

HOW OLD GOVERNMENT FAKED UP ITS SURPLUSES

Opposition Members of Public Account's Committee Admit Their was a Deficit at the Close of 1915 and 1916---Old Government Responsible for Present State of Provincial Finances---How Accounts Were Juggled.

The frankness of the government in laying before the people of the province the exact state of the provincial finances has made the annual statement appear on the surface somewhat unfavorable as compared with the statement of last year, which showed the apparent condition under a former administration.

Statements made by the auditor general before the public accounts

committee put a different complexion on the matter. For any increase in the actual expenditures the old government must accept the larger share of responsibility as they were in office for the greater part of the fiscal year while, as the auditor general shows, the balance of the apparent increases in expenditures and the consequent deficit are due to changes in the methods adopted by the new government to show clearly and exactly the actual state of the finances.

When asked for a comparative statement of the actual expenditures last year and the year before on a basis of the committee of both sides of politics, the auditor general produced figures which reduced the apparent increase from about \$600,000 to \$226,404. Further examination of the accounts will readily explain even the remaining increases.

How Figures Made Up.

The actual expenditure for comparative purposes was reached by deducting first the Valley Railway interest, which had been included in the comparative statement this year for the first time, a matter of \$242,617. He then deducted the \$178,641 paid in 1917 for bills incurred in 1916 and added \$49,742, the amount of unpaid bills at the end of the last fiscal year, making a total of \$1,795,388.

In making the comparison he was hampered by the fact that the old government kept no record of outstanding bills and there was no record of the current liability at the end of 1915. It was suggested that the amount be taken as the same as at the

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end of 1916, viz., \$178,000. This was agreed to by the auditor general with the approval of Mr. Smith of Carleton, who was acting as financial critic for the opposition.

This ready assent by Mr. Smith and the other opposition members of the committee came as a surprise to the government members. It was remembered that the old administration had claimed a surplus for that year and had denied that there were any outstanding accounts. It is somewhat late, but the candid admission that the former statements were not in accord with the facts were nine the less welcome. If the amount is any less than admitted, it makes the comparison still more favorable to the present government.

The total for the previous year was arrived at by adding the amount of bills outstanding at the end of 1916 and deducting the estimated amount paid on account of the previous year.

This leaves an apparent increase of \$226,000. How this increase is made

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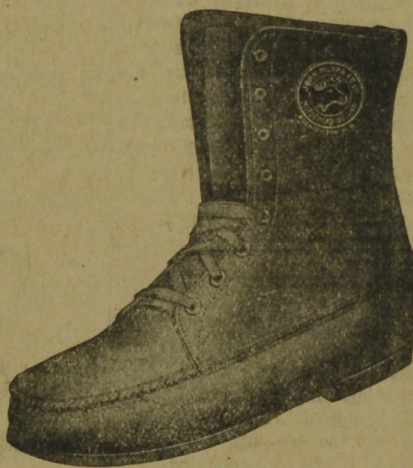
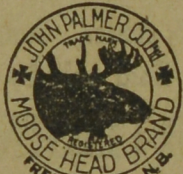
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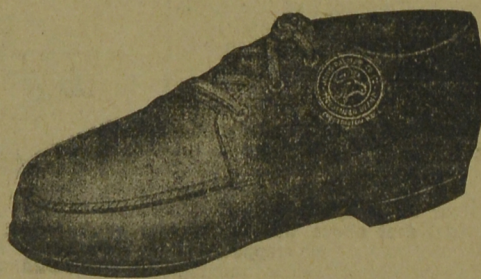
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Military Service Act

Important Announcement to All **EXEMPTED MEN** and to the Public Generally

IN dealing with the very large number of claims for exemption brought forward for consideration in connection with Class 1 under the Military Service Act, it has occurred, as was inevitable, that as a result of false statements and difficulties put in the way of investigation, some individuals have secured exemption whose proper place is in the Army.

It is not the intention of the Government to allow these men to evade permanently their obligation to bear their part in the military defence of the Country and of the ideals for which we are fighting. To do so would defeat the purpose of the Act, and cause grave injustice to men in the second class necessarily called out to fill their places.

Exemptions Granted on False Grounds

It is, therefore, proposed to scrutinize carefully all exemptions granted to date in order to separate those which have been granted on false or insufficient grounds from those that are well founded.

With this object in view the various Registrars under the Military Service Act have been instructed to issue a series of questionnaires to exempted men. These questionnaires must be filled up correctly and returned promptly under penalty of forfeiture of exemption for failure to do so.

Exempted Men Who Have Changed Address

It is therefore important in their own interest that all exempted men who have changed their address since their exemption was granted and who have not already notified the Registrar of such change should notify him at once. Under the Regulations it is the duty of exempted men to keep the Registrar advised of any change of address, and failure to receive the questionnaire by reason of neglect of this duty must be treated as equivalent to failure to return the questionnaire after receipt.

Citizens Urged to Assist

In many instances information has been furnished by members of the public which has led to the cancellation of exemptions obtained by false or misleading statements. Further co-operation of this character is invited. The Government regard it as the Duty of all loyal citizens, not only to the Country, but to the men at the front, to assist in this way in securing reinforcements on a just and legal basis. Correspondence of this character will be treated as strictly confidential and will receive the fullest investigation.

CHARLES J. DOHERTY,
Minister of Justice.

Correspondence should be directed to W. A. Ewing, K.C., Registrar under the Military Service Act, St. John, N.B.

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up is shown by a glance at the accounts.

Various increases are found which more than equal the total. Ordinary bridges cost \$70,000 more than in the previous year, but this is \$19,000 less than spent by the former government in 1911.

Ordinary roads cost \$50,000 more but only slightly more than in 1915. The total includes \$30,000 spent for seed which was resold to farmers.

The provincial hospital buildings account is charged with an increase of \$21,000, due chiefly to the construction of the new power house and hospital maintenance was \$16,500 greater or largely on account of increased cost of supplies.

Elections last year added \$12,000 to the total, an item for which the new government could hardly be blamed.

The expenses of the Jordan Memorial Sanitarium were \$15,000 greater and the legislative buildings increased \$9,000, owing to the installation of a much needed new heating system.

In the unforeseen expense account another \$9,000 increase is found. This includes \$2,600 for stationary bills incurred by the late government as far back as 1911, the sum of \$3,284 for the Price, Waterhouse report which proved a good investment, with the balance chiefly made up of patriotic contributions.

These items made up a total of \$234,000, more than accounting for the extra amount.

How Surplus Was Faked.

While methods of bookkeeping, unpaid bills and government balances are being considered a quotation from the sworn statement of a former secretary of the public works department is of especial interest. It is as follows:

"In the months of August, September and October, 1913, I did present to the provincial secretary-treasurer's

department for payment certain accounts which were almost exclusively for ordinary expenditure of roads and bridges, amounting to between \$55,000 and \$60,000. These accounts had been checked up in the department of public works and passed upon, the proper requisitions had been signed, and all were made ready for payment. They had been sent to the

(Continued on page 7.)

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