

MR. TWEEDDALE'S CONTRIBUTION.

Member for Victoria Presents Able Arguments to the Legislature

IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

And Successfully Answers Opposition Criticisms.

In the legislature Monday, Mr. Tweeddale, member for Victoria, speaking in the budget debate after Mr. Maxwell said:

I listened with great attention to the remarks of the gentleman who acted as financial critic for the opposition and if one thing in this line of argument impressed me more strongly than another, and I am sure that the same thing must have presented itself forcibly to every member of this house who heard him speak, it was that his whole effort his entire line of attack upon the administration, seemed to be to create prejudice against the government, and that too, by seeking to make it appear that his statements were so earnestly presented and he seemed so sincere in what he was saying that he could not possibly be wrong and should not be doubted. Take his attack upon the Grand Falls Water Power incident. In listening to the hon. member from Carleton the other day one would get the impression that the premier in his budget speech had treated that deposit of \$50,000 as an asset of the province, as a source of revenue, while this House knows that that deposit was only as a guarantee of the good faith of the company that they would go on with the work and it was to be returned to them whenever they had complied with the conditions. The whole tenor of the remarks upon this subject by the hon. gentleman opposite was to make it appear otherwise, and I consider such tactics not only unfair but unjustifiable as well. That was a sample of his whole speech. Wherein has he condemned the government fairly? No government is infallible; all are liable to make mistakes. But on the whole wherein has the opposition shown that the government might have done otherwise in acting in the best interests of the province?

THE HIGHWAY ACT.

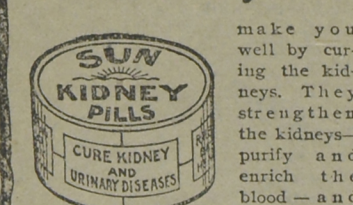
Take the Highway Act of last session as a sample of the unfair manner in which the opposition deals with public matters. Their whole effort in respect to that act has been to create prejudice against it and to make it unworkable.

While a member of the Municipal council of Victoria I contended that the road monies would be best expended through the councils and their appointees, and if ever again I contest a seat for the legislature I have no doubt that the opposition will accuse me of inconsistency because I have supported the new Highway Act. I have done so upon principle. When the government saw the necessity for a change in the manner of administering the road monies they made a wise change by consolidating the fund and lessening the number of men who would be responsible for expending the money. Under the old act we had highway commissioners, bye-road commissioners and other officials, all expending small portions of the fund and scattering the road monies and dividing responsibility. The principle of the responsibility. The principle of the new act is to consolidate the fund and to fix responsibility upon a few men who will be chosen for their fitness for the work. This should secure better results and at the same time more economical administration of the fund. Another thing that will make for better administration is that a statement in detail must be published in a paper in the country of all the receipts and expenditures. The most of the money for the roads comes from the provincial treasury. Can anything in the act or the administration of the act be construed as bringing profit to the government? Do the members of the opposition assert that the government are not honest in their desire

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to get the very best results from the expenditure of the money or highways?

When the Highway Act was before this House it was fully discussed and many suggestions even of the opposition were adopted, the desire of the government being to get the best possible act; but after it had gone through committee the opposition brought in many amendments for the sole purpose, so it would seem; of giving them campaign capital to go before the municipal councils with.

Mr. Hazen—You voted for some of those amendments.

Mr. Tweeddale—Yes, in committee I did, as I desired to assist in perfecting the act, and I will take the responsibility for my attitude.

We have the opposition standing up here and insisting that the government enact new laws, clamoring for new expenditures, demanding that teachers be paid larger salaries for instance, and yet when the government complies with some of those demands these same gentlemen condemn the government for increasing the expenditure. Every member must have noted how unfair the hon. member from Carleton was in making his so called comparison regarding wheat raising in this province. If he wanted to be honest and fair, why did he not take the years preceding the adoption of the policy of bonusing wheat mills and the years since then. This would have shown that the production of wheat has greatly increased. As the member goes about the country and sits down to the well supplied tables of the farmers he is partaking of bread grown and manufactured in this province and produced in most instances because of the government's policy of encouraging and bonusing the production of home made flour. In the past we have heard a great deal of criticism of the agricultural policy of the government and of the gentleman who has filled the position of commissioner of that important department. I well remember having heard the former leader of the opposition condemn the government for making a storekeeper commissioner of agriculture, and laughing at the suggestion that he could possibly make a success of the position. We have seen his administration of the department of agriculture and we have watched him in the more responsible position of commissioner of public works, the chief spending department of the government. He has filled those positions with ability and integrity, and during this whole time even the most unfair of his critics have not laid a single charge against him. As I was saying a moment ago, the record will show that the policy of the government, coupled with the efforts of the Dominion government has had the result of stimulating the production of wheat and other grains, and by education and illustration in seed selected has produced larger crops and better quality of grains. One thing which the hon. member seemed to approve and advocate was that the county assessment for the school fund be increased from thirty to fifty cents, and the increase be given to the teachers in the way of larger salaries. I take exception to that, but mention it here only to say that if the provincial secretary adopts such a course we will have the hon. member going about the country saying that the government has compelled the municipal councils to assess more so that the teachers may receive more, and he will ask the people to condemn the government for that. That seems to be the settled policy and favorite tactics of the opposition; to suggest to the government some expenditure and then condemn them for that expenditure.

The House took recess until eight o'clock.

PEANUT POLITICS.

In regard to the question of larger salaries for the school teachers, no person would be more pleased to see this done than myself. If the opposition are sincere in their wishes, and have solved the problem of how it may be done so as not to prejudice the other necessary public services, why do they not give the house and the country the benefit of the evolutions of their fertile brains? So far as they have expressed any opinion on the matter of finances it seems to me that they think it can only be done by abolishing the succession duties, and cutting off other sources of revenue. That is only one phase of the inconsistency and absurdity of their contentions. Take up the speeches of the opposition section by section, and they appear plausible enough and to hear them speak their phrases fall pleasantly enough upon the ear of the hearer, but their ideas cannot be worked out in practice. If the opposition would lay down some sound principle of administration of affairs, instead of small criticisms of the government, they might be listened to with favor in the house and country. Their criticisms are not such as any practical business man or an intelligent electorate can accept.



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So far as I have looked into the matter of increased salaries for teachers and the betterment of our educational system, it seems to me relief can only be found in the system of consolidated schools, which the government is disposed to favor and encourage. I believe the consolidated school system can be successfully extended to many of our country districts, and they will place our children within the reach of higher educational facilities, and give them better opportunities, and that, too, without any, or very little, additional tax upon the provincial treasury. One expression which the hon. member for Carleton used over and over, and which seemed to have great weight with him, was that his speech was the earnest conviction of himself, and ought, consequently, to be accepted by the house and country as Bible truth. Because it was the old, old story, it must necessarily be the gospel truth, in his estimation. Perhaps the hon. member will give others credit for having convictions and sincerity, too.

The hon. member for St. John city spoke feelingly and eloquently because the government had elevated to cabinet position one of the representatives of an up river constituency. I do not know if this was in a spirit of jealousy because the portfolio did not go to St. John, but I am glad that the great section of the provinces on the upper waters of the St. John River has been recognized and honored, and that those counties were able to provide a man who will do honor to himself, the cabinet and the province. I think that such criticisms should not come from the city of St. John, and we know that had a St. John man been appointed to the position of solicitor general the opposition would have roundly condemned the government for passing by the upper section of the province. I believe that one strong reason why they condemn the appointment of the hon. member for Carleton County is because they fear that when next the general election comes he will bring to this house two colleagues who are supporters of the government. The member for St. John who spoke upon this budget was also eloquent in his denunciation of the government in the matter of succession duties; because the government took from the widow some portion of an estate of \$25,000 and applied it for the general good of the province. It is a commendable feeling to sympathize with the widow and the orphan but what of that other poor widow who may be left with a family of children to rear and educate and has

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only the efforts of her hands to depend upon? Would not the hon. member take from the plenitude of the \$25,000 estate to assist the poor widow to educate her small and dependent ones? The principle of succession duties is not new nor is it something peculiar to this province, but is the custom in most civilized countries. The opposition also criticizes the expenditures for executive government, and the attorney general is made the object of special attack. The provinces have rights to be guarded, and these great questions need able and learned men to advocate them. In the matter of the fisheries award the sum of two million dollars is involved, and it is the duty of the government to press the rights of the province to this sum. What more reasonable than that the ablest man that can be found should be retained to look after the province's rights in this matter, and where will you find a man more capable than the attorney general? To a layman it may sometimes seem that the fees are large, but the leader of the opposition, himself a lawyer, will not contend that the retainer paid the attorney general in these cases is larger than a man of his ability should command. Other small matters, such as coach hire, are aired from year to year, and answered from year to year. The matter of the bonded debt came in for considerable criticism, but the opposition are not able to refute the statement of the premier, that every dollar of the bonded debt has been incurred to provide facilities for the development of the province. The railways, assisted by this government, will open up vast tracts of valuable timber lands, and give access to valuable mineral deposits and tend to build up the industries of the province, and give our people profitable employment at home, and encourage others to come here.

I do not wish to prolong this debate and only wish to place before the house some of the impressions as they have presented themselves to me as the debate has progressed. (Applause.)

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