it is not trom Restigouche, nor Victoria, nor the representatives from Northumberland nor Gloucester nor any of these counties, where they have these large fishing interests and where these great salmon rivers are to be found, that you hear this doleful wail. It is from these other counties of the province that have no familiar experience or knowledge with regard to them, and if you ask the gentlemen representing these northern counties what they think of the fishery law making the reservation of four rods, they will tell you that they think highly of it, and their constituents think highly of it because it assists in bringing people from abroad to expend large amounts of money in their several localities, and that there is a very much more free and general expenditure of money and employment of the people on those rivers to-day than there had been previously. I was told to-day by a gentlemen acquainted with the state of affairs on the Tobique river that during the past year there was more money spent by the people who went there to enjoy the fishing than there had been previously spent there in any four or five years altogether. I have said enough I think to explain to you fully what we have done on the question of the fisheries of the province and I ask you to draw therefrom such conclusion as you think is fair and reasonable. The question is should we have allowed these lands to be granted away and these fisheries to cease to be the property of the crown, or did we do prudently and wisely when we reserved these four rod fronts in order that this property should continue to be yours for all time to come?

Another charge preferred against the government is: We reduced the stumpage. Now, this is no doubt the largest charge;

This is the monumental Sin

which I understand this government has been guilty of. We have ventured to reduce the stumpage. We have ventured as a government to yield to the demands of the north. We heard the cry, as I think I may say the despairing cry which had come from the county of Northumberland and these other counties. We listened to the repeated memorials sent to us from the county councils of the northern counties of the province from year to year, asking us to make a reduction of the stumpage to afford some relief to what they represented to be a depressed industry. This is the great charge laid at the doors of the government and upon which some people say we ought to be condemned. Now, I think it is fair for you to ask yourselves before passing your judgment upon the conduct of the government the question: What is this charge that is preferred? Was it wrong that the government should reduce the stumpage? And then I think you should ask by whom is the complaint made and in whose interest is it that the accusation is preferred? Now, I am free to confess that it is the duty of the government to call upon the lumber industry to contribute to the revenues of the province as much as that industry ought reasonably to be called upon to bear. Now, it is a difficult question, perhaps, for anyone to decide just what that amount is. It is a difficult question even for a government to decide just how much burden the lumber business of the country ought to be called upon to bear. It is not because the country needs the revenue, therefore it should be drawn from the lumber industry. It is not because we want a little more money that we may properly turn the screw and exact an extra $10,000 or $20,000 from the business to make up the deficiency, but it is how much stumpage should that business in fairness and justice be called upon to pay and how much can it reasonably bear? Now, in determining whether we correctly decided this admittedly difficult question, it is only right that you should remember that in a whole section of the province, in Northumberland, Restigouche, Gloucester and Kent, there has been a continual and uninterrupted protest upon the part of the people engaged in that business against the high stumpage rate which had been imposed. They had been clamoring for reduction. There was agitation, there was discontent, and let me tell you whether we granted it or did not, the time had come, or very nearly come, when a reduction would have had to be made in the stumpage rate, and when a concession would have had to be yielded to the demands of the people of that large and important section of the province. It is impossible for any government to go on continuously

In the Face of any Deep Seated Agitation

in a large section of the province without feeling the injurious effects of it. The people will feel the effects of it. It is the business of the government to quiet all grievances and redress any wrongs of the people or what the people conceive to be wrongs, for if they only believe that they are suffering wrong it is just as serious in many points of view as if they did actually suffer the wrong. No man hearing the continual cry that went up from the counties of Restigouche, Gloucester, Northumberland and Kent could doubt that the people of these counties were thoroughly convinced that they were unfairly treated and that the government was making undue demands upon them to contribute to the revenues of the country.

Such being the case what was the position of the government? When we came in, in 1883, we raised the stumpage. We found it eighty cents and we raised it to $1, believing that it would stand an increase, and from that we raised it up to $1.25 and it continued at that down till this agitation culminated in the election of 1890. Now, when we raised the rate and while it was being continued, we were approached by the lumbermen from the counties I have mentioned, repeatedly. From time to time they approached us as a government and in the legislature. In both houses their representatives made motions and strongly urged the government to make a reduction in their interest, and they showed us how severe a case it was for them that this rate should be maintained. Well, we said this: Gentlemen, it may well be that we are, perhaps, exacting too much from you, but we cannot reduce the rate as long as the revenue requires the money. While we would be very glad to make a remission of a portion of this tax and afford you relief, yet the state of the revenue is such that we cannot meet your wishes, and we said this—I said it, speaking for the government, not only upon one occasion but on many occasions, as late as the session and following summer of 1889—I said, gentlemen, as soon as the revenue of the country reaches that sum, that we can without diminishing the grants for the public services, meet you and make a concession to you, we will be happy to do so, but that time had not arrived. In 1889, the very last session preceding the general elections, I was called upon as leader of the government, to make a statement in answer to Mr. Phinney. Mr. Phinney, just before the prorogation of the house, made this request: He said the lumbermen from his county, as he knew from other counties as well, had made a representation through the county council urging strongly that we should make a reduction, and he said that he hoped the government would be able before another session came around, to offer some relief to the lumber industry. I replied to him, I think substantially in these terms: The government would be very glad to meet the wishes of the people of these counties if they could see their way clear to do it; that they would consider them and if the revenues admitted of it, they would be happy to do so. That was substantially the answer I gave him when he expressed the wish I have just stated to you.

Now it appeared when we got in the returns from the scalers of the operation of the winter of 1890 that our revenues were going to be very much larger than they had been previously. The scalers, the gentlemen employed all over the country scaling on crown lands, showed by their estimates of the cut of lumber that for the year 1890 we would get a larger revenue than we had the previous year and we found that upon the basis of $1 a thousand we would be able to draw into the exchequer more money than we had received at $1.25 during the preceding year. Now, that was the state of things at the time of the elections or shortly after the elections. We had this information that I speak of from our scalers because we get our reports from them as early as the month of February. And when the elections came off in January 1890 and we found that we were going to be confronted by this question that your county, St. John and other counties, were indifferent and did not strengthen our hands—when we found that this was the critical issue and that the government had no alternative but to come to terms upon the question, if possible, and that the opposition press and members were offering a reduction, we met the representatives from the lumber interest in Northumberland—not the members but the representative men appointed as a committee by the lumbermen of the north—and we discussed the stumpage with them and made proposals as to the expenditure of a sum of money on their streams, to facilitate driving operations, the details of which I will not dwell upon to-night. The offer was really equivalent to the reduction which was subsequently made, but it was not accepted by the lumbermen, who wanted a reduction in the stumpage pure and simple. Finally we met the members for the county and

Came to an Understanding

with them that they would accept 25 cents per thousand of a reduction as a satisfactory arrangement between them and the government until the expiration of the present leases, and pending the report of a special commission to be appointed to report on the whole matter. We came to that agreement which has been called the Northumberland deal subject of course to the sanction of the house of assembly, and Mr. Tweedie came into the government on that understanding.

Now, if we have done anything wrong in that connection, if there was anything improper in making that reduction, if we ought to have tried to keep up the rate, or have handed over the government to the opposition in order that they might make the reduction, then of course the government is open to censure at the hands of the people, but I would like the people to fairly look at the position, recognizing as they should that the time had come when the government must necessarily meet the demands of the North Shore, that if we did not do it, our opponents would do it, that overtures had already been made by them to that effect. I do not think that anybody, looking fairly at the situation between the two parties, they using the situation against us and we only doing what we were compelled under the circumstances to do, will say we acted without a justification. I do not think that if any one of you were in our position you would have taken any different course from the course we took. There cannot be any actual wrong in making concession to a great industry and affording relief to a business which enters as largely as that business does into the concerns of the whole people of this province. There is hardly one of you engaged in mercantile life who does not feel the effect if the lumber interest is depressed, or who does not feel the advantage if it is in a buoyant and prosperous condition. There is no farmer who has hay or produce to sell who does not at once feel the beneficial advantages of a live and prosperous lumber business. And I say further that when the government reduced the stumpage, even though they did it under pressure, even though they were constrained to do it, even though they might not have at the moment have done it except under the combinations which existed, and there was no loss to anybody, that they were wholly excusable. The government had as much right to reduce it as they had to raise it—it was purely a matter of administrative detail and not a question of general policy—and your business and that of the whole country feels the benefit of the relief afforded them, and the money that would have gone into the exchequer remains in the pockets of the people of the country, while at the same time the revenues have been maintained as high as they were in 1889—the revenues are as large and the public expenditure is as great; there is no reduction in the grant to roads, bridges or schools and none of the important grants have been diminished, and as a matter of fact in 1890 we were able to estimate the revenue from stumpage as $2,000 or $3,000 more than it was in 1889 although the rate is $1 this year and it was $1.25 in 1889.

But, who are the people who are declaiming against the government because they have made this reduction? Are they those who have always been opposed to a reduction of stumpage? Are they those who have endeavored to hold up our hands and assist us in maintaining the high rate of stumpage? By no means, Mr. Chairman. They are the persons who have invariably, when they have spoken upon this question in public and in the legislature, cried out against the maintenance of this so-called enormous and onerous tax, and have condemned the government because it had not reduced it. The leader of the opposition supported a resolution—other gentlemen in the opposition moved their resolutions, calling upon the government to reduce the tax, not from $1.25 to $1, but to 80 cents, not to take off $20,000 but $40,000.

Mr. Wilson—And the whole territorial revenue was only $110,000 at that time.

Mr. Blair—Yes, and the territorial revenue was only $110,000 at that time, whereas, now, it is nearly $140,000 at the reduced rate. They deliberately and seriously contended that the government ought to be hurled from power because we were maintaining an exorbitant and unjust stumpage rate; that we ought to reduce the revenue by $40,000; that is to say, we ought to reduce it from $110,000 to $70,000, whereas we only get about $20,000 less at $1.00 than we would at the $1.25 rate. This is the action of the opposition for you, and when the elections came off in 1890, where were these gentlemen? Where was the St. John Sun, the organ of the opposition party? Where was the Moncton Times, the organ of the member from Westmorland, Mr. Stevens? Why, they were crying out against the government because they had kept up the stumpage rate. The St. John Sun declared that it had always been the friend of reduction, until they found that we had reduced it, and then they were always the opponent of reduction. (Laughter and applause). To use a racing illustration they backed the reduction party until a reduction was made and then they hedged and backed the opponents of reduction. They cried out down to the 20th of January last that it was an onerous and unjust tax, and they invited the people of the north to come and cast in their lot with them, they would do them justice, they would see that this unfair and iniquitous impost was removed, and the very moment that they found Northumberland had not yielded to their persuasive appeals, the very moment that, standing in an independent position as they unquestionably were, the Northumberland members joined hands with the government, why then this onerous and iniquitous tax was a most just and reasonable tax, and the government that reduced it ought to be turned out of office.

Well, what else had we? Why, we had our friends from St. John and Westmorland visiting the north and paying their compliments to the Northumberland members.

A whole Planetary System of Carpetbags

and yellow valises went shooting cometlike towards the pale north star. (Laughter). Northumberland, you see held the key of the situation and as went Northumberland so went the government; if Northumberland was to go against us, why the inference drawn by the opposition was that the government was gone; if they could only secure the co-operation of the Northumberland members they would have the government in their hands. So up goes Mr. Stevens, his yellow valise more rosy still with the reflection of his hopes; (laughter) and up goes Mr. Powell the philosopher of the opposition, and correspondence from Mr. Stockton and Mr. McKeown and Mr. Alward, who were imbued for a brief period at least with the deepest solicitude for the welfare of the good people of Northumberland, whose best interests they said demanded that they should cast in their lot with them. I am bound to confess that when the legislature met there was a general denial of any overtures having been made on the part of the opposition to the Northumberland members. Of course they did not quite agree; they did not quite give the same version as to what was said and what was not. Mr. Stevens said when he went over there to see the Northumberland members, that what he told them was not that he would reduce the stumpage to 80 cents a thousand, but that the opposition were prepared to deal as generously and liberally with the question of stumpage as the government, or even do better. Mr. Stockton it was represented had promised distinctly that he would reduce it to 80 cents a thousand, that he would continue the leases for a further term of years, and that he would give them a renewal without competition. But when he was charged with this in the house he declared that he did not put it in that explicit way—that he had stated no particular amount to which he was willing to reduce it. They did not give us the same version exactly, but they did not deny that they had communications—that there were overtures and that they did hold out the assurance that they were prepared to meet the reasonable expectations of the people of that county, in a generous and liberal way.

Now, I am not going to say that these gentlemen have stated that which was not true; I am not going to say that they have misrepresented their own conduct; all I say is that their memory is not entirely trustworthy or reliable, and that the various versions they have given remind one of the incident of the old lady who complained about the umbrella that she was charged with having borrowed and not having returned. She affirmed that when she borrowed the umbrella it was torn and broken, then that she returned it, and finally alleged that she had never borrowed it at all. (Laughter). These gentlemen never had any overtures at all with the Northumberland people, yet what overtures they did have were to the effect that they were going to be able to do more than the government would do; then that they did engage distinctly to make a reduction although they did not expressly bind themselves to the particular amount for which the reduction was to be. (Applause). Now, gentlemen, this is the position of the stumpage question; you have got it there in a nutshell and you must judge of it for yourselves. Dr. Atkinson has stated—in fact he said it down in Manners-Sutton when he came down to enlighten us in York county in the recent contest—that the opposition had never had a caucus and therefore could not and did not make a distinct pledge with regard to the question of stumpage—that they did not hold a meeting until the very next night after Mr. Tweedie had signified his willingness to go into the government, when, of course, they could not make any overtures even if they were disposed to do so. I refreshed Dr. Atkinson's memory on the subject—and he did not dispute my statement there—that on this night when the caucus was convened in St. John the subject of stumpage came up for consideration, and a committee was appointed by these gentlemen and it consisted of Mr. Young, member of the legislative council, and Dr. Atkinson, and that they went down stairs at the Royal hotel as delegates from the caucus to see Mr. Burchill, a member from Northumberland, then in the city, to make a tender and pledge to him that if the Northumberland members would come in with them they would be willing and ready to deal with them on the question of stumpage reduction. That is what the opposition did do, and I understood Dr. Atkinson to affirm that that meeting was after the Northumberland deal, so-called, took place. If so, their present position is confusion, even worse confounded, because it would seem the only difficulty was that they did not hold the opposition caucus soon enough.

Well, now, that is what has been done in the matter of stumpage and I am very happy to be in a position to say that as far as the country is concerned, there has been no pecuniary loss. Had the people of the north as in the past been called upon to submit to the extra tax of 25 cents a thousand, it would have come out of the pockets of everybody connected with the lumber trade and it would have gone into the exchequer, but as it is the 25 cents remains in the pockets of the people, the revenue received is as large as it was last year or any previous year at the $1.25, the expenditure on all the public services has been maintained and will not be diminished, and the country is exactly in the same condition therefore as it was under the old regime. Therefore, I do not think this is a very practical question or one which will very seriously influence the views of the people of this country as respects the government.

Now, let me pass from this question to another. Another charge preferred against the government is that we have refused to give information in detail as to

The Cost of the Horse Importation.

Now, what we have done is just this: We did expend on the horse importation the sum of $30,000, and any person who states that the government declines or has declined to give full information of the details of that expenditure, states that which is not true. It is true on the other hand that immediately upon Mr. McLellan's return from England he met the board of agriculture, a body then in existence, and although they were not strictly entitled to have the information laid before them, he, as a matter of courtesy, as they were the representatives of the agricultural societies, laid before them a full and detailed statement of every dollar of expenditure which was made in connection with that importation. The accounts were all there spread out before the members, and the members of that body I am sure will verify my statement that Mr. McLellan did lay before them this detailed account. Not only did he do that but when the house met the information was furnished to the legislators. It does not appear to have been published in all its details in the journals of that year but it was published as fully as any accounts are published. The accounts were furnished not only in detail but every item went before the committee of public accounts, and any member desirous of being again shewn just what those horses cost can learn by moving for a return at any session of the house. If he is disposed to do this every dollar of the expenditure, all the receipts and vouchers, from beginning to end, will be open to him. At the close of the year in which they were furnished they were all filed away of course, and all that was published was a statement of general items the same as are published with reference to all the other items of expenditure. The accounts as published do not go into minute details because it would take a volume four times as large as the present report of the auditor general to give all the details, but any member who is desirous of receiving that information can have it for the asking.

Now, the next count in this indictment is that the

Government was Condemned upon its General Policy

in January last and placed in a minority in the house. Now, I want my friends to kindly give me their attention for a few moments while I present to them what my view is as to that statement or that canvass. It is said that we were condemned on our general policy in January before the country and placed in a minority. Now, I venture to state that that was not the case. There was not any one of the counties of this province, unless it may have been the counties of Carleton, or Kent and possibly Westmorland, in which the government was condemned upon its general policy. Yet, even in the county of Carleton Mr. Ketchum was returned, in Kent Mr. LeBlanc, and in the county of Westmorland I shall state in a few minutes who were returned and in what interest. Now, what was the result generally throughout the province? In the city and county of St. John what was the issue there? No one will say that it was the general policy of the government that was under consideration there. No one will say that Mr. Stockton and Mr. Alward after they returned from the house in 1889, went back to their county discontented and dissatisfied and in antagonism to the government because of our general policy and our management of affairs generally. It would be idle for any man to make a statement of that kind. Why, these gentlemen were our friends, our trusted friends; they could be seen hanging about our necks in the most affectionate manner; they were our companions, associates in arms and supporters. Until when? Why until in the summer of the year 1889 we had the temerity to appoint Mr. Ritchie to one of the offices in St. John, and that very instant these gentlemen withdrew their confidence and support from us. It was not because we had done any general administrative act as a government or embarked upon any plan, or put upon the statute book any measure that they could not agree with, but because we did not fill the office of police magistrate of St. John

With a Person to Their Fancy or Liking,

and whose nomination they could feel like endorsing. But the very moment we appointed Mr. Ritchie to the police magistracy of the city of St. John, these gentlemen forthwith handed in their resignations and went into opposition, and that great constituency, to which we are wont to look and properly and justly to look as a leading constituency of the Province, was racked and torn by the agitation these gentlemen set in motion against us because we had made an appointment obnoxious to them from a religious point of view. (Applause). I do not hesitate to put that statement forward boldly because outside of that appointment there was no complaint raised by the opposition against the government before the people of the city and county of St. John. You might have gone down, any of you to the city of St. John during that contest and you would have heard no question of the general policy of the government; you did not hear us attacked for this act or that act, but it was simply the question of Mr. Robert J. Ritchie's appointment that was upon the general tongue, and that was spoken of on every corner and made a handle of against us throughout that whole campaign. Did that question attract the slightest attention, politically speaking, in any other part of the province? Was it a question of general policy and was it large enough to influence the people of that great commercial metropolitan constituency to pronounce against the government? Why, sir, in the house of assembly I ventured to tell these gentlemen that they came up in opposition simply because of the appointment of Mr. Ritchie, and I said to them that they had procured their election by stirring up religious strife and upon a bigoted and upon an intolerant cry. Well, they did after a fashion deny it, but when I exhibited a circular which I was able to produce, bearing the names of the opposition candidates, which had been distributed freely among the protestants of that community claiming their support upon religious grounds, they everyone disclaimed that they had anything to do with getting out the circular. But there was not one of them who said that after the circular had been distributed broadcast throughout the constituency—and they must have known of its distribution—that they had disclaimed responsibility for it at the time or that they had told the people they disapproved of it. There was not a man that took any such stand as that. They availed themselves of the circular; they got the benefit of that cry and they came to the legislature as the spokesmen of that cry. It appears that they dignified their agitation with the very high sounding title that they were fighting the battle of

Local Responsible Self-Government.

They said they were fighting that battle and that is what they christened it. Well, they came to Fredericton and after they got there, these apostles of local responsible self-government, which was going to be an eternal and undying principle indelibly imprinted upon their hearts—these gentlemen when they got there took the earliest possible opportunity of burying it as far out of sight as they could by any possibility bury it, and not only did they inaugurate a hasty funeral of local responsible self-government, but they set to work at their first caucus and nominated as leader of these local responsibles Mr. Hanington from Westmorland, who, so far from approving of their course in the election distinctly commended ours and condemned theirs. (Applause).

So, it is idle for anyone in the interests of the opposition to say that we have been condemned by the people of St. John upon our merits. It simply happened that at an inopportune moment it seems to me the cry was raised, and the people allowed themselves to be deceived. I think there are many of them who are ashamed of it now. I think they themselves think now that it was by no means a laudable or worthy agitation. And when we look at what has transpired I think we are free to say that it was not the constituency of the city and county of St. John that returned these people on that cry, or that returned them at all. They were not returned by any legal, registered vote of that constituency, but they were returned by a majority which appears to have been obtained by the addition of between 900 and 1000 names of immature youths put upon the registry who had no legal right to be there, ranging from fifteen to eighteen and ninteen years of age, by means of which solely they received the majority by which they were elected. We have found that out and it shed a flood of light upon the whole event I am glad of it because it largely relieves the great constituency of St. John from the imputation of having returned its representatives to the legislature upon such an illiberal cry. It was not the solid voice of that constituency of St. John; the 800 or 900 majority that was recorded for these six gentlemen was made up as I have pointed out of 900 or 1000 names that were added at the instance of Messrs. Stockton and Alward in the canvass preceding the registration of votes for the election that subsequently took place. So that, as I say, these six gentlemen having been returned by such means from that constituency would count twelve on a division, which is a most important change in a house of forty-one, so that when it is stated that the country pronounced against the government on its merits in January last, and I account for a change of twelve votes in that one constituency, I dispose of the whole argument that is made against us. Because with the St. John vote reversed, our majority would be as large in this house as in the last.

What took place in the county of Westmorland? Why, gentlemen, Mr. Hanington, who was the leader of the opposition during all these years, and who was the leader of the opposition during the last session of the house, did not go back to his constituency as a government opponent in the ordinary sense. I do not know that I am entitled to say that he went back to the county as an opponent of the government at all. I will tell you what he did do. He threw up the sponge; he, in effect, declared that the government were not doing anything out of the way, that it was no use trying to organize an opposition against them, that there was no question on which to attack them successfully, and he set to work to form a ticket of which he was one and two others were Messrs. Killam and Anderson, both avowed, notorious and open supporters of the government, and he ran the election upon that ticket endeavoring to do all he could to secure the return of that ticket, two of the members of which were staunch supporters of the government. Can any one justly say that in the election of Mr. Hanington, who was laboring for the success of two government supporters and of Mr. Melanson, who himself, as he says, was an independent, that the government was condemned in that constituency? I venture to think no fair-minded man will arrive at any such conclusion when he ascertains the true history of these events.

So much for that. Well, another charge is that the government

Took the Tax Off Wild Lands.

That is another accusation which I understand has been freely used against us in this county. Let me say with regard to that, that as far as the tax on wild lands is concerned, it was at first a cent an acre, then half a cent an acre was taken off, but that happened to be taken off a good many years before this government came into power, and I do not know upon what principle we can be held responsible for it. The only thing that has occurred in our day is that two years ago a motion was made in the house by a member from the city and county of St. John, if my memory serves me, supported by Mr. Hanington and others in the opposition chiefly, and opposed by myself and Mr. Wilson and a number of other members, to remove a portion of the wild lands from the operation of this half a cent an acre tax, confining the half cent an acre to lands located within three miles, I think, of a settlement. That was done, as I have said, but it was done against my vote and that of Mr. Wilson, and was carried against us by a majority consisting of both friends of the government and of the opposition. It was not a government measure, nor in the slightest degree connected with any action of the government. So that there is nothing we can be charged with in connection with this wild lands business. We did not take the half cent off in the first place, and we had nothing to do with relieving any portion of the wild lands from it. While many of the members of the government voted against it, one or two, no doubt, voted in its favor.

Another canvass is that with conservatives we are a liberal government and with liberals we are a conservative government. Well, that is a very serious charge. The fact is we have so succeeded in carrying on the government and holding a balance between the two dominion parties that, whether we merited it or not we certainly received a very small amount of assistance in many portions of the province from either of the parties as such. We find that the

Conservatives think we are too Liberal

and the liberals think we are too conservative. Apparently between two stools there should be some danger of us falling to the ground if the ordinary rule prevailed. We are opposed by the very strong conservative newspapers and we find ourselves also opposed by some of the very strong liberal newspapers and organs. I think the legitimate inference is that we have been able to carry the public business along with a fair degree of justice to both sides. Though consisting of some liberals and some conservatives we have endeavored to treat both sides as fairly as possible and to make no distinctions because of dominion politics. If our supporters from a county are liberals we have yielded to their recommendations, the patronage has been distributed by them and they have. I suppose as far as they have thought it desirable to do so, somewhat leaned to their liberal friends. On the other hand if our supporters from a county are conservatives the patronage has been in the hands of the conservatives and the conservative members have no doubt favorably considered their conservative friends. So that it has depended entirely on whether the government was supported in the county by the liberals or by the conservatives as to whether the patronage was in the hands of conservatives or liberals. We have endeavored to hold an even balance between the two parties so far as the government is concerned. We have got along very amicably in the government although about one half of us are conservative and the other half liberal. We have sought to do our duty as best we might irrespective of dominion issues or considerations. We have not been a tail to the dominion ox nor a donkey engine for the liberal party. We have simply gone on our way holding an even balance and treating both parties fairly and as we thought justly and equitably, and if we have not met the expectations of both sides it is because we have not been treating one more liberally and more generously than another. I do not know any other way in which the government of this country can be carried on properly. Perhaps I could suggest a way in which it could be carried on as successfully but it would not be with equal fairness. If the people of the country desire that the time shall come when the government of this province shall be entirely in the hands of one political party—that it shall be either entirely liberal or entirely conservative, why they have it in their power and they can make the change, and they can I suppose reconstruct the administration largely according to their wishes. But I have been under the impression myself and so has the government as a whole that it would not be in your interests, or the general interests of the province that the life or existence of the provincial government should depend upon the life or existence of the party dominant for the time being at Ottawa, but that we might fairly well move along irrespective of whether they lived or died—of whether they were conservatives or liberals, and we have endeavored, whether successfully or not it is for you to say, to conduct the affairs of the country upon that principle. (Applause).

Now then, another charge is that the

Government does not Enjoy the Confidence

at the present moment of the people of the province. Well, if that were true that would be a very good reason why the government should give place to other men, but it happens that there is only one way in which such an opinion can be confidently expressed. Whether a government posesses the confidence of the country or not, can only be ascertained through the votes of the people's representatives. So long as they say, as they have said, by a majority or from ten to twelve that the present government is satisfactory to them, it does not lie in the mouths of anybody to say to the contrary. It may be that the people of the country when another election comes round will express another and a different sentiment, but for the time being the government have a majority of the representatives of the people with them, and they are the only ones who can constitutionally declare what the popular wish is.

Now, we have had some elections recently and if you try out the question by the result of those elections you can see whether that charge is sustained or not. In February last Mr. Tweedie was elected in Northumberland by a large majority. In Victoria there was a difference of some thirteen votes between the election in August last and that of January. In January Mr. Baird was returned by a majority of a few votes, and in August was beaten by a dozen votes. But thirteen or fourteen votes one way or the other on either occasion would have turned the tide of battle. One swallow is not sufficient to make a summer and I do not think thirteen votes in Victoria represents the solemn verdict of the people, particularly when those votes were cast in the parish of Lorne, and when the rest of the county gave the government a larger support than at the preceding election. The result in Lorne was due to the canvass made there to the effect that we had interfered with the people's right to spear and net, of which I have already spoken. But we had another election since,

In October Last, in the County of York,

and we had a large amount of missionary work done there by the leading lights of Her Majesty's loyal opposition from various portions of the province. We had in York county the benefit of all the counsel and all the light these gentlemen were so capable of shedding on the subject. I am not going to underestimate the efforts of Dr. Atkinson. He illuminated the darkness of our county in many of its most remote settlements. In addition to him we had Mr. Hanington, Mr. Phinney, Mr. Stockton, Mr. Alward, Mr. Smith, and Mr. McKeown. They came down upon us, these gentlemen did, with a fell swoop upon the head of my devoted county. (Laughter) You have us all here to-night, gentlemen, the four who were left to do battle by ourselves against the giant intellects from these other counties who poured in on us like an avalanche from north, south, east and west, and invaded the otherwise quiet and peaceful county which we have the honor to represent. Well, they worked from morning to night, and from night to morning, from day to day they labored and struggled, the day of election came, the votes were counted and when the result was known they folded their tents like the Arab and quietly stole away. (Laughter and applause). They did not remain to rejoice over the issue of the struggle. They did not stop to distribute the offices they had in imagination parcelled out among themselves. They did not tarry to induct their new sheriffs, and new registrars and commissioners and provincial secretaries, but they hied themselves away to the seclusion of their respective homes and we have not heard from them since the 23rd of October last. (Laughter and applause). If there is any county in the province whose voice has a right to be heard by the other counties of the province it is the county of York under the circumstances which I have detailed to you. The people of York did not vote under any misapprehension of the true question. They had heard all about the stumpage—they had heard all about the whitewash bill—they had heard all about our extravagance, and while the items of that extravagance were not in all cases minutely dwelt upon, still they were dwelt upon generally and with emphasis. They did not hear much about the $1.03 of postage with which these collossal minds wrestled for nearly a day last winter, nor did they hear much about the price of Christmas turkeys for the lunatic asylum, but they heard about every other conceivable question, and the people of York when they recorded their votes recorded them with a full knowledge of all the questions before the country upon which they should pronounce. Well, they gave us a majority, and a majority somewhat larger than that of January considering that the opposition only put up two men in January, while in October they ran a full ticket. This decision was the highest possible commendation of the government, for just then the whole country was flooded with dire prophecies of our fate. You know it is a very taking canvass to say that public opinion is against the whole government—the whole country is going against the government, and, therefore, you ought to vote against the government. It has a marvellous effect. You convince one man that all his neighbors are of one way of thinking, and it will have an effect upon him naturally, and perhaps legitimately, and therefore it is that we were assured by a large section of the public press that the government had lost the confidence of the people, and that the attorney general could not carry his ticket, the object being of course to induce the people who had not withdrawn their confidence to at once set about and withdraw it, so that the statement might be verified and realized by the event. We had a great contest down there, and we received a very handsome majority, and until you have some better evidence than any that has yet been furnished, I do not think you are entitled to accept the statement that the government does not possess the confidence of the country.

Now, there is still another charge, number thirteen, for there are almost as many of these charges as there were of the original Papineau resolutions. That

Charge is the Leary Dock Scandal.

I am going to leave my friend, Mr. Wilson, to make a remark upon that if he is called upon to speak. I wish to exhaust all the subjects before me, but as this is one in which I was personally interested if anybody has anything to say about it, I would rather it was said by some one other than myself. I will observe, however, that the only person they could find, I am sorry to say, to make this charge against me was one of your representatives, and when the investigation came on he seemed to be quite unwilling to furnish the committee with the least suggestion as to where he got his information on the strength of which he made the charge. He left it just where it was, and thereby very narrowly escaped the expression by an almost unanimous vote of the strong disapprobation of the house because the charge was made. When the report of the committee came before the legislature, Mr. Hanington, not only once, but repeatedly in his speech, expressed his pleasure and satisfaction that there had not been the slightest evidence or suggestion of evidence adduced in the investigation sustaining the charge preferred against me. (Applause).

Now, I intended to have made one observation while I was speaking about the expenditure in Carleton county, upon the subject of the bridge, here. It is included in the statement my friend has handed to me—that is with regard to

The Woodstock Bridge.

I understand there is a good deal of feeling in this community, in the first place that there ought to be a new bridge, and in the next place that it ought to be constructed in a particular locality. I believe there are conflicting views as to what would be the most desirable site for the location of the new bridge if it is to be constructed. Let me say with regard to the subject of bridges that they come exclusively under the cognizance of the chief commissioner. A gentleman came up here—a Mr. Currie by name—who undertook to inspect this bridge and who, I am informed from outside sources, declared that the present bridge was unfit for use and condemned it. Now, I do not know Mr. Currie. I have made some inquiries and I understand he went up river to see about some bridges in free grants settlement which were within the particular jurisdiction of the surveyor general's department, but he did not come here under any authority whatever from the department of public works, under which department this bridge would come, to examine or make a report upon this bridge in any way whatever, nor has he made any report whatever upon it. I believe that somebody asked him to look over it and he did so, but whether he condemned it or not I do not know; certainly he did not make any report to that effect to the department. But what I wish to say is that the matter is one entirely within the control of the chief commissioner of public works, Mr. Ryan. He has been informed that the bridge is in a somewhat precarious state and has sent a competent person—one who has had some experience, large experience—Mr. Haines, and he has looked the bridge over and he is making, or has made, his report to the chief commissioner. Mr. Haines told me he was about sending the report this morning. Now, I am satisfied Mr. Currie would not claim himself that he had sufficient experience in works of that kind to express an opinion upon it of any value. I am satisfied that what he did was done without any feeling of responsibility, or that he was speaking in any authoritative way, or that anyone would take it that he was expressing the views of the department. Mr. Haines is in an entirely different position. He will make his report and all I can say with regard to that is, that when that report goes to him, if the chief commissioner shall decide that a new bridge is necessary, you may rely upon it that outside of any pressure and outside of any political influence whatever, that new bridge if it is built will be located just at the point along the river and in the town which will be best adapted for a structure of that kind. (Applause). The location of the new bridge if it is to be built will not of course suit everybody—will not suit a good many—some want it in one place and some in another, and some in a third place—but I am satisfied when the location is made, it will, on the whole, commend itself to the great majority of the people, and that is all the chief commissioner can hope to be able to do. (Applause). That is all I wish to say upon the subject of the bridge.

Now, gentlemen, I have gone over I think about all the statements and charges that are included in the indictment that was put in my hands. Perhaps you will think some of these are very trivial and so they are. Perhaps they were too trivial to have engaged serious considerations. Perhaps I have taken too long a time and wearied you with having entered upon them so fully, but I desired, whatever else I might be able or might not be able to do, as rapidly as I could but as fully as possible cover the grounds of the canvasses and charges which had been made against the government, and to remove as fully as it was in my power to remove the misrepresentations, if any, which existed in your minds. True they are small but, gentlemen, they are all that you have had—all the questions that you have had to deal with—these are all the issues the opposition have raised before you. Many of you will think that after all they are very dry husks. Many of you would have preferred to have heard questions discussed more vital to the interests of the country and which concern the welfare of the whole people. But I plead as my excuse that all these charges have been made and once for all have to be answered.

Now, there are many things on the other side of the question that I would like to touch upon and, unless my friends here think I have already taken too long, I will very briefly allude to now. We have certainly not hesitated as a government, I think, to deal in an enterprising and intelligent way with many prominent questions.

Our Legislation has been Progressive

and I venture to say it has been enlightened. We have placed upon the statute-book measures which must be of advantage to this country in the present and in the future. I think you will commend us for passing the general franchise act, which opens the door of citizenship to all the young people of the country, whether they have property or not. We have been authorized to make liberal grants in aid of mining operations—laws under which we can extend a helping hand to the dairying industry—we have as you know spent a considerable amount of money for the importation of horses, and have advanced in many important ways the interests of the farmers. We claim to have as fully deserved their confidence as that of any one class of people throughout the province. On the whole, our financial management has been prudent. We have also secured a prompt despatch of public business; our sessions are very much shorter than were those of our predecessors; we carry on the government at a less expense; we have done away with some useless offices; we have dispensed with government house; we have done away with the governor's private secretary; have reduced the number of employees in some of the departmental offices; and have reduced the number of the executive. And this government gets through with its business in thirty-one or thirty-two days, while the previous administration took forty, forty-five and fifty days to transact their legislative business. All these matters I have not time to enter into details upon. There is an old Spanish proverb which says that "Boys do not throw any stones at trees that bear no fruit," and I think the fact that we have been so vigorously attacked affords some evidence that we have been doing something. (Applause). This, in a very brief and hurried way, has been some of the work we have been able to accomplish, and we look forward to being able to accomplish something more. We have it in contemplation to adopt some improvements and to make some changes in the mining laws of the country whereby we think the mining industry will be materially encouraged. It may not be that there are large or very large deposits of minerals in this province which will repay the investment of capital, but we are not without hope that by these improvements, by making more liberal provisions and affording greater security to those who invest their money in mining explorations, we will be able to secure a test of what the province can produce in that direction. My own view is that there is no reason why this province of New Brunswick should not develope in time as productive and as valuable mines as those in the neighboring province of Nova Scotia. Perhaps not in coal but in gold and other precious metals. Why should we not have some of these mineral deposits in paying quantities in our soil as in Nova Scotia? There is no reason why according to geologists and probably if more liberal provisions are made than have heretofore been made the effect may be to stimulate our mining industry to such an extent as to produce a beneficial and profitable result.

More than that the time has come—and I am mentioning this now because a very short time will elapse before we will be called upon to take active steps in connection with it—we have it in contemplation, I say, to make a

Very Considerable Importation of Cattle

into our province. When, as you may remember, the other day we took occasion to bring to this province a couple of gentlemen who had come out to Canada as delegates from Great Britain, to look over our country and judge of its capibilities for settlement and for immigration, these gentlemen, in going over your county, were very favorably impressed with the thrift and prosperity evidenced on every hand—with the success that seemed to have attended the efforts of your farmers, and with the fertility of the land as far as they could judge. All these things impressed these gentlemen very, very favorably and very highly, but there was one thing in which they said they felt compelled to criticise the farmers of this province, as far as they had seen it, and that was that they had not given the same attention to the growing and breeding of a good quality of cattle as they thought they ought, and as they thought they might properly do. We have been for some time past convinced that our people might, with advantage, give more attention to these matters, and we have determined to ask the legislature at the next session for a liberal grant in order that we can make a large importation of cattle and stimulate this important industry. (Applause). It is an industry which, if stimulated, must be advantageous to our province, and I hope the effort, when it is made, will be appreciated by our people.

However, while I am speaking of it, let me remark upon another direction in which these farmers from the other side said they thought the country might do more. They were very, very favorably impressed indeed with New Brunswick as a sheep-growing and producing country. They thought the outlook on every hand was very favorable to the growing and producing of sheep and mutton and they were surprised to find that the industry was such a limited one. We have been thinking some of us that this also is a subject that might with advantage be inquired into. There does seem to be no reason why the province of New Brunswick should fall behind as it has in this direction, and we have been considering whether some means might not be taken whereby the truth should be got at upon this matter, and that we may ascertain where the trouble lies and if we can apply a remedy. It has been suggested that a commission of competent persons, three or four gentlemen it may be, who would be competent to investigate and give us a report on this question, should be appointed. They might study the question and with great advantage give the members of the government the benefit of their conclusions upon it and suggest what action might be taken whereby this industry for which our province is so well adapted should be promoted and encouraged. I mention this as a subject which has been passing through my own mind and not as a matured conclusion by any means.

Another matter the cabinet have under consideration is

The Subject of Immigration,

and no doubt that is a difficult subject to deal with. We have had some experience with it in the past and that experience has not been an encouraging success, but still we do not think we ought to be discouraged and that if anything within our reasonable means and ability can be done to direct the immigration which is passing by our doors and which is seeking other provinces and other lands—or to cause a portion of it to be diverted here at all events, it would be well that we should do it. We are and have been for some time past been in communication with people on the other side of the water with a view of ascertaining whether a portion at all events of that immigration might not be directed here. If the thing can be done without making too large a draft upon the exchequer of the province you may rely upon it, it will be the aim and endeavor of the government to do it.

Now, these are some of the subjects that have been under our consideration, and that we will be glad to do something in a practical way; bnt I have already exhausted your patience and must hasten on. There is another subject of importance I would like to speak upon, but I cannot take it up to-night. I wish I had the time to dwell at length upon it. I had intended to call your attention here to-night somewhat fully, as one of the most intelligent constituencies in the Province, to one of the phases of the educational subject that has not received a very great deal of attention in public discussion up to the present time. I refer to the

Attendance of our Children

at the schools. It is an actual fact that a very large—I regret to tell you how large—a percentage of our children are not availing themselves of the benefits and advantages which the school law offers them. That proportion is very much larger than any of you would be likely to conjecture; it is a proportion which I am sure it would be the desire—the earnest desire—of every person to see diminished. As a matter of fact there are in New Brunswick only 68,000 school children enrolled upon the registers between the school ages of 5 and 15, while there are altogether something like between 90,000 and 100,000 children between those ages in the province assuming the population to have increased to about 350,000. Of that whole number of, as I have said, between 90,000 and 100,000, there are only 68,000 actually on the register, and out of that number only some fifty per cent, or in other words, about 34,000 or 35,000 are in attendance upon the schools. Only about fifty per cent of those actually registered are in attendance on the average, so that it remains a fact that out of between 90,000 and 100,000 of school-age children in our province, two-thirds of that number, taking one day with another, are absent from school, one-third never attend at all but two-thirds any day and every day, as a matter of fact, are not in attendance. Now, that we must admit is a great reproach upon our country. It is one we ought, if possible, to have removed. It is one that philanthropists and all benevolent and high-minded citizens would desire to see removed, and the question is how are we going to remedy it. It is to that—that I would like to see the attention of the people of the country directed. I am only speaking for myself in my remarks, and I am not going to make any proposal on the subject Some people will say that the only adequate remedy is compulsion—that we ought to compel parents to send their children to school. I am not, at this moment, prepared to say that that is a practical remedy, or that the people of the country would sustain any government in placing such a law upon the statute book. Such a law means this: That the people of the country are to be subject to fines and penalties and imprisonment, it may be, in the event of their failing to send their children to school. It means that in many sections of the province, certainly in the towns, perhaps in the country, the children would have to be clad, some of them, and furnished with school books and provided with other facilities whereby they could attend school. These are a few of the incidental points and perhaps the least important. The question is one worthy of your serious consideration, and it is a question I would like to see discussed. I wish I had time to discuss it in all its bearings; I feel that by my touching upon it in this superficial manner I am hindering rather than helping you to a better understanding of it. I have merely hinted at it at this late hour to show that we are fully alive to the importance of maturing public opinion upon the question.

Now, gentlemen, I have passed over the charges made against the government and hastily over a few other matters and I am just going to ask you to allow me a few moments while I point out to you some things which I think you are entitled to bear in mind in view of what I have said. I have shown you what we have to say in answer to the charges preferred against us. But after all is said and done who are they that are asking you to withdraw your confidence from us and transfer it to them? Now, gentlemen, we had the other day an election in the county of York. We had there the leading members of the opposition; we had Mr. Hanington there, and I had the opportunity and privilege of meethim on the night before the election at the very last meeting of the campaign in the parish of Stanley. He came all the way over from the county of Westmorland to tell the people of York why they ought to change the government, why they ought to prefer him to me, and it was natural, under such circumstances, it appears to me, that I should expect from him as the leader of a party and a gentleman who had been for years in the house and acquainted with the carrying on of affairs and thoroughly familiar with all that had been going on—who if any man was able should be able to set out before the people of that constituency and through them before the people of the whole province what the policy of the opposition was—that he should detail to them and explain to them what the policy of his party was. He came to Stanley and he came to Fredericton and addressed the people there; he came to Canterbury and addressed the people there, but not on one of these occasions, nor upon any occasion in the legislature has he directly or indirectly indicated to the people

What is the Policy of His Party.

Not a word has he or have they uttered as to what it was proposed to do if the conduct of affairs was transferred from the hands of the present government into the hands of himself and his party. I expected, I say, that Mr. Hanington would have told—that Mr. Stockton would have told—that some one of these leading members of the party would have told the people on some one of these occasions what the policy of the opposition was, but on none of them, neither in the legislature nor out of it, have they ventured, to do so. Well they have no policy! If they have any they have concealed it. But they have none. They do not tell you what they would do to improve the welfare of the people of the country if the power was to pass into their hands. (Applause). All they could do, and all they have done was to cavil and carp at this little alleged wrongdoing and that little alleged misdeed; all they could do was to complain and criticise; not a hope do they hold out to the people of New Brunswick that in their hands your interests would be promoted or your welfare enhanced. They promise no reforms—they indicate no departure—they mention no economies. Not in one single, solitary direction have they shewn you where they would improve upon our policy, and I do say, Mr. Chairman, that it is an extraordinary thing if we have been doing things so wrongfully—if our policy has been so reprehensible—and if it would be so much better that we should be expelled from office and they transferred to our places—that these gentlemen on none of these occasions should have taken the opportunity of enlightening the people as to the direction in which these things should be effected. But they have not done it, and the reason is that they could not do it. (Applause). They are thoroughly confident in their own minds that they cannot do it. There has been nothing which the welfare of this country according to our judgment has called for that we have not endeavored to do, and that we have not succeeded in doing to a fair and reasonable degree. There has been nothing that we have not done as successfully as they would have accomplished and therefore they have been silent in these respects. The only thing they have distinctly pledged themselves to do according to their declared resolution and policy is to enlarge the railway debt, and to aceord you the satisfaction of paying from $60,000 to $80,000 additional a year of interest on the railway debt, but that is not the cause for which I think the people at the present moment would desire a change of government to be made. (Applause),

Now, I am satisfied that I have endeavored to cover too much ground, to cover that ground as thoroughly as I would wish either in my own interest or in the interest of the government or for your information. But the ground was large—the field was large—and I desired to touch upon all these matters upon this occasion. I have done so—you have these statements before you—I ask you to reflect whether or not, these things being true, the government has been very wastefully, very extravagantly or so very recklessly carried on; whether after all you may not be very well satisfied that, while we have not done it may be everything you would have had us do, while we have not in all cases perhaps done the best that might have been done under the circumstances, we have on the whole fairly succeeded in crrrying on the government of the country in the interests of the country, and so that you might fairly give it if the opportunity should at an early day arrive your commendation and your approval. (Hearty applause). Gentlemen, the matter rests entirely for you to exercise your judgment upon. I hope the explanations I have been able to make to you to-night have been such as to influence any of you who have been unfriendly to us hitherto to think more favorably of us, and that whenever in the future we should appeal to you as a government again you should be able to treat us a little more generously and to render us a more hearty endorsation. I am thankful for what you did do; I am thankful that you gave us Mr. Ketchum as a representative. You could not have given us, you could not have given yourselves, a gentleman who is a truer representative, not in a government term alone I mean, but to his own county. A more faithful man than Mr. Ketchum could not have been chosen—a man who has the confidence of the whole house, who has the respect and esteem of every member in the legislature, and who can accomplish, if any man can accomplish it, what your interests require at the hands of a representative. (Applause). I ought to say this, that if there is anything you want—anything you particularly desire and he is not able to secure it for you, you may rely upon it that there is no representative you would be able to send to the legislature from the county of Carleton that could have done any better than he. (Applause).

And now, I must thank you, ladies and gentlemen for the very attentative hearing you have given me to-night. I must thank you for turning out in such large numbers to hear what I fear has proved a very rambling and uninteresting address, but I feel and hope, after the most cordial and attentative audience you have given me, that when the opportunity may be given you to express your opinion of the government in the future that opinion may not be entirely unfavorable. (Loup and long-continued applause.)