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MR. FLEMMING'S CRITICISMS.

Conclusion of His Observations in the Budget Debate.

ARGUMENTS THAT HAVE OFTEN BEEN ANSWERED BEFORE.

(Concluded from yesterday.)

After recess in the legislature on Thursday, Mr. Fleming continued his address in the budget debate.

I was pointing out to the House the great increase in the income of the province, and I must say that the present government have devised new and ingenious ways of taking money out of the pockets of the people. All the taxes upon incorporated companies and large enterprises eventually come out of the people. The increased revenue last year was made up almost wholly of increased revenue from crown lands, and this in a year when lumbering industry was in a depressed condition. It is not able that the expenditure has kept pace with the larger revenue.

Under the expenditure is not included \$30,000 to the New Brunswick Coal and Railway Company, nor \$25 to the Intercolonial Railway. The premier claimed a surplus of \$5,000 for the past year, but I will show the House that there was really a deficit of over \$150,000. On page 5 of the Auditor's report we find "Provincial Hospital, over-expenditure, \$17,764." I wonder why that was not put down under the head of current revenue, which would have been the proper method of keeping the accounts? Next we have "Board of Works, balance ordinary accounts \$5,133." I ask the

Commissioner of Public Works if there is any justification for putting that in the debt account? It is money overexpended in the department, and if put in the current account, where it properly belongs, it would more than wipe out the boasted but imaginary surplus of the provincial secretary. Right under this we have the item "Advanced on account permanent bridges, \$83,392.28." Now I want to call the attention of the House to the extraordinary fact that in the Auditor General's report there is no statement of this expenditure of \$83,000 on permanent bridges, which means that the amount was spent without any audit by the Auditor General. It is true that the commissioner gives us a statement in his report of how the money was expended, but the point I wish to make here is that there was no proper audit by the officer of the province of this large expenditure. It is a bad system that \$125,000 can be spent by a single department in one year and not a dollar of the expenditure pass under the examination of the Auditor. If I am not correct in this statement I will ask the commissioner to correct me. While on this matter of permanent bridges I will say that a few years ago we were told by this government that the only kinds of bridges worth building were steel superstructures

on masonry foundations, but they have changed their minds since then, and last night we were informed by the premier that the government now considered the wooden, covered bridge the best. The classification covered bridges has also been widely extended, so that now it included very small and unimportant bridges, in some cases to my knowledge only stone culverts that should be paid out of only stone culverts, that should be paid for out of current revenue, but they are charged up as permanent bridges and paid for on bonds instead of out of current revenue. Another item of expenditure last year we find put in the statement of debt is "Crown Land Department, over-expenditure on game account, \$10,000." When I look at that item charged in debt account I find it hard to confine myself to parliamentary language in speaking of it.

If we add all the items of over-expenditure we find they total \$157,000, so that I was absolutely correct when I stated that the real deficit of the province last year was upwards of \$150,000 and not a surplus of \$5,000 as the premier tried to make it appear.

Another thing. I pointed out to the House last year that the amount of \$18,000 from special loan for freight account of 1900 had been turned into current revenue, a most vicious system of book-keeping when sums borrowed on bonds of the province are turned to swell the current receipts. The commissioner in his report tells us that more was expended on freight account last year, but it was not kept in separate account, so that today no person can tell what amount has been spent on freight account.

Hon. Mr. LaBrosse.—Last year we built a large bridge that was carried out in the freight of 1900, and all have not been rebuilt yet.

Mr. Flemming.—I am not now objecting to rebuilding the bridges, but to the practice of turning money obtained on special loan into current revenue account, where no trace of it is kept.

It is unnecessary that I should again this year, as I have done on previous occasions, point out to the House the enormous amounts paid out under the items of controllable expenditure, for public printing, executive government, contingencies, etc. The same unsatisfactory state of affairs exists as formerly, and I will only call attention to a few items. Take public printing. We find that The Fredericton Herald was paid \$6,076.28. Of course The Herald says that this is a wise and a good administration. The Fredericton Gleaner was paid \$2,602.33, and the St. John Telegraph \$1,756. In addition to this, The Telegraph got \$13,017 for printing the revised statutes. The Telegraph seems to be lost in the mists as far as federal politics is concerned, but it has its bearings splendidly in the provincial arena. The whole cost of public printing last year for regular, sundry accounts and statutes, was \$26,282.98, a pretty stiff figure, the country will agree with me.

Under the head of executive government we have a truly remarkable showing, and one that should be a cause of alarm to the ratepayers. The statement is something like this:

Hon. F. J. Sweeney, \$660.
Hon. Wm. Pugsley—\$2100; travelling expenses, \$400; settling succession duties, \$1540; expenses to Ottawa and London, \$4579; total \$9,120.

Premier Tweedie—\$2100; travelling expenses, \$1105; salary as surveyor general, \$860.

Hon. A. T. Dunn, surveyor general—\$650; travelling expenses, \$315.

Hon. H. A. McKeown—\$441.

Hon. C. H. LaBrosse—salary, \$1700; travelling expenses, \$1433.

Hon. L. P. Farris—salary, \$1700; travelling expenses, \$600.

Sessional indemnity of six members of the government, \$3,000.

Coach hire for members of the executive, \$693.

A grand total of \$24,066. This is equal to over \$80 a day for every working day of the year, and is exclusive of the amounts paid as hospital commissioners or the travelling expenses of the executive. The members of the executive cost this province over \$80 a day last year for each working day.

The attorney general of New Brunswick was paid a greater sum out of the provincial treasury last year than was received for public services by our governor, by the prime minister of Canada, or by any other man in political life in this country. I am quite willing to concede that the attorney general is a gentleman of great ability, but he is entirely too expensive for this province.

But turning now to some of the great services of the province what do we find? Let us look at the agricultural department, which comes so near home to the greater number of our people. A few years ago the government's wheat policy was given to us as something that was to make the farmers rich beyond the dreams of avarice. What do the figures show? Simply that less wheat is grown now than four years ago, and less acreage is sown to wheat. In 1900 there were 26,867 acres under wheat in this province. The decrease has been steady and last year only 20,419 acres were under wheat and last year 150,000 bushels less of wheat were grown than in 1900. But not only in wheat but in cheese we find a similar decrease. Cheese production for the past several years has been as follows:

1900—\$82,000 pounds.
1901—1,887,000 pounds.
1902—1,910,000 pounds.
1903—1,996,000 pounds.
1904—1,886,000 pounds.

The cheese exported tells the same story of decrease; and the product of butter last year was only slightly more than in the previous year.

A similar story of retrogression is true regarding the butter and cheese factories, which declined from 42 of the former in 1903 to 39 last year, and cheese factories in operation last year were about the same as the year before. The salaries of the commissioner of agriculture and the three dairy superintendents and their expenses last year totalled at \$10,907.90. The total amount paid to

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A woman does a lot of thinking trying to figure out whether the baby is going to be a great man or a good man.—New York Press.

Expected.

Landlady—The coffee, I am sorry to say, is exhausted, Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith—Ah, yes, poor thing, I was expecting that. I've noticed that for some time it hasn't been strong.

Arms and the Man.

Winkle—Count Duello is a daring swordsman. Twinkle—Yes; he ran through a cool million without any trouble.

Sometimes a cold settles in the bowels! The pain pierces like a lance. Get rid of it promptly by taking Perry Davis' Painkiller in sweetened water. There is but one painkiller, Perry Davis'. Refuse substitutes.

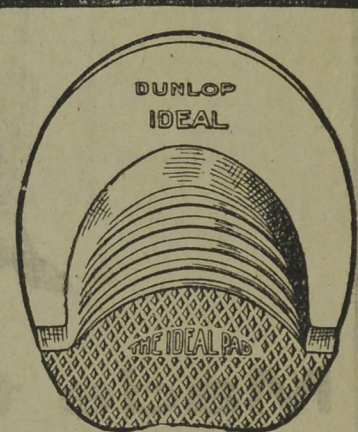
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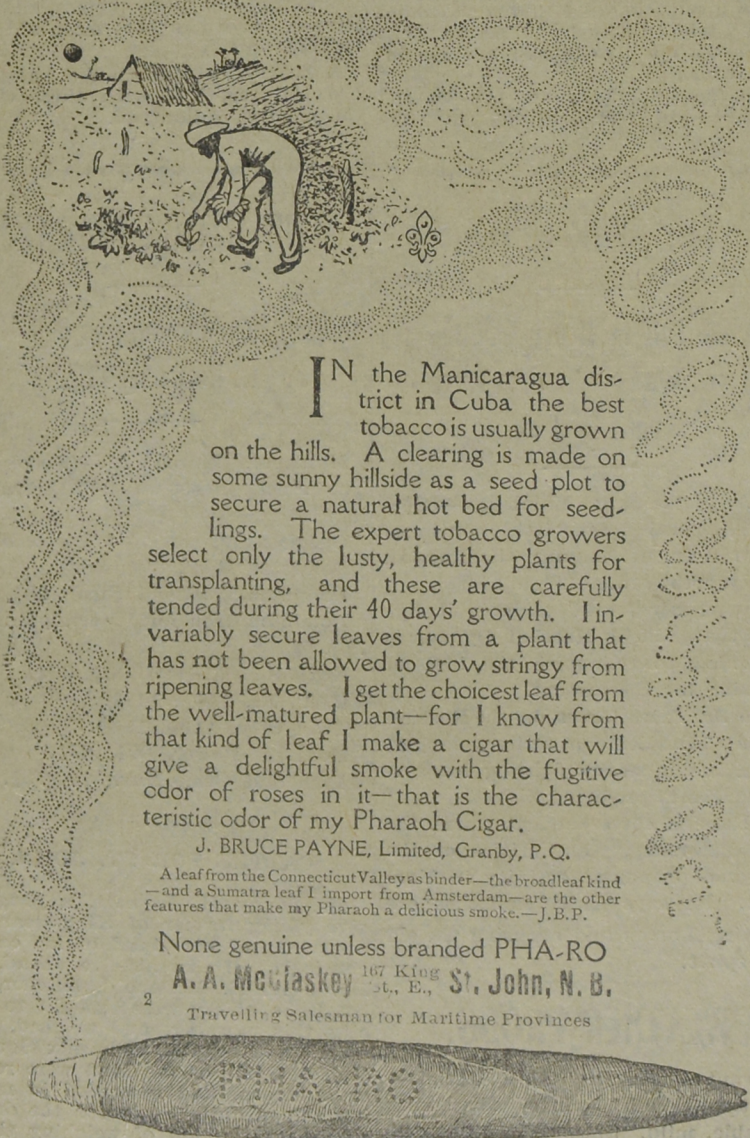
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