

MR. COPP'S GREAT SPEECH.

A Crushing Exposure of the Shilly Shalling Policy of Hazen Government.

MEMBER FOR WESTMORLAND SHATERS THE ARGUMENTS OF GOVERNMENT SPEAKERS.

One of the ablest and most convincing speeches heard in the budget debate thus far was delivered in the legislature on Thursday afternoon by Mr. Copp, the talented young member for Westmorland. He was in splendid form and subjected the members of the moribund administration to a terrific grilling. He said that in rising to say a few words in the debate he must first of all congratulate the speaker, who had been unanimously elected by the house to the position of first commoner. While pleased that he had been so honored yet he (Copp) regretted that the house had lost the great ability and wise counsel which the hon. gentleman always brought to bear upon the work of the committees and in the debates of the house.

He also congratulated the government upon the manner in which they had despatched the business of the house and in having the departmental reports printed and tabled early in the session, something never done before.

He had no sympathy with those Liberals who had been foiled and hoodwinked by the members of the government when they were in opposition. As for himself he did not expect fair treatment for Liberals at the hands of the government. If Liberals were dismissed it serves them right for taking any stock in the pre-election promises of the government to give Liberals fair consideration. The government had acted with base ingratitude towards the Liberals who had helped to put them into office and he hoped the government would continue to dismiss them until they were all turned out. When he had the patronage of Westmorland county, and there were appointments to be made he always had his friends' patronage of Westmorland county, government to do the same with their friends. It was no credit to the Liberal party of this province to allow themselves to be fooled by the little bunch of gentlemen who now sit on the treasury benches.

The hon. member for Carleton had said that his party were willing to conduct a clean election in that county, but an agreement to that end with the Liberals had been blocked by Mr. F. B. Carvell and he practically admitted that because of Mr. Carvell his party had carried on a campaign of bribery and corruption.

With regard to that portion of the speech which refers to the tercentenary celebration at Quebec, he had no fault to find other than to say that the government had violated the Audit Act in spending money on that celebration and for the expense of the premier, who represented the province there, which had not been voted by the legislature. Hon. gentleman, when in opposition, had made the chambers ring with their denunciation of the government of the day because the expense of the ministers were paid for similar purposes.

Hon. Mr. Hazen challenged the hon. member to name one instance or cite one word which had been uttered by himself or any member of the opposition in criticism of expenditures for purposes such as the gentleman was discussing. He instanced the appropriation of \$5,000 for the expenses of the Premier to the coronation celebration, and which the then opposition had not opposed.

Mr. Copp said that the speakers on the government side had tried to lay the blame for the Scotch farmers not being given opportunity to see New Brunswick upon the federal minister of agriculture, but he thought that it was the duty of the provincial commissioner of agriculture to have arranged that this desirable class of visitors were given a chance to see the resources of our province, but that he possessed neither the knowledge nor ability to do so.

In inaugurating an immigration office the government were following the previous administration. For political reasons the government had dismissed Mr. James Barnes, but he would like to ask was it not for political reasons they had appointed as immigration agent, the son of the defeated candidate in Queens-Sunbury. The late member for Queens-Sunbury had laid the responsibility for his defeat at the door of the Premier, and had compelled him to provide an office for his son.

THE SCHOOL BOOK FRAUD.

The government was making its school book policy merely a political machine. The proprietor of a book store in Sackville, Mr. Rodd, ordered books on the 3rd of August, 1908, and ten days later he received a reply that a vendor had already been appointed for the town of Sackville, and the man appointed was a man

who lived at Middle Sackville, and who had no place of business. He lives three miles away from the town of Sackville, where the schools and educational institutions are, and simply farms out the handling of the school books. The present members of the government had said that the old government was in the grasp of a school book ring, but they were only in the kindergarten class as compared with this government. After a lot of correspondence and negotiating with Frank B. Black, the thrice rejected of Westmorland, Mr. Rodd got a small consignment of school books two months after the schools opened.

He hoped that the matter of the Fisheries Award would soon be settled, and that a large sum of money would go into the provincial treasury. The Premier, when in opposition, had said that this award, if it was ever secured, should go to the fishermen and not into the public funds, and he wondered if the hon. gentleman was of the same opinion now. Responsibility was upon the government to press this claim, and it was their duty to make every effort to get it settled.

THE AUDIT ACT.

He congratulated the government in having passed the Audit act, which was merely doing what the late government intended to do, but the act had been so framed that there had been ways of getting around it. The gentlemen on the treasury benches today can overrule the Auditor General and over expend in their departments the same as under the old Audit act.

Hon. Mr. Hazen said that the Auditor General must report to the House at the earliest opportunity all orders for over expenditure passed by the treasury board, and must lay all the facts and correspondence before the House took recess at this stage.

After recess, Mr. Copp resuming, said that before making any more remarks he would like to correct an error made before recess that the expenses of the Premier to the tercentenary celebrations were not authorized by the legislature. He had since ascertained that he was wrong, and he desired to admit his error.

He congratulated the government on the Audit act, but notwithstanding the claim that had been made last session, that there could be no payment without the Auditor's consent, he (the speaker) had then pointed out that occasions must arise when extraordinary measures would be necessary, in which case the responsibility must be thrown back on the government. He would not charge the members of the government with misappropriation of the public funds, but he would say that the Audit act as it stood on the statute book, although it put the auditor in charge, did not take away from the government the chance to misappropriate if they were so minded. The hon. member then read sects. 14, 16 and 17 of the act. These sections foresaw the possibility of unauthorized expenditure, but the provisions of them only applied to the ordinary public service for purposes for which appropriations were ordinarily made. He would ask whether the auditor was in fact a free and independent official. He had the highest respect for the Auditor General and all the other officials of the department, but he charged the government with the liberty of attempting to

DECEIVE THE COUNTRY

when they said the Audit act protected the public funds. The government took great credit to themselves for the act. The provincial secretary contrasting the present conditions with those under the late government, and said the passing of this one act alone showed that the government was doing well. He regretted that the provincial secretary had seen fit to drag in the name of an official who had served the province faithfully for forty years in the way he had. It was beneath the dignity of any decent man to attempt to make political capital out of such a tragedy. Would it not be just as reasonable to say that Simms & Co., of St. John, were equally responsible for the misfortune which had overtaken the young man who was recently in their employ, as it was to put Mr. Flewelling's death at the door of the late government. The Audit act had some good features, and the government would have his support in protecting the country from improper expenditure.

The government press, particularly the local press, had a good deal to say about the speech of his hon.

friend from Victoria. That it was windy and there was nothing to it. That was a very easy method of criticism and no better proof that his hon. friend's charges had gone home, could be shown than when the press and the people all turned on him. Never had there been a stronger arraignment of a government than that of his hon. friend's last night, and the charges that he made were still unanswered. With respect to the charge that was made against an official in Victoria county, if those charges were true, could it be said that he was a fit and proper person to hold any public office? Yet the provincial secretary could not say they were not true. All he could say was that it was the first he had heard of it. If the charge was not correct, then some opportunity should be given for proving that fact.

Hon. Mr. Hazen said he would like to say to his hon. friend that if he would just repeat the charges outside the House where he was not protected by his privileges as a member, he could have all the opportunity he wanted to prove them in the law courts.

Mr. Copp, continuing, said that the Provincial Secretary had admitted that if the charge against that official were true he was not a fit person to hold the position. If his hon. friend would come to him (the speaker) he would give him some sworn information concerning a gentleman well known to the House, and then we could see if he would carry the matter through.

Although the Provincial Secretary had said there was nothing in the speech of his hon. friend from Victoria nevertheless he took up half an hour of the time of the House to explain away some parts of it. He had told them with some emphasis that his reputation was second to none and although the speaker admired a man with a good reputation, he preferred to have that reputation from some other man than himself. He would not if he could, and he could not if he would, say a single unkind word about the member personally, but he would say that while he may have satisfied his own followers, with regard to his connection with the lumber on the Blue Bell tract, he (the speaker) would like a little more proof than his own statement.

THE AGRICULTURAL

COMMISSION. The government had appointed an Agricultural Commission which had been travelling about the country as they said, getting evidence. This he presumed was to enable them to formulate a policy. He had no fault to find with the personnel of the Commission but he questioned the benefits which would result from their labors. The House had not yet heard from the Commission, but he presumed that the purchase of Kentucky horses was made on their advice. He would not say that the purchase of the horses was a bad thing, although the Chief Commissioner had kindly told him, he didn't know anything about it. It had never been his fortune to occupy a seat in the government and it might never be his fortune to ever do so, but he hoped if the time ever did come when he should occupy a seat in the front row, he would know how to treat hon. members with a little more courtesy than some of the Ministers appeared to do.

He didn't profess to know very much about horses, but he knew enough to know when a horse was leashed on three feet. The Commissioner of Agriculture stood in a very bad light because when answering his (the speaker's) question, he was so curt without any apparent reason, but though the courtesy of the Attorney General, who he might say was always courteous both to friends and opponents alike, he had obtained information he wanted, and the commissioners' curtness in answering would not prevent his continuing to ask questions where the interests of the country demanded it. The question he asked was a fair one. The horses were cheap stock bought up at a forced sale and would be of no benefit whatever to the farmers.

Hon. Mr. Hazen.—Lots of farmers bought them more than they ever did before at any other sale. Messrs. Stewart, Culligan and Murchie, in Restigouche; Colter, Pinder and Forbes in York; Mr. Seovil in Queens, and others, all experienced farmers.

MR. PINDER'S THROW DOWN.

Mr. Copp.—If the hon. member for York is such an experienced farmer as the hon. Premier said, why did not the Premier take him into his cabinet? He had served his party well and faithfully for many years, and when the opportunity came to give him his reward, instead of sitting in the front bench, they rewarded him by pushing a blemished horse onto him. The government was loud in declaring that the sale had been a great success. That remained to be seen, after the balance of the purchase money was paid. If the purchasers had already paid twenty-five per cent of their purchase, they had paid all the horses were worth.

A lot of meetings had been held by this commission, and although the secretary had had a lot to say about what had been done, it appeared that as a rule, the number of people present was very small, in Westmorland county at any rate. He (the speaker) was told that they had asked for some dredges to drain the Tantramar marshes. The Surveyor General when recently at Ottawa at the forestry convention had expressed his

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desire to drain the bogs and re-forest them. Possibly he intended to use the same dredges.

Hon. Mr. Grimmer.—We might send them to Courtenay Bay.

Mr. Copp.—Don't you get me started on the Courtenay Bay, or you may be here all night! You are not using my honored leader right when you seek to belittle what he is doing toward the rebuilding of St. John.

Then the government appointed another commission to investigate the affairs of the Central railway. He (the speaker) had followed the reports of the proceedings before that commission, and saw nothing to lead him to conclude that a hundred, and fifty thousand dollars could not be accounted for as had been asserted by the Premier, but even assuming that it could not be accounted for, was it worth while digging up these ancient matters, and ignoring the live issues affecting the province. If that amount could not be accounted for, was that knowledge worth the many thousands of dollars which had been spent to obtain it, and which could have been far better used in the interests of agriculture.

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