SUPPLEMENT TO THE HERALD.

OUR PREMIER

Hon. Mr. Blair's Speech at Woodstock.

A MASTERLY REPLY TO OPPOSITION CANVASSES,

THN STUMPAGE, FISHERY, AND PUBLIC DEBT CHARGES DISCUSSED.

FEATURES OF THE FUTURE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OUTLINED.

A Speech That Has Already Rallied Hundreds of Electors to the Government Standard.

(Stenographed by Mr. F. H. Risteen).

The meeting addressed by Hon. Mr. Blair and Mr. Wilson in the rink at Woodstock, on Monday evening, the 5th inst., was the largest political gathering ever seen in the county of Carleton. Fully 1500 people were present, two-thirds of whom were electors, embracing representatives from every section of the county, as well as from the border parishes of York. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Colter were also present, making the York representation complete, and the quartette were lustily cheered.

J. R. Murphy, the chairman, to whom much of the honor of the demonstration is due, made a most appropriate and eloquent introduction of premier Blair, the chief speaker of the evening. Mr. Blair spoke for over two hours and a half and was followed by Mr. Wilson who gave a most effective address, covering many features of provincial politics not touched upon by the premier.

The meeting in every way was a grand success and scores of people at its close thronged about the attorney general and his friends and stated that they had voted opposition for the last time. Space precludes us from publishing the speech of Mr. Wilson, which was one that did him credit and and enhanced his reputation as a rising politician in our province.

Hon. Mr. Blair on coming forward was warmly received. He said:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—I do not feel that I could properly appropriate to myself the very complimentary terms in which the Chairman has been good enough to introduce me to you on this occasion. I do, however, feel that to have the opportunity of addressing so large, and I am satisfied (coming from this county) so intelligent an audience as that which I see before me, is a circumstance upon which I am entitled to congratulate myself and which I may accept as of a complimentary character. I think I might be justified in assuming as I look upon this magnificent audience, that there is, at all events, existing in this county of Carleton some sentiment not unfriendly to the present administration. (Applause.) I assume, Mr. Chairman, that this large gathering does not by any means consist of only those who have looked with favor upon the policy and conduct of the government with which I am connected, or of those who are friendly to its leader. I recognize that probably there are among you a number of persons who have come here to-night inspired, perhaps, by some curiosity to see and hear a person who has received so unstinted a share of compliment and attention during all these years from a section of the public press. I presume there are a number of you also here to-night who, while you are not distinctly unfriendly to the government, have yet perhaps heard and read such statements as to the way in which we have been conducting your affairs that you have begun to feel some doubt as to whether we are proper men to be entrusted with your destinies, and whether it would not be in the public interest that some change should be made. And I presume there are among you a third class who have not seen anything in our conduct that merits condemnation and who are disposed if they had it in their power to continue the government of the country in our hands a longer term.

If I have correctly gauged the sentiment, therefore, of the three classes in this audience, I think I will be entitled to expect from this whole audience, both friends and opponents, that they will give to my statements and to such reasoning and argument as I may be able to present to them, a fair and a calm consideration, and that they will take an opportunity—perhaps not now, because the moment of debate is not always an opportune moment to do so—to weigh carefully what I shall say to-night in defence of the government, and endeavor thereby

To Reach a Just Conclusion

as to whether we ought to be approved or whether we ought to be condemned.

There are a good many people, I may say, Mr. Chairman, who are very apt to discern in any step which is at all unusual on the part of a public man, an occult design or an ulterior purpose, and I have not been able to accept the kind and complimentary invitation extended to me a few weeks ago to address the people of Carleton on the political issues of the day, without having a great deal of suspicion attached to the acceptance, on my part, of that invitation, and a good deal of anxiety manifested as to whether I was not here to-night for the purpose not of defending the government, but of compassing some other totally different design. It was only the other day that I saw in one of the papers which we publish in Fredericton the suggestion that I was coming here to-night, not for the purpose of doing battle in the interests of the local government, or for the discussion of local questions, but that as it is said to be the intention of the gentleman now representing you at Ottawa (Mr. Hale) to withdraw from further candidacy, that I am here now for the purpose of booming myself in this county as a future candidate for the dominion house of commons from the county of Carleton. Now, Mr. Chairman, while there is no county in this province, outside of my own, that I would be more pleased to have the honor of representing than the county of Carleton, I think I may fairly take you into my confidence to-night and say that any such ulterior purpose has never entered my mind; that I have no designs upon the fair county of Carleton other than desiring it to have its people furnished with a correct view of the way in which we are carrying on your affairs at Fredericton.

It will also be understood, unless otherwise assumed, that when a man who is filling the position I have had the honor of filling for a number of years in this province, asks the people to come and hear him, they will assume that his object is, and they may correctly assume in my case, that my object is to lay before them a statement of his management of the public business. My object is to impress the people of this county as favorably as I can with the way we have conducted your affairs, and I hope you will consider that I was justified in accepting the invitation so kindly tendered me and I do not think that the people of this constituency will take it amiss that I am here on this platform to-night for this purpose.

Now, a friend of mine has been good enough to put into my possession a very lengthy document in which he assured me there was contained a statement of

All the Charges that were Preferred Against this Government

as far as he could learn in this county and used as canvassas against us. I have these charges before me now and it will be my design as rapidly and yet as fully as I can, to cover all the ground, to take up all the various counts in the indictment which was preferred here in the election of January last against the present administration. I am happy to be able to avail myself of this opportunity of doing so, because I think it is an exceedingly favorable opportunity. We have just passed through a period of the year when we may be expected to regard with generous consideration the acts of our fellow men, even though those men be politicians; a time when as it happens you are not agitated by any political contest, but when you are in a calm and tranquil state of mind and will, therefore, be able to hear and consider and digest with all the consideration they are entitled to any reasons or facts which may be urged to you in defence of the policy and conduct of the government. I must, however, proceed with as much despatch as possible to take up these various charges and in doing so I think perhaps it would be as well that I should first refer to those subjects of least interest in one sense or least likely to attract the attention of my audience. I have all these charges before me. The list is at all events sufficiently long, and I was quite alarmed when I came to examine the whole indictment in all its details to discover that the government was considered so great a sinner as it is represented to be in the list before me.

Now, I propose to meet these questions fully. I am not going to-night to express to you any opinion as to whether the government has done right in the way in which it has managed the public business, I am going to show you how we have managed affairs and leave it to you to judge as to whether that management has been wise or unwise. I propose to state to you the facts. I propose to put before you a statement which a gentleman here present will take accurately in shorthand and which will be published throughout the province, and if that statement can be successfully challenged no doubt it will be by those who are antagonistic to the government. I am going to make these statements fully confident that they will be criticised and that they will pass in every detail under the public eye, and after I have made them, I will leave it to the people of this county and the fairminded audience I see before me to judge and to decide whether they ought to conclude against or conclude in favor of the administration of their affairs by the present government.

Now, sir, there is as a first count in this indictment with which my friend supplies me, the charge that the government has been

A most Extravagant Administration.

Well, we know that governments are always charged with being extravagant. There is no charge which can be so easily made—no charge which is more freely and carelessly made against all governments than that they are extravagant. Any man whether he has any knowledge of public affairs or not can charge the government with extravagance. One man with a limited idea as to how a government should be carried on will think it extravagant if it spends $100, while another will think it parsimonious. As a matter of fact all governments have been and all governments I suppose will be charged with extravagance. But as this government has been charged with extravagance I think it right that I should tell you what we have done compared with our predecessors. I am going to state what the revenue and what the expenditure of the province has been during the years we have been in power as compared with the same number of years under our predecessors. I am going to show you what the present condition of the public debt is and what the position of the public debt was at the time we came into power, and I am going to show you how the increase has come about. I am going to make a fair, and I think a complete comparison, and I will leave you to draw your own conclusions therefrom, which I venture to think will not be unfavorable to the present administration.

Now, there are some items of expendiditure entirely within the control of the government, or when I say entirely I am using that term in a relative sense. There are such items as those connected with the salaries of the executive, the salaries of their staff and with the carrying on of the general executive governmental machine. There are other expenditures such as the legislative expenditure connected with the maintenance of the legislature, the pay of the members of the house and of the staff connected with that body. There is another class of expenditures that we call contingencies, which include all the incidentals which arise out of the carrying on of the government, and I have classified another distinct body of expenditures under the head of public printing. Outside of these classes, I have not particularly specified the public expenditure, and I have not done so for the reason that they include the money laid out upon the public works and on the roads and bridges of the country, upon schools, upon the maintenance of the lunatic asylum, upon the interest of the public debt; all these other items I have not gone into, as you will see, for the very simple and obvious reason that it could form no ground particularly upon which to claim the favorable consideration of the people that we have not expended as much upon roads and bridges as our predecessors, or upon schools; that would be rather an argument against the government and would be taken rather as a ground of complaint against them, so that I have not classified that class of expenditure though I make this general statement with regard to them, that they are larger than they were during any previous administration. But I have taken up those items which are included under the heads I have named, such as public printing, contingencies of government, expenses of the legislature and of the executive government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that statement put briefly is this: The expenditure under these four heads by the government in 1878 was $96000, in 1879, $86000, in 1880, $81000, in 1881, $89000, in 1882, $92000; making a total for the five years of $455,000, an average for each year of $91,159. You understand me that upon these

Four Classes of Controllable Expenditure

which I have named the government which preceded us laid out in the five years previous to our advent to power the sum of $91000 per year. Now, what has this extravagant government done in the same direction. What has this government laid out upon the legislature, upon the executive, upon our salaries and the salaries of our staff, upon contingencies and upon public printing? If you will take up the public accounts you will find that in 1884 we laid out $85000, in 1885, $86,000, in 1886, $82,000, in 1887, $82,000, in 1888, $83,000, and in 1889, $84,000. I am giving simply the round figures—the odd hundreds I am not including in the yearly statement but I include them in the total—making a total of $505,000 for the six years or an average for each year of $84,316—a comparison, of which no man can challenge the accuracy, in favor of this government, which is so wasteful and extravagant and which these gentlemen are desirous to supplant, by over $7,000 per year upon those items of expenditure which you do not wish to see the government increase and which it is in your interest to have reduced. (Applause). These savings may go, as they do go, to swell that larger class of expenditure in which you are more deeply interested and which you desire to see increased, because they touch directly the public welfare. Now then, gentlemen, $7,000 per year is the amount we have made of absolute saving since we came into power. I am taking it down to the very last moment up to which the public accounts are published, and this is the result.

Now, it is said, there has been a great increase in the public debt. Well, so there has. But, gentlemen, it is not enough for a man who challenges the conduct of the government to say that we have increased the public debt. He must needs go further, and he must needs tell the people wherein this debt has grown, for what purpose has it been augmented, and unless he can show the public that the government under whose administration and office this debt has actually been increased have increased it in an improper way and for improper purposes, there is nothing whatever in the argument to take hold of the public mind. Now, I frankly acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, to my friends here that the public debt has grown in these years that we have been in power; that while it was something over $1,100,000 in 1883, when we came into power, to-day it is $2,100,000. It has grown a million of dollars, and there is no man who regrets that this increase has taken place any more than the person who is now addressing you. I would be very glad indeed if these obligations of a previous legislature and, I say it without reflection at all, a previous government, upon this country had not been imposed, and you would have been glad if the aggregate of our public obligations had not been swollen to the height it has now reached. But it is one thing, gentlemen, to regret it and it is a totally different thing to mete out a condemnation upon this government because it has so increased. Now, I will tell you what the increase has sprung from and I have before me the public records which give the items in detail. It has grown out of the subsidies which have been given

Towards the Construction of Railways

throughout this province almost in its entirety. With the exception of two items I will speak of later, this added million has grown out of the railway obligations which the legislature in 1882 placed upon the statute-book of the country—legislation the effect of which was to promise a subsidy to every company in point of fact that had been incorporated and named and included in that act, that they would if they fulfilled the conditions which the act imposed be entitled to receive a subsidy from the country of $3,000 a mile. Well, the public debt has grown as I have said in that way, and in so growing, what man is there who can justly say that this government did wrong in carrying out in a spirit of fairness and integrity the obligations which the legislature in 1882, the representatives of the people, put upon the statute-book? We would be unworthy the character of men—we would be running counter to those traditions of public honor which have ever been the possession of British representative bodies if we had failed to mete out to all these companies included in that act the same measure of even-handed justice. To say that we as a government should say to the Kent Northern, "Gentlemen, you shall have a subsidy," and to a railway to be constructed from Petitcodiac to Elgin, "No, you shall not have a subsidy" is surely to make fish of one and flesh of another and to outrage those sentiments of public justice and those sentiments of public honor which prevail throughout our land. I would not take the responsibility of doing it and I venture to say there is no man in public life in this country to-day, I care not how anxious he may be to secure the seals of office or oust the present occupants from the treasury benches, who would do other than we have done, or who would have hesitated to accept the full measure of responsibility that act carried with it.

Now, that is what we have added to the public debt. Mr. Chairman, I am not speaking of this because I desire to make any reflection upon the men who in this respect were directly responsible for that legislation. I may say frankly that I was a member of the legislature at the time the act passed in 1882 while the other government were in power and I voted for the act. While I reluctantly did so, I voted for it because it included a subsidy for a bridge that ran across the river and for a railway in my own county, I did not and I do not profess to be able to resist the influences which commonly and ordinarily affect representative men and I voted for the act which the government of that day had promoted. So that it will be understood that I do not refer to this subject for the purpose of casting any reflection upon the government or the legislature which passed that act; I am merely referring to it in self-defence and in answer to that which many of you know was put forward throughout this county in the canvass of January last against the government—namely that they have, as they said, been improperly and unduly augmenting and increasing the public debt.

Now, I want to state the whole case to you fully and let me add to what I have said about the financial condition of the province one other observation. Since we came into power we have received from the dominion government a sum of between $700,000 and $800,000 by way of settlement of what was called

The Eastern Extension Claim,

and by way of readjustment of debt between the several provinces. While we have added $1,000,000, or a little over, to the public debt in carrying out these railway obligations, we have at the same time received from the dominion government, the largest portion of which is to our credit at Ottawa, this sum of between $700,000 and $800,000, or to be entirely accurate, $754,000. Now, we have not all that money there at the present time. Though we have added to the public debt by about a million for railway purposes with the exception of two items I am going shortly to refer to, we have at the same time withdrawn $187,000 from our credit at Ottawa, and I will tell you how we have withdrawn it and for what purpose. We withdrew $45,000 for the purpose of building an annex to the lunatic asylum in the city and county of St. John, $84,000 in payment for the Fredericton bridge, $37,000 for the purpose of paying for the new departmental buildings, and $22,000 for the purpose of paying for other special and permanent bridges which we have constructed. So that there has been $187,000 withdrawn from the balance at Ottawa, which leaves $567,000, or say $500,000 in round figures, which will fairly be placed against the million which has been added to the debt during the time which I have mentioned.

Now, that is a full and correct statement of the financial condition of the province. We have so far as those classes of expenditure are concerned which are within the legitimate and proper control of the government and which you desire to see reduced to the smallest possible limit, carried on by the government, with an increasing population and in the face of necessary modern improvements, with which many of you are no doubt familiar and which adds to the departmental cost, for $7,000 a year less than our predecessors and we have only added to the public debt for the purposes I have already detailed. So much for the financial condition of the province.

But I am told by my friend, who has thus supplied me with the data for my speech to-night, that there is put forward in this county a general statement, specifically charged and made, that the government has been

Doing Everything for York County

and has not dealt in a just and liberal spirit with the county of Carleton. That while our public works expenditures have been larger in other directions, and larger upon the roads and bridges in York and other counties in the province, that Carleton county has a just ground of complaint because of the parsimonious and illiberal spirit in which we have dealt with her public services. Well, since that charge has been made, let us to the law and testimony, let us to the public records and see just what foundation there is for an accusation of that kind against the present administration. I would have thought that the public accounts, which are available for everybody, would have attracted attention in contradiction of that statement, but I am happy to be able to furnish you to-night with specific and conclusive evidence upon that point, from which I think you will have no difficulty in drawing your own conclusion. First, let me tell you that from the year 1874, down to the year 1882, the year preceding the advent of the present government to power, the gross expenditure upon the great roads and bridges of Carleton aggregated $58,430. That covered the whole expenditure upon the great roads and bridges of Carleton county during those years, which would be an average of $6500 per year. Well, now, we have been in power six full years. I do not take into account the year 1883, because our friends who preceded us were in power part of that year—they were in power four months of that year and we were in power the balance—so that it would not be possible for me to make a fair and just calculation if I were to include the year 1883 in it either to their credit or to ours. I therefore drop 1883 out from my statement, and I find that from 1884 to 1889, inclusive, the amount expended in the county of Carleton for great roads and bridges was $74,462., an average of $12,500, or an addition from year to year of $6,000 in excess of the amount that was laid out upon your great roads and bridges by the preceding government. (Applause). $6,500 was their average expenditure. In 1874 it was $7,000; in 1875 it was $5,000; in 1876 it was $8,000; in 1877 it was $7,000; in 1878 it was $6,000; in 1879 it was $3,000; in 1880 it was $6,000; in 1881 it was $10,000; in 1882 it was $7,000; making an average of $6,500 per year on your great roads and bridges during those nine years. During our six years closing with the year 1889, the figures were: In 1884, $10,000; in 1885 it was $18,000; in 1886 it was $15,000; in 1887 it was $8,000; in 1888 it was $10,000; in 1889 it was $11,000, making an average of $12,500 a year. Who wants now to make a comparison between this government and its predecessors as respects its expenditure upon your great roads and bridges? There are the figures and they speak trumpet-tongued to each of you. They are capable of immediate verification, and do not they sustain the inference which any man of you, if so disposed, may draw that, whatever other charges may be preferred against this government, and in all conscience we have had charges enough—whatever other accusations may be made against us, the accusation of having dealt illiberally and unjustly with the county of Carleton as compared with the preceding government does not lie at our door. (Applause).

Now, I will take occasion at this moment to give expression to a feeling which I must confess I entertained at the close of the election in January last when I found that the county of Carleton had not unitedly pronounced in our favor. I was disappointed at the result of that election in Carleton because I thought if there was a county in the province of New Brunswick with which the government had endeavored to deal fairly and upon which it had claims for fair and reasonable consideration it was the county of Carleton. I have only been able to conclude that the result was owing to the indefatigable and it appears successful efforts that were made to misrepresent to the people of this county what our treatment of it had been and what our policy and our conduct of affairs in the whole had been. And, Mr. Chairman. it is, I am free to confess to you to-night, because of the feeling of disappointment which I then experienced and because of the conviction that accompanied it that it was only through misrepresentation and error that the vote of January last was recorded, that I was led to entertain the hope at all events that when the facts were put before the people of this county, when they were put before the intelligence of this county, because no man needs to be told that the county of Carleton is excelled by none in its intelligence and in its capacity to understand public questions, the result might be—indeed I cherished the hope that it would be—that when another election should come around, (and they come around we politicians find soon enough in all conscience) the people of this county might possibly render us a different verdict.

Now, I have disposed of the financial question and as figures are almost always dull and uninteresting I am very glad indeed that I have done so. My friend supplies me with a statement that a charge has been made against this government, which I think I recognize as being somewhat of a special Carleton county grievance. I mean by that a grievance, if there is a grievance at all, which especially concerns and affects the people of this county. I understand it is said the government brought in a separate resolution for a subsidy to the Fredericton and Woodstock railway during the session of 1888, and that the

Centreville and Woodstock Road

which was included in the act of 1882, was entirely ignored, and I understand that it was, as has been alleged here no doubt and in different parts of this county that it was, because of the action of the government in respect of that railway question that one of your representatives who formerly was a supporter of the government and who was elected in 1886 as such, withdrew his support and placed himself in opposition. Now, Mr. Chairman, the meeting will pardon me I am sure if I take a few minutes to just spread out before them a brief history of this railway subject. You will remember—I think I have already stated it to you—that as early as 1882 the legislature passed a general subsidy act which included a great number of railways and which, when they were all subsidized, involved an expenditure of something like I think $1,750,000. Among the different railroads which were so subsidized or included was one which I will call the Fredericton and Woodstock railway—that is not the exact name but that was the road—but there was not included in that act of 1882 the railway known as the Woodstock and Centreville railway. That railway was not projected and certainly the company was not incorporated until some years subsequent to the passing of the legislation of 1882. Now, there was a clause in that act of 1882 under which the legislature reserved the right to the house of assembly (not to both branches but to one) to withold its assent to a contract being given for any railway included in the act after 250 miles should be subsidized. It was true that when the application was made by the gentlemen who had incorporated the road from Woodstock to Fredericton for a subsidy, that the 250 mile limit had been exceeded, and it was necessary for the government before they could enter into a contract with that company to procure from one branch of the legislature (the representative branch) the assent of that branch to the contract being entered into. Well, sir, when the time came we applied to the legislature to give their consent. We also included in the resolution two or three other small railways that had not been up to that time subsidized but were included in the general legislative authority of 1882, and we thereby about cleaned up, I think I am correct in saying, all the railways that were included in the subsidy act of 1882. Well, when this question came up before the house it appears there were some representatives who desired that other railroads should be subsidized as well as the ones we proposed. They knew thoroughly well, none knew better, that we could not by a resolution of the house of assembly authorize a subsidy to be given to any company that was not included in the act of 1882, and they knew thoroughly well that it would be absolutely necessary that the government should determine upon a policy of railway subsidizing generally—should embark upon a new scheme—should lay out its lines and spread out its policy before the country with reference to a new subsidy act, before another road not included in the act of 1882 could receive one dollar of subsidy. Well, we did not feel as a government that when these companies (there was a company in Charlotte, a company in St. John and a company with one end in Carleton and the other in York), applied to us to give them the benefit of the act of 1882 to which I have referred, that we were called upon as a government to at once embark upon a new railway scheme and thus add immensely to the railway debt and the railway obligations of the country. We felt that those roads which were included in the original act, should not be refused, simply because they had not come up as promptly as the others (for very good reasons in many cases). Having been included in that act, we had to treat them fairly and honestly and we asked the legislature to give its assent—or one branch of it to give its assent—to our entering into a contract with these several companies, among the rest the Fredericton and Woodstock company, for a subsidy to their roads. Well, what happened when we made that proposal? Why there was a moving of the waters; there was evidence of discontent. It was not open, it was not above board, it was not public, but it was none the less patent. I saw myself and others saw and communicated it to me, that

Intrigues were going on between some of the Supporters

of the government and the leaders and others of the opposition, whereby they hoped to hamper the action of the government and compel us to enter into and embark upon a large railway scheme before they would give their consent to our carrying out the contract obligations which the legislature had placed already upon the statute-book. Among the rest was one of your representatives, Mr Atkinson. These gentlemen co-operated and caballed and intrigued with Mr. Hanington, the leader of the opposition. They had their meetings and caucuses, and they at last as the product of their joint incubation produced a motion which they made in the legislature in qualification of the government's proposal to authorize a subsidy to these roads which had not before taken advantage of the act. Well, I am told that my friend Dr. Atkinson—I am not going to speak of him with disrespect, because he is your representative, and as such is entitled to be spoken of here with respect—I believe he claims that I dealt with him severely, or sat down on him with a considerable degree of weight. I am not at all conscious that I performed any such squelching operation as is attributed to me. I am not sure that I am competent to do it; all I am conscious of doing is that I expressed some indignation that Dr. Atkinson should have taken the course he did take when he was an ally and friend, or at all events a professed friend of the government; when he was in our confidence; when he was dealing with us and we with him in a confidential way and when he had been sent to the legislature as our friend and supporter. I took occasion to point out to him what I thought was improper in his conduct. I thought if Dr. Atkinson was not satisfied with the government's course in thus seeking to carry out its present obligations before embarking on a new scheme of this magnitude, that it was only fair and only generous that he should have come to me as the leader of his party and communicated to me the difficulties with which he was embarassed. Gentlemen, you cannot carry on party government in the world unless there is some species of honor and fair-play between the leader and his party—the government and its friends. If a man sent to the legislature by the voice of the people as a supporter or ally of a party, may secretly intrigue, it he may cabal, if he may undermine and still be thought to be treating a government with fairness, with candor and with decency, then I don't think you can carry on public affairs at all, nor do I think that you can expect decent men to remain in public life. I did, as I have said, severely criticize the course which Dr. Atkinson had taken, and I say to you now that any of you in my position would have felt that it was

Dr Atkinson's Fair and Bounden Duty

to have come to me and said: "Mr. Blair, I am sorry to see the course you are taking; I have a railway up in my county that requires assistance; true I have not communicated with you heretofore on the subject, but I want to have you now state that you will give to this railway your approval and will introduce a subsidy act, including a subsidy for my railway, but if you will not do these things then I want you to understand that I will be compelled to withdraw my support from the government. I want to treat you fairly, I want to give you fair notice, that I cannot, unless this is done, continue to give your government my support." Why if Dr. Atkinson had done this I would have respected him; I would have pointed out to him that the act which was passed in 1882 did not cover the railway from Hartland to Forreston which, it is said, he was deeply interested in. I would have pointed out that if we had then opened the door for a new railway, we would open the door for twenty; that when you add $20,000 to the debt for one railway, you run the risk of adding $1,500,000 or $2,000,000, and I would have asked him whether he was prepared as the representative of this county, which is anxious as every county of like intelligence is to keep the public debt within as reasonable a limit as possible, to take the responsibility of favoring such a policy as that? But he did not afford me the opportunity; nay, he did more. He read, which I thought he should not have read, a confidential communication I addressed to him stating frankly before the opening of the legislature what we proposed to do and what we did not propose to do, and which I thought I was free to communicate as between one gentleman and another without having that letter read as a public document and before a public assembly. But he did not take that view and perhaps I may have dealt somewhat too severely with him, but the occasion was one in which any person under the same circumstances would have been much moved, and I expressed perhaps even more strongly than I have to night the extent of the disapprobation with which I regarded his conduct.

Now, let us come to this matter of the resolution. The government made that proposal and notwithstanding what I have said to you, a motion was made by the leader of the opposition, in amendment of my motion which received Dr. Atkinsons support. I had no congnizance of the fact from himself that Dr. Atkinson was operating with the opposition and intending to vote against the government on a motion of want of confidence on this railway question, until Mr. Hanington rose in his place and moved the motion I am now about to read to you. Now what was the proposal that was brought before the legislature? What had the people's representatives to choose between? On the one hand the government proposed to carry out the obligations of the previous legislature—the contract that the people of this country had entered into with companies incorporated for the building of these several roads. On the other hand there was the alternative proposal moved by Mr. Hanington and supported by your own representative, Mr. Atkinson and five or six others in the legislature. Well, I will tell you precisely what that counter proposal was. I have before me now the official records of what transpired on that occasion and this was the motion that Mr. Hanington made: omitting certain portions which do not effect the general point I am making.

"Resolved, That any action of the government or any measure authorizing provincial aid to railways should be general and not sectional,"—you will observe the word sectional. I do not know what that means. I suppose that it shall include a number of roads and not two or three. "And shall include all (mark you) or at least the most important of the lines of railway in each of the counties of the province which have been incorporated and have charters; and that no provincial aid should be given to any lines of railway included in the act of 1882 until provision is made for provincial aid for these other lines of railway."

Now, gentlemen, this was the alternative proposition. On the one hand here were two or three railways which were already subsidized under the act of 1882, which had passed the house and passed the council and received the assent of the governor years before and only required the renewed assent of the house of assembly now; and on the other hand was Mr. Hanington's proposal, which committed the government, the legislature, and the country to what policy? Why, gentlemen, let me tell you that there were companies comprising seven hundred miles of railway which were covered by the amendment that the leader of the opposition moved and that your representative supported. And how much money would that represent? $2,000,000. Now, the leader of the opposition said, of course, in his amendment, that the government, before going on with these roads included in the act of 1882, must agree to give subsidies upon all "or at least the most important." Well, we will suppose that in working out that resolution all would not be included, but only the most important. We know what these things mean when a government is committed in this way; you need not look for any escape short of the outside limit. But we will suppose that Mr. Hanington could control the railway pressure when it had once been brought to bear. His motion would mean, I venture to say, 500 out of the 700 miles, which would be $1,500,000 added to the public debt of this country by the motion which the leader of the opposition proposed, and which the member for Carleton supported. Now, this was the alternative proposition. What would the people of this country say to a government that would embark upon a scheme of that magnitude? You only need realize that to-day $105,000 is required to pay the interest on the public debt, the greater part of it having been incurred for the subsidizing of railways, some of which you will agree with me are not of the utmost use or benefit to the country. But we are paying, and will continue, for all time to come to pay the interest upon this debt and already one-sixth of the provincial revenue is absorbed in paying interest on bonds issued on account of railway obligations. Is it a wise or judicious policy—are the people going to support any government in adding another $100,000, or $60,000 at the lowest and possibly $100,000, to our interest burden account, thus absorbing one third of the whole revenue of the country for the purpose of increasing the railway mileage of this province, already the greatest according to population of any country in the world? Other men might feel like doing it; I am free to confess that I have very much reluctance in agreeing to any such policy as that. But this was the alternative before the house and because we would not agree to embark upon this vast and tremendous scheme; because we would not reach out in a direction no man knows to what limits or with what result, for that reason and let me tell you in all fairness and candor for that reason alone one of your representatives withdrew the confidence which he had theretofore expressed and I presume theretofore felt towards the government and went into violent and direct antagonism to us. Everything which had been just, proper and commendable before, from that instant forward, from the moment we failed to agree to launch out into this tremendous sea in which these gentlemen were willing to embark—because we refused to get into the boat with Mr. Hanington on such a wild and reckless venture as this, from that moment down to the present this government has been unable to do an act or perform a deed, to promote a legislative proposal or to propose a public policy, which has received the approval or commendation of that gentleman or those who were acting with him. (Loud applause). Well now, gentlemen, I leave it to you—I am not going to express any opinion as you will observe upon this question, at all, but I will leave it to you to say, as jurymen deciding between the opposition then and the opposition now and the government of the present, whether you would yourselves, much as you would like to see the Woodstock and Centreville railway subsidized, not think that you would be paying a great price—whether you would not be placing upon the shoulders of the people of this country too great a burden, advantageous and all as that railway no doubt would be to the people of one section of this county, in order to secure for yourself the construction of that work.

Now, gentlemen, I pass from the charge which is embodied in the third count of the indictment with which I have been supplied. The next question that comes up is one of some magnitude,

The Fishery Question.

Well, we have heard a great deal about this fishery question. We have heard of it almost everywhere but where the fishery question is a live issue. We have heard it in York—we have heard it on the uplands, in the backlands and on the mountains—everywhere it has been made a leading staple in the political discussion of these inland counties, but in the counties of Restigouche, Gloucester and Northumberland, counties where salmon fishing has reached a degree of development and magnitude which we have no conception of over here—in those counties you hear nothing at all of the fishery policy, at all events in connection with any misconduct of the government. You have to come over here where some of these gentlemen have never cast a fly in their lives—to gentlemen some of whom (I mean some of the candidates) do not know a fishing rod from a handspike, and they will tell you that the fishery policy of the government is most injurious. I have heard and even seen some candidates before the people, weep scalding tears while they narrated the grievous wrongs imposed upon these poor fishermen in the remote settlements of the country who are not allowed to spear or net or fish, owing to the abominable legislation this government had put upon the statute book. Well, gentlemen, I am going to give you, if you will hear me patiently, a little narrative of this fishery question, and if I have to refer to history, do not fancy because I am going a good ways back that I will trespass much upon your time. When this government came into power we found that the fisheries of the country were exceedingly valuable. We found that they had been growing in value and that their value was very generally recognized. We found that almost all the lands which had fishing privileges in front of them and which had formerly been the property of the crown, had been granted, and of course the fishing pools on these rivers (the property in them) had passed with the grants, which of course would be necessarily the case with all grants which lay along the shore or banks of these fishing rivers. We found that a very small number of those valuable fishing pools, which at one time belonged to the crown, remained, and we thought that it would be good policy in us, that it would be in the public interest that we should take a course which would stop the further sale of what remained of those valuable fishing fronts. We, therefore, as soon as we came into power, put upon the statute book a law to this effect: That thereafter there should be no grant issued of the front or shore of any fishing rivers—that is any rivers where there were salmon fishing pools—without there being

Reserved Along the front of Those Rivers

a margin of four rods, so that we would be able to retain in the crown the property in the fishing. There was no other possible way by which it would be in our power as a government or in the power of the legislature to reserve the crown rights in these fishing pools except by limiting the grant to within a distance of three or four rods of the edge of the stream. If we had bounded the grant as had always been done down to the stream, it would convey the rights to the grantee to the middle of the stream, which would take away and pass to the grantees all the fishing rights and privileges. The only way we could prevent that was to make a reservation of four rods in the grant along the front, as I have described. But we were careful to make this provision and have invariably acted on this provision—that the person who might receive the grant, though it would contain this reservation, would have the full right of way over and no interference with his going backwards and forwards upon this four rod front, he has the liberty to use and cultivate and even build upon and do anything in the way of using the four rods that he pleases, only that he has not the title to the four rods down to the stream, for if he had the title to the four rods as I have explained to you it would carry the fishing privileges in front of the land with it.

Let me give you an idea of what these privileges were worth. There were a number of persons who had, before we came into power, obtained grants on these rivers, some under the labor act and some at $1.00 per acre, thus getting the fishing. As soon as the people became possessed of the lots, or a purchaser offered, they almost invariably sold the fishing to persons from the United States or elsewhere for very large amounts. If any of you should have occasion at any time to visit the river Restigouche or Nepisiguit—take the Restigouche or Upsalquitch or any of its large tributaries, and ask any of the people living along the banks of those rivers if they own the fishing in front of their lands and they will tell you every man of them, no that they have either leased or sold it. Why? Because someone came along and paid them thousands of dollars for the fishing pools that lay in front of their grant. One man received $20,000 last summer, I am credibly informed, for the fishing pools in front of his land. Is it reason or common sense that the government of this country should be permitted to go on disposing of fishing pools for $1.00 an acre, or under the labor act, as many of them were disposed of to A, B, C, or D in order, that A,B,C, or D might be able to make himself independently rich for life and put $10,000 or $20,000 in his pockets by selling out these pools? I do not think the thing will admit of argument for a moment. All these people on these rivers, who you have been told were grievously wronged because as poor people, they were debarred from the privilege of fishing in front of their lots—these very people take the earliest possible opportunity in all cases of parting with their fishing when they are offered a liberal consideration for it.

Now, the question we had to decide then, as a government, was whether we would retain the residue of these properties to the crown—let the value, whatever it was, belong to the people of the country, not to you or me, not to A, B or C, but to everybody, and whatever income or revenue was capable of being derived from it should be derived for the common and universal benefit and go into the provincial exchequer, or whether as theretofore these valuable rights should be given away for a song as a matter of profit and speculation to the grantee. That was the question we had to determine, and we think when the people of the country know the whole question they will say we decided properly.

But that is not the real grievance after all. The grievance which chiefly evokes these scalding torrents of grief is that of

Stopping the People from Spearing and Netting.

Let me tell you, so far as that is concerned that the legislature of this province has no control whatever over that subject at all. We have no power whatever to say that the people may or may not net or spear or to regulate at all in any way or shape the exercise of the privilege of fishing. The dominion government possesses that jurisdiction, and possesses it exclusively and entirely, and whatever laws there are regulating the time, regulating the mode or manner in which the people may fish, whatever laws there are restricting the right to spear or curtailing the privilege of netting, those laws have emenated from the dominion parliament and were not passed by the legislature of this province. And yet an election takes place in Victoria, and somebody goes up the Tobique river and tells those people who have been used to spearing and netting without interference that the local government has passed a law that they should not spear and should not enjoy there the old time privilege of going out in front of their lots and spearing a fish, and therefore they ought to vote against the local government and put them out of power. That was the result up in the parish of Lorne on the river Tobique in the county of Victoria, all the while it being true that the legislature of this province or the government of this province had and has no power if they had the will—had no authority whatever to pass any legislation regulating in the minutest particular the privilege or the right of fishing in any shape or form. All that we ever did was as I have said: We passed the law which controlled only the ungranted crown lands. We said that so far as the ungranted crown lands are concerned we will not give a man under the labor act—we will not give a man at public sale—we will not permit anybody who may come along, A, B or C, to absorb these ungranted fishing fronts on the rivers of this province but keep them for the general public; in time they will be valuable; to-day they are yielding us $10,000 a year in revenue, and in ten or fifteen years hence perhaps they will be worth $20,000 a year and perhaps very much more. I will venture to say that if the crown was willing to sell the privileges which it owns, restricted as they are, curtailed as they are by what I must think was the impolicy of our predecessors, we would be able to get from men who are willing to pay for them as much as $250,000, on these rivers of the North Shore alone. And yet there are those who will say that we ought to throw them away and give them to Tom, Dick and Harry, because in doing what we have done we have been interfering with the privileges of the poor settlers. Now, there is no man living and I do not think any body of men who would be more desirous of aiding the poor settlers to the extent of their ability than the members of the present government, or than I would myself. No charge more illfounded and unwarranted could be brought against us than that any spirit of unfriendliness to the poor settlers of the country or desire to curtail their rights and privileges had impelled us to the action we took on this question. I have put the actual facts before you. We have done nothing more and nothing less than I have told you. We do not interfere with any man who had his grant or with any person who had before our law passed filed an application in the crown land department for his grant. We simply said, the time has come when we will not sacrifice this valuable property of the crown; we will keep it at all events; let the people of the country in the future make what use they may of it we will reserve these valuable revenue producing properties to the people of the country and not part with them as they have been parted with in the past.

Now, that is all I think I need remark to-night upon the question of the fisheries, with this single solitary addition thereto, that while you here know from these gentlemen who have attacked the government in this vigorous fashion—from Dr. Atkinson, Mr. Stockton, Mr. Hanington, Mr. Alward and all these gentlemen—in strongest condemnation of the government, in the several counties wherever they have been addressing the electors on the eve of recent elections, how grossly iniquitous is our four rod law and how bad our conduct and management of the fishery question, yet when, in 1884, the government passed the law which is now upon the statute-book there was not a voice raised against it among the opposition. Although Mr. Hanington was there, although Mr. Wetmore was there (many of these gentlemen now in the house, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Alward and others were not there it is true, but these other gentlemen were there leading the opposition and promoting the interests of their party), not one of them had a word of fault to find against the government because of our fishery legislation. So far from condemning us they expressed their hearty approval of what we were proposing to do in that regard and Mr. Hanington said it was a very proper thing for us to make this reservation of four rods and that it would be very beneficial because the people could grow trees along, and would greatly improve the appearance of our rivers. And now they are all asking you to condemn us although we did it with their approval and although while that law was put on the statute-book in 1884 not in any one session since has a single voice been raised in criticism of the law nor has any proposal to amend its provisions in any one respect been suggested. Not one single solitary suggestion! It is reserved until an election is pending in the county of Victoria or York or elsewhere. It is outside of the legislature that these people ventilate their grievances. They did not ventilate these grievances in the house where they could be given all proper consideration and where their claims might have some effect. And