

# Finances of the Province Still Under Discussion

**A Number of Good Speeches Contributed to the Budget Debate---Hon. C. W. Robinson Deals Effectively with the Diatribes of Mr. Baxter---Thinks Part of the Valley Railway May be Utilized as a Through Line From Halifax to Boston.**

The Budget debate was resumed in the Legislature yesterday afternoon, and was continued until 10.30 o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Pinder moved the adjournment. The speakers on the government side were Hon. C. W. Robinson, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Le Blanc, Mr. Robichaud and Mr. Burchill while the opposition case was presented by Mr. Peck, Mr. Guptill, Mr. Tilley and Mr. Young. In the evening, before adjournment, the new Audit Act was put through the committee stage with some amendments which were submitted by Hon. Mr. Foster.

The House met at 3 o'clock.

Bills to authorize the Town of Chatham to issue debentures and relating to the Town of Woodstock were read a third time and passed.

HON. MR. BYRNE presented the report of the Committee on Standing Rules.

MR. BURCHILL presented the report of the Committee on Corporations.

MR. LeBLANC presented the report of the Committee on Municipalities.

MR. TILLEY moved for the suspension of the rule to permit of the introduction of a bill to enable the City of St. John to appoint a commission to act in the matter of the New Brunswick Power Company. He explained that the city wanted authority to appoint a commission of three members to investigate the whole matter in dispute. It was proposed that the commission should have authority to appoint an expert accountant or valuator. Leave having been granted, the petition was presented to the House.

HON. MR. MURRAY moved that the order for third reading of the bill to amend the Schools Act be rescinded and the said bill be referred to a committee of the whole House for further consideration. He explained that

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## GEMS OF POETRY ASPIRATIONS.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
I would be pure, for there are those who care;  
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.  
I would be friend to all—the foe—the friendless;  
I would be giving and forget the gift;  
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;  
I would look up—and laugh—and love—and lift.  
—Howard Arnold Walter.

subsequent to the bill having been dealt with by the committee, a bill relating to schools in the City of St. John had been forwarded to him. The legislation asked for would be covered by a section which he proposed to add to the bill now before the House.

HON. MR. ROBINSON, on the Order of the Day being called, rose to continue the debate on the budget. He said he wished to take advantage of the opportunity to compliment the hon. provincial secretary on the able manner in which he had presented his budget speech to the House. The hon. member for St. John county had certainly paid the hon. provincial secretary a fine compliment when he declared that the estimates submitted to the legislature had been prepared by a master mind, and knowing as he (the speaker) did that the provincial secretary's was the master mind, he wished to say that he heartily concurred in the remarks of the ex-attorney general.

The only conclusion that could be drawn from the labored attempt of the hon. member who had followed the hon. provincial secretary in a two hours' speech was that he thought too much money was being expended. The government was ready to accept a full measure of responsibility for its acts, but responsibility for the financial transactions of last year could not all be placed on its shoulders. When the government took office, five months of the year had elapsed, and the financial momentum was so great that it was impossible to check it and bring about the needed change. Had the administration thought it necessary to conceal items of expenditure and leave accounts unapid, it might have shown a fictitious surplus, but it did not want to do that. The government was certainly to be commended on the full and frank statement of affairs that it had given to the public. It had been found necessary to take stock of the situation and the government had gone out the province and brought in the firm of Price, Waterhouse & Company and had instructed them to make up an audit of the accounts. That firm had performed its work well and its report was now in the possession of the House.

Mr. Baxter's Efforts.  
He believed that hon. members would pardon the ex-attorney general for having taken up so much time in dealing with his own efforts on behalf of the province. It was Josh Billings, Mark Twain, Dr. McGrath or some other noted humorist, who had said that "if a fellow did not toot his own horn

that horn would not get tooted." The ex-attorney general had said that had the old government remained in power, it would have annihilated the commission on succession duties and do many other things for the benefit of the country. Some one had said that hell was paved with good intentions and he hoped that the ex-attorney general would never assist in the paving of that city and that no hon. member of the House would ever drag his feet along that pavement. The hon. member for St. John county in showing a disposition to reform reminded him of Solomon of old who, after having passed through a reign of thunder, in his last days was willing to give up his post, as well as his wives.

MR. SMITH (Carleton)—"You must have been reading the Bible last night."

HON. MR. ROBINSON—"We have Bibles in our rooms at the hotel, and I am sure no harm can come from reading them occasionally. It would be a good thing if all hon. members would read the Bible, as it might assist them in their legislative efforts."

The hon. member who had spoken on the budget, had declared that the old government was not defeated on its merits. He also said the Clarke government was a good government and had let it go at that. Personally the speaker had no fault to find with the gentlemen who composed the Murray government, but the electors had shown wisdom in taking the control of affairs out of their hands and placing it in the hands of a government which he believed would deal frankly and honestly with the people.

The hon. member for St. John county had been somewhat at fault in dealing with figures and details. He had stated that there were some things in the auditor general's report that were puzzling and he was at a loss to know why the estimates exceeded the expenditures last year by \$137,000. If the hon. member would consult the statement again, he would find that an item in the expenditure on agriculture alone would account for \$130,000 of it.

The hon. member also had stated that \$22,000 lost on a bond sale was not shown in the report. If the hon. member were to consult the 14th chapter of Proverbs, 6th verse, he would find it set forth that "a scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not, but knowledge was easy to him that understandeth."

Now with reference to the loss on the bond sale, the hon. member would find it charged up in the accounts of the different departments. The sum of \$20,000 had been charged against permanent bridges and other amounts would be found charged up in other departments. Under the method followed by the late administration, there was no provision made for losses on bond sales.

## The Patriotic Tax.

Reference had been made by the hon. member to the patriotic tax. It was necessary for the government at times to do things in the public interest which were not popular. It was not always the duty of a government to bow to the popular will in matters of legislation, but it should do what was deemed best in the interests of the country. The hon. member had stated that the placing in the revenue of \$90,000 of the patriotic fund was the entering wedge of direct taxation. The municipalities last year had been taxed to the extent of \$518,000 for the Canadian patriotic fund and during the present year not more than \$400,000 would be needed for that purpose. The question of the readjustment had come up and some of the municipali-

## 'IT SAVED MY ARM'

when blood-poisoning set in as a result of an injury." This is what Miss S. A. Wernicke, of Hilton, B.C., says of Zam-Buk.

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ties had complained that the assessment was unfair. War conditions were constantly imposing new burdens on the province and the government had decided to make no change in the law for the present year, and if it was found that not more than \$400,000 would be needed for the patriotic fund, the balance would go into the provincial treasury and be expended for patriotic purposes. He knew that the proposal was not a popular one and had had complaints in regard to it from some of his own constituents. His reply was that the government would stand by it for the present year and if the opposition turned out the administration for taking that course they were quite welcome to do so. A number of municipalities, which had owed amounts to the Provincial Hospital, had arranged for the payment of the same and he had sufficient confidence in the municipalities of the province to believe that they would not shirk their duty, with respect to carrying on the war.

Coming to the matter of increase in the estimates, he said that the increased expenditure over last year would total \$137,000. The greater part of that sum was accounted for by the agriculture department, which had made extensive purchases of seeds and was re-selling the same to the farmers. This action had provoked some criticism, but he firmly believed that it was a step in the right direction. The agriculture department was to be congratulated on the work it was doing to stimulate the cause of greater production. It was the duty of the department to see to it that the farmers were able to obtain a sufficient supply of seed and even should there be a slight loss on the transaction, the province will not suffer. He believed, however, that all the money would be returned to the province, as the agriculture department was handling the transaction in a businesslike way. He had shown that the increased expenditure of \$137,000 was largely accounted for in the agriculture department; the other items were largely the same as in previous years. Had the government seen fit to hold over a number of accounts, the \$137,000 would not have appeared and the expenditure would be the same as in 1916. The increase in interest charges of \$93,000 was a large amount, but the present government was in no way accountable for it. A considerable portion of it had been due on sinking funds, which had to be taken care of and the province would be no worse off by taking moneys out of one fund and placing them in another. The province had lost the revenue from liquor licenses last year and there had been reductions in succession duties and in fees to the provincial secretary's office, making a total of \$97,000 in these three items alone. On the other hand there was increased expense incurred in connection with the Provincial Hospital. The government had estimated increased expenditure last year at \$400,000 and the estimate had proved nearly correct. The increased expenditure in connection with roads and bridges was in his opinion a wise one. All over the province they had found the roads in bad condition, due not so much to the old government perhaps as to climatic conditions. He wished to pay tribute to the hon. minister of public works for the energetic manner in which he had attended to his duties. The hon. minister had travelled from one end of the province to the other and in that respect had accomplished more than had any of his predecessors. He could say that if any criticism was levelled against the hon. minister of public works for the course he had pursued, he was prepared to stand by him and he believed the people of the province strongly approved of what he had done.

**Territorial Revenue**  
The government had estimated the territorial revenue at \$690,000, an increase of \$140,000. From sale of timber licenses they expected to get \$40,000 and from renewals of licenses \$82,000. Stumpage was expected to yield, under the new rate, \$356,000, while receipts from the wind land tax were estimated at \$0,000. In reference to stumpage, returns showed last year a considerable falling off in the lumber cut as compared with previous years. He had always taken the ground that stumpage should be collected in a businesslike way. Some remarks which he had made on the stumpage question at a convention had been much quoted by hon. members opposite. He had said that he

believed that the province was not getting full returns from stumpage and he still believed that it had not all been collected during the last eight years. He was not blaming the old government, but if they claimed that they had collected every dollar of stumpage, they were certainly wide of the mark. So far as he was concerned, he was not prepared to support any government that neglected to collect the stumpage in a businesslike way. Had the lumber cut last year been as large as in previous years, there would be no need of the patriotic tax and he was hopeful that there would be an increase during the coming year. As to standing lumber the hon. minister of lands and mines had estimated that the province had five billion feet of lumber, twelve inches and upwards, and five billion feet under twelve inches, making a total of ten billion feet of both kinds.

Mr. Charles E. Oak, who was an authority on lumbering matters, had estimated the standing timber in this province at twelve billion feet. It was certainly a great asset and the province was to be congratulated on having a minister of lands and mines who was putting forth every effort to protect it from fire and conserve it. It had been suggested that it was not possible for a government to be perfect, but he felt that so long as the present administration managed the forest lands in a businesslike way, they would receive the confidence and support of the people. The most valuable timber lands in the province were largely confined to the counties of Restigouche, Gloucester and Northumberland and the people were indebted to those counties for the bulk of the territorial revenue. There had been some criticism in regard to the rate of stumpage and the hon. member from St. John county had said that somebody went up a hill and then went down again. All were aware of the serious conditions which existed in the lumber market in 1917 at the time fixed for the enforcement of the increased stumpage rate. Large quantities of lumber were piled up on the North Shore, the owners of which did not know when they would succeed in marketing it. The government, after looking carefully into the matter, had fixed a rate of \$2.50 per thousand for spruce, with a proportionate rate for other kinds of lumber. Whether the rate had been made too high or too low, the government was deserving of some measure of commendation for having grappled with the situation. Some lumbermen had held their leases for such a long period that they almost felt that theirs were vested rights and it looked as if governments in the past had been inclined to share that view. The old government instead of placing the lumber lands up at auction in 1918 had extended the leases for a period of twenty years at a bonus of \$100 per mile. He had heard it reported that the lumbermen had been willing to pay a higher price, but temptation had come in the way of somebody in authority and he had yielded to the same, with the result that the leases were extended. The old government had even passed an order-in-council stipulating that the rate should not be increased for ten

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years. The regulation had afterwards been rescinded and in this connection he wished to congratulate his hon. friends opposite for having marched up the hill and then marched down again. He believed that the province should receive more than \$100 a mile as a bonus. Possibly the government might have done the right thing had it cancelled the whole business and resold the leases, but its hands had been tied by the action of the old administration. He believed that if those lands were offered for sale on the first of August nobody could estimate the size of the amount that would be brought into the treasury of the province. It may have been the right thing to have granted the renewal, but it should have been made on the most

(Continued on page 3.)

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