

CANADA'S GREAT PROGRESS.

Budget of Minister of Finance Shows Largest Surplus Since Confederation.

Post Office Surplus is Upwards of One Million Dollars.

TORIES IN SORRY PLIGHT.

Mr. Ames and Mr. Foster attacked the interior department administration, alleging that Mr. Turiff, M. P., when land commissioner opened tenders for limits in a dark room, secretly and alone.

Investigation proves that this was false. Mr. Turiff ordered to go in the witness box and testify, but Tories refused to call him. Mr. Turiff announces that he will testify in any event and prove the falsity of the charges made.

On Tuesday last Hon. Mr. Fielding, Minister of Finance, presented his budget and delivered his annual statement of the condition of the finances of the country for the last fiscal period, which in this instance was for nine months.

Mr. Fielding, amid the cheers of the members, announced that the surplus for the nine months, amounted to \$16,427,167. That is, that the surplus for the nine months was larger than the surplus of any fiscal year since Confederation, and was nearly half the total revenue of the Conservative government when they went out of office in 1896.

Total revenue for nine months ending 31st March last amounted to \$67,969,328, and expenditure on consolidated fund for the same period amounted to \$51,542,161.

During the nine months the sources of revenue were as follows: Customs, \$39,760,172.53; Excise, \$1,805,413.21; Post Office, \$5,061,728.45; Dominion Lands, \$1,443,632.03; Railways, \$6,509,099.78; Miscellaneous, \$3,389,282.29; Total Revenue, \$67,969,328.29.

POST OFFICE SURPLUS.

Mr. Fielding invited particular attention to the prosperous condition of the post office department, which in 1896, had a deficit of over \$700,000 but for the nine months forming the last fiscal period, produced a surplus of \$1,082,171. The following figures illustrate the process of evolution from deficits to surpluses in this department:

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure
1897	3,202,938	3,789,478
1898	3,202,338	3,789,478
1899	3,527,809	3,575,411
1900	3,193,777	3,603,799
1901	3,205,535	3,758,014
1902	3,441,504	3,981,446
1903	3,918,415	4,023,636
1904	4,397,832	4,105,178
1905	4,652,321	4,347,540
1906	5,125,372	4,634,527
1907	5,933,342	4,921,577
1908	5,061,728	3,979,557

PAY SURPLUS.

Mr. Fielding made a reference to the changes recently made in the tariff which he thought were operating to the advantage of the country, and he further said that no changes were contemplated at present. Although there is some readjustment of the tobacco duties which will not, however, affect the revenue.

NO TARIFF CHANGES.

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SOUND FINANCIAL CONDITION.

The country expected an agreeable financial statement, but the one presented by Mr. Fielding was far in excess of what the most sanguine anticipated. A surplus of \$16,000,000 for the short period of nine months, and a surplus for the year of \$19,000,000 should cause any reasoning man to acclaim the present government as the best in the history of the Dominion. With great public works in progress, a decrease in the public debt of \$3,371,117, with generous appropriations for the public service, with a greater Canada to govern the per capita public debt decreased from 50.82 in Conservative days to 42.84 today, surely there are facts which will appeal to the electors of Canada and stamp the administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as efficient and intelligent, and in the interests of all the people.

ANOTHER SCANDAL EXPLODED.

The Conservative press of the country has given extensive circulation to the unfounded but vivid description of the manner of opening public tenders for timber limits, which Mr. Foster evolved from his imagination. Mr. Foster alleged that tenders were opened by Mr. Turiff (formerly Commissioner of Dominion Lands, and now M. P. for East Assiniboia,) in secret in a darkened room in the interior department, behind locked doors.

This subject first came up in the House and Mr. Turiff challenged any member of the Opposition to charge him with wrong doing, if there was any suggestion of the kind. There was no answer to this.

When the matter came up in the public accounts committee, Mr. Turiff offered to submit himself for examination under oath, but the members of the Opposition saw at once that their insinuations would be quickly dissipated when Mr. Turiff met them face to face in the witness box, and they declined to call him.

In the meantime Mr. Greenway, the present Commissioner of Dominion Lands was called before the committee.

After the Opposition had charged that the system of opening tenders was open to abuse, Mr. Greenway was called to the witness box and he testified that the tenders were brought into the Commission's office by the proper official, but the proper day, and that they were then opened in the presence of a second official, and that sometimes some of the members were present also, the Opposition, in the person of Mr. Ames, the suspicious one, abruptly stopped the examination. No question had been asked about secrecy, nothing elicited as to a dark room, so attempt whatever to prove the words uttered by Mr. Foster.

This conclusion, however, was not acceptable to Mr. E. M. Macdonald, of Pictou. This gentleman too, Mr. Greenway in hand and the examination proceeded as follows:

EVIDENCE UNDER OATH.

Q.—Now, did you lock the door when you went to open the tenders?

A.—No; I never did anything of that kind.

Q.—You never heard there had been any system of locking the doors.

A.—No; I never heard of it.

Q.—Then was there any dark and secluded room in the building in which you retired when you opened these tenders?

A.—Not that I am aware of; they were always opened in my office.

Q.—In your regular office?

A.—In my regular office, yes.

Q.—Did the officials of the department tell you that there was any dark and secluded room in the building when tenders were supposed to be opened, or where Mr. Turiff used to open them?

A.—No.

Q.—I suppose you are fairly familiar with the department, the rooms and all that?

A.—Yes, I think so.

Q.—Do you know if there is any dark and secluded room there which could be utilized for that purpose?

A.—I don't know.

Q.—You never heard tell of anything like that? Now when the clerk brought these tenders did you open them?

A.—Yes.

Q.—And I supposed the clerk took down the names and amounts as you read them off?

A.—We opened them together. The clerk and myself always opened them together.

Q.—So that there were always two people present while the tenders were being opened?

A.—Yes.

Q.—There have always been two people present, you and this clerk, when the tenders were opened?

A.—Yes; sometimes more.

Q.—Sometimes more?

A.—Yes.

Q.—In what case would there be more?

A.—Well there were other clerks, of course, in the office, and sometimes we had some of the tenderers?

Q.—Some of the tenderers?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Was there any attempt to exclude anybody?

A.—Anybody who wanted to come in was allowed to do so as far as I know.

Q.—If a proper party?

A.—Anybody interested in the business.

Q.—Did you understand that you were following the system.

A.—Yes.

TORIES BLOCK INVESTIGATION

Mr. MacDonald had proceeded so far with his examination and established the fact that there was no dark and secluded room, no locked door, no secrecy, but that on the contrary, the tenders were opened in the light of day, in the presence of two or more officials and in the presence of some of the tenderers, and any other person who had business to transact. At this point the opposition saw their house of cards crumbling to pieces and all their allegations disproved, so Mr. Bristol jumped to his feet and the following incident occurred before the witness could answer the last question:

Mr. Bristol—We might as well have this stopped right here.

Mr. MacDonald—Surely you are not going to be an obstructionist?

REAL TRUTH OF IT.

It will be remembered that the opposition constantly make the claim that they are permitted to extract information from witnesses because of technical objections made by Liberals to their questions. This timber question is one of the main attacks made in the government, and yet although Mr. MacDonald was anxious in the public interest to investigate the affair to the bottom, he was met by the obstruction given above. The public will be able to decide after reading the evidence given here, how much remains of the wild assertions of Mr. Foster and Mr. Ames, that star chamber methods are permitted in the interior department.

Notwithstanding the objections of Mr. Bristol, Mr. MacDonald proceeded with the examination and concluded with the following question:

Q.—So that you went right along without making any change, or giving any directions, just as you understood from the officials of the office had been done before you came?

A.—That was my understanding.

MR. TURIFF INSISTS ON TESTIFYING.

In the meantime Mr. Turiff, M. P., for East Assiniboia, a gentleman of unimpeachable character, and whose integrity has never been questioned, does not propose to allow the Conservatives, for political reasons, to base an attack on the administration by reflecting upon his acts when filling the position of Land Commissioner.

Mr. Turiff never opened tenders in a dark and secluded room, he was never alone when he opened them, there was always one official present, sometimes more than one. Therefore as the Conservatives, well know that the public they inflated would burst after Mr. Turiff had made his statement, declined to call him.

What will the public think of this? The only man who can give direct evidence on the point—the one man singled out by the Tories as having conspired to award tenders by fraud—the man who was the responsible official at the time alleged frauds were said to have been committed. This is the man they refuse to call, although he announced in the committee that he had been in daily attendance for that purpose. The public will arrive at a proper conclusion with regard to this.

The matter will not be allowed to rest here. If the Conservatives don't want the facts and the truth, the Liberals do, and Mr. Turiff insists upon being called to the stand, and under oath he will make such a statement as will bury this latest scandal with the others, which have served their day as campaign material.

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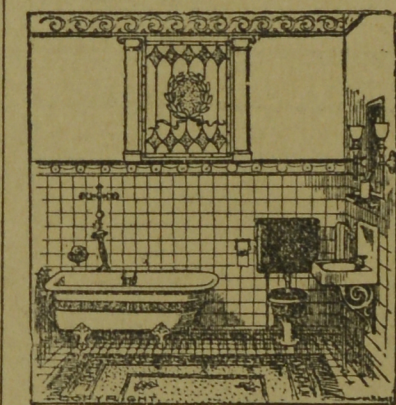
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NET DEBT PER CAPITA.

June 30, 1896	50.82
" 1897	50.87
" 1898	50.77
" 1899	50.62
" 1900	49.88
" 1901	49.84
" 1902	49.59
" 1903	46.34
" 1904	45.74
" 1905	45.63
" 1906	44.63
Mar. 31, 1907	42.84

SURPLUS FOR 1907-08.

The fiscal year for 1907-08 will close on the 31 March. The total revenue up to 29 February '08, was \$87,007,299. Mr. Fielding estimated the revenue for the year at \$96,500,000, and the expenditure chargeable to capital account at \$77,500,000. If this estimate is established by the facts the surplus for the year will be \$19,000,000. The largest surplus in the history of the country or more than half the total revenue when the Conservatives went out of power in 1896.