

MR. MERSEREAU OF SUNBURY ON PROVINCIAL FINANCES

**Tells How the Late Government Piled up
The Public Debt of the Province--
Quotes From a Speech by Mr. Pinder to
Show That Old Government Violated Its
Promise to Improve the Roads.**

No less than thirteen members contributed speeches to the budget debate in the Legislature yesterday. In the afternoon a number of bills were put through the Committee stage and Mr. Mersereau resumed the debate on the budget at five o'clock. He was followed by Mr. Sutton, and when the House took recess at six o'clock Hon. Dr. Roberts had the floor. The latter concluded after recess and was followed by Messrs. Peck, Robichaud, Young, McGrath, Smith (Albert), Hon. Mr. Dugal, Guptill, Melanson, Hunter and Dysart.

Mr. Murray (Kings) moved the adjournment of the debate, which will likely be concluded today.

Mr. Mersereau
On the order of the day being called Mr. Mersereau continued the debate on the budget. He said that he had not intended to take part in the debate because for one thing the ground had very much impressed with the full than was necessary. He had been been so fully covered already by previous speakers and for another he did not wish to lengthen the debate more and frank statement of provincial fin-

ances made by the hon. member from Moncton and also with the remarks made by the ex-Attorney General in reply. Those speakers he thought had covered the ground fully, but other hon. members had gone out of their way to cast insinuations upon those who have no opportunity to reply. One gentleman to whom they had made reference took a prominent part in preparing the Dugal charges, which had resulted in the retirement of a

former member to private life, and he could well understand why hon. members opposite had no particular love for that gentleman.

Some speakers on the opposite side had mentioned a case where money had been refunded to the public treasury, but they had neglected to make reference to another and more recent case which came nearer home to them. He (Mersereau) thought that when lawyers began refunding money to the treasury it was time for people to sit up and take notice, and they had done this on February 24th.

The hon. gentleman who has addressed the House (Pinder) had indulged in considerable criticism of the present administration. He (Mersereau) when he listened to him had been almost afraid that he would attempt to buy another horse to demonstrate whether or not the new government employed the same business methods which characterized the old one. The hon. member for York had condemned the government's road policy, but the speaker felt that it would be impossible for any government to inaugurate a road policy that would be satisfactory to him.

The report of the debates of the year 1915 showed that the hon. member for York had declared in the House that the former government had neglected to carry out the policy with respect to roads which had been laid down in 1908. He (Mersereau) had been interested in the hon. member's explanation of the Southampton Railway enterprise. He had been over

that road and he was surprised to hear the hon. member claim that it was as good as the Gibson and Minto railway. He had also been surprised to hear him say that the cost per mile of the Southampton Railway had been less than justified the payment of a double subsidy by the Federal government.

In this connection the speaker quoted from some remarks made in Parliament on the subject of the Southampton Railway by Mr. H. F. McLeod, M. P. at the time Mr. F. B. Carvell, M. P., had asked for an investigation.

Mr. McLeod was quoted as saying that the road was built in a slipshod way, the accounts were padded and that Mr. Pinder was not a good business man.

Hazen's Pledges.

Referring to provincial finances, the speaker recalled addresses delivered by Hon. J. D. Hazen and Mr. J. K. Flemming at a party convention in St. John in 1908. These gentlemen then stated that the province was in a deplorable financial condition, and pledged themselves if placed in power to keep the ordinary expenditure within the income. During the recent campaign in Sunbury he had referred to that promise and to the manner in which it had been broken.

He had then estimated the public debt of the province at \$17,000,000, but the statement made by the hon. member from Moncton had convinced him that his estimate was altogether too low.

Under the regime of the hon. members opposite, the public debt had



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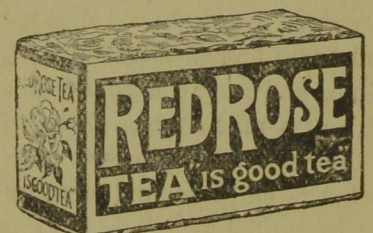
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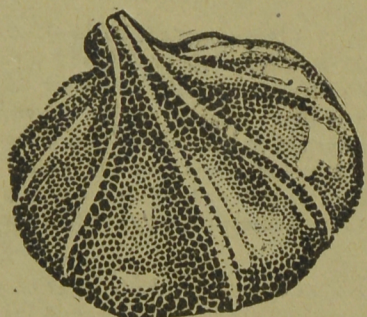


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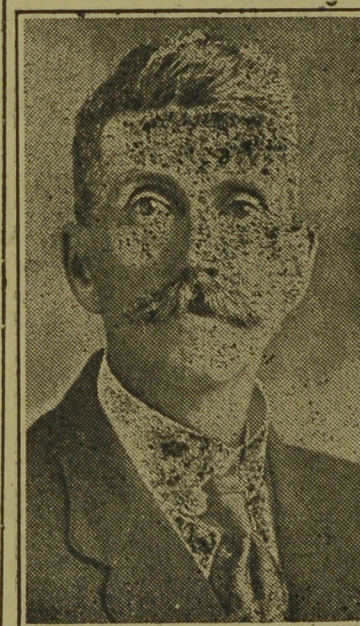


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jumped from five and a quarter millions to nineteen millions.

The Stumpage Question.

He noticed that several hon. members who had preceded him had made reference to the stumpage question. Although not a lumberman, he could



D. W. MERSEREAU, M. P.

heartily agree with the remarks made on that subject by the hon. member for Westmorland. If the Crown Lands are worth \$50,000,000 as claimed, and the revenue from them is only one per cent., there surely must be something wrong.

He had it from the owners of private lands that they considered the investment worth at least ten per cent. on their money. He hoped that the government would find some means of increasing the revenue and make it balance the expenditure.

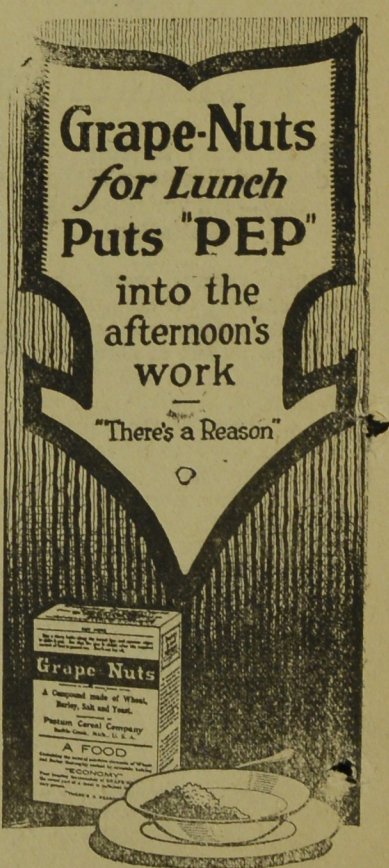
In reference to stumpage he had been informed that the full amount had not in the past been collected from the large operators. In the case of one large concern he had been told that while they had a cut of thirty millions, they paid stumpage on only eighteen millions.

The former government deserved some credit for increasing the territorial revenue, but he felt there was still room for improvement. Honorable members opposite had charged



that the new government had already added \$1,200,000 to the public debt, but they had omitted to state that the bulk of that amount was to be used in discharging obligations incurred by the old administration.

In reference to the appropriation of \$700,000 for permanent bridges, one half of that amount had been expended and the balance would go to pay for bridges now in course of construction.



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