moment of writing we have not heard the result of the meeting of the Government held on Monday at Fredericton at which the matter will likely be decided. If the decision be in the affirmative the Government can safely go to the people on their record, confident that no amount of opposition tin horn blowing of the two price bridge fake nature will be able in the least to cloud the real issues before the electorate. Here in an agricultural County the questions before the people concerning the local administration are very simply and easily answered by the electorate. Has

the Emmerson Government carried out its pledges for a progressive agricultural policy by giving every incentive possible for the success of the great farming industry? The free distribution of seed wheat and the bonusing of wheat mills have been a practical illustration to the people of Kent that the Local Government were in earnest in their efforts to promote the best interests of the farming community. The importation of choice cattle, horses, sheep and pigs have been fully appreciated in every farming County in New Brunswick, while the subsidies given to the agricultural societies, have enabled the farmers in each section to receive more fully the benefits best fitted for each locality as the spending of these grants is left to the farmers composing each association. Coming to the dairying interests which with us are second to none it is known to all that the establishment of creameries and cheese factories with the assistance of the Local Government, has given a new outlet to our farmers which has been thoroughly appreciated. We have only to remind our readers that last year the four butter factories operated in Kent produced 41,768 pounds of butter which sold at an average price of between 18 and 19 cents a pound. Our four cheese factories in the same year produced 34,500 pounds of first-class cheese which sold at prices varying from 9 1/4 to 9 1/2 cents a pound. This is the outlet afforded by an intelligent policy for the surplus products of the firm. When we further call to our readers attention the fact that most of the butter and cheese is marketed in England, thanks also to the practical assistance of the Government, by which means an entirely new market was secured, we can understand what this promising industry means to our farmers and it is still in its infancy with a chance for almost unlimited extension.

Then we come to the question of Roads and Bridges, and no one we think in this County will assert that these were ever cared for as well as in the past four years. The building of the Kingston Bridge alone should be sufficient to show that both our local members and the Government they so ably represent, thoroughly appreciate the needs of this community. In our issue of December 29th we called attention to the intelligent and effective work being done for the proper maintenance of our bridges by Messrs. Barnes, Johnson and Legere.

If there is a portion of this Province to which the Emmerson Government has shown more consideration than any other, it is in these North shore countries where their progressive agricultural and dairying policy, their intelligent preservation of our great lumber and game interests, and their prompt and effective maintenance of roads and bridges are thoroughly appreciated. Here the friends of the Local Government will stand firmly together, regardless of dominion politics, knowing that in their support of the Emmerson Government they are giving their suffrages to elect men who have deserved re-election at the peoples hands.

There have been several slates made and broken in Kent as to the personnel of the three opposition candidates, but we can assure the Richibucto wire pullers who are posing as King makers that whether the present members are opposed or not, their election is assured beyond peradventure. The people of Kent appreciate the faithful, unselfish service given in the past by Messrs. Barnes, Johnson and Legere, and it would only be a proper compliment of their good faith to our people if their election should be by acclamation.

This, however, we understand, is not to be, as it is necessary at all hazards for Mr. McInerney to make some show of filling his assurance to the Moncton Convention. Verily pride cometh before a fall, and the shock this local king maker will get after the next local election returns are in, will assure even his dearest friends that Kent is too big to be held in the hollow of any man's hand, and that our people appreciate the fact that selfishness alone dictates the opposition policy not only in this County but throughout the Province of New Brunswick.

THE MONTREAL EXTENSION.

In an editorial under the above title the Moncton "Times" attempts to pose as a critic of the present Government's railway policy, and in so doing quotes certain portions of two speeches made by the Minister of Railways. We are sorry for the dullness of the Times' editor or for his ignorance of the meaning of plain English words whichever it is that prevents him from discovering that the two statements quoted by "The Times" mean exactly the same thing and that the supposed variance exists only in the lack of education which prevents the Times' Editor from understanding his own quotations.

The statement made by the Minister of Railways a year ago in St. John, was that by his arrangement with the Grand Trunk Railway he could send the freight solicitors of the I. C. R. into any part of the territory drained by the G. T. R. and invite shippers to make contracts to ship via G. T. R. to Montreal and thence to St. John or Halifax via I. C. R. so that any shipper along the G. T. R. wishing to ship grain or cattle to England by the all Canadian route, could do so to the advantage of the I. C. R. This could not be done along the C. P. R. for the reason that this railway has a Canadian terminus at St. John with every facility for handling business and a shorter connection between Montreal and the sea board than the I. C. R. has.

Unfortunately some people were visionary enough to jump at the conclusion (and the Times' Editor appears to have been of the number) that this meant that the G. T. R. would hand over business of their own accord to the I. C. R. at Montreal, although the former has direct connection with Portland, Me., and expensive terminal facilities at that point. To correct this stupid impression which neither Mr. Blair nor any intelligent hearer or reader of his words ever conceived to be his meaning, the Minister made the further statement a month ago which the Times seizes upon as being contradictory. In his later utterance, Mr. Blair simply stated he did not believe the I. C. R. could offer either the C. P. R. or G. T. R. any inducements sufficient for these roads to voluntarily hand over their export trade to the I. C. R. at Montreal and that while the freight solicitors of the I. C. R. might secure certain contracts with shippers along the line of the Grand Trunk system to ship via G. T. R. to Montreal and thence via I. C. R. to St. John, that the main dependence of the Government road for export freight would necessarily be in the vast and fertile country not drained by either of these roads.

This is what the people of the Province have understood from first to last, and is in itself the great reason for the extension of the I. C. R. from Levis to Montreal, and which in our humble opinion will necessitate the further extension of the I. C. R. further west to Larry Sound or some point on the Lakes. It is quite possible this latter move may be avoided by trade arrangements with connecting lines having no Atlantic terminus, but one thing is sure, as we understand the plain business policy of the Minister of Railways, he does not propose that the I. C. R. shall be dependent on either

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the C. P. R. or G. T. R. for export business, for he is clear-headed enough to understand that both these roads being competitors of the Government system for this export trade with through connections to the Atlantic sea board and well equipped termini at St. John and Portland respectively, no favors of this kind could in reason be expected from them.

It is a case of another mare's nest discovered by the Times and we could respectfully suggest to our Moncton contemporary the more thorough study of the English language which would prevent such silly exhibitions of ignorance in future. We confess it must be humiliating to the Moncton organ to have us in this County enlighten the people of the railway "hub" as to the plain railway policy of the Government system. We would advise the Times to stick to the two price bridge nightmare, and leave railway matters alone until it understands the

question better; and further that it would be well not to make quotations from a public man's speeches until it understands the meaning of the words so plainly uttered.

R. A. Klock is suing John Laughlin M. P. P., for \$5000 for slander alleged to have been uttered during the recent Nipissing, Ont., by-election.

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