# THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

## ITS DUTIES, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE DEMONSTRATED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE.

### Conclusion of the Budget Debate Report—Explanation of the Schemes for Assisting the Agricultural and Stock Interests—Mr. Ross Hotly Resented the Insinuations of Favoritism Made by Mr. Mowat—Speech of the Leader of the Opposition—Mr. Mitchell Termed the Government's Policy a John Bull Policy—Mr. Haultain Would Not Accept Provincial Establishment With Any Less Powers Than the Provinces Possess.

*(Continued from last issue.)*

THE LEADER'S Budget debate report (N.W.T. Legislature, 13th Sept., 1898) broke off last week in the middle of the speech of the Commissioner of Public Works and Agriculture.

MR. ROSS

had detailed the reasons which impelled the Government to undertake the opening of the Peace River road, and explained the work done on the road. He then proceeded to show some of the benefits reaped from the Government's action and policy in that connection, as follows :—

He had taken the trouble to ascertain as nearly as possible the exact results in trade at Calgary and Edmonton accruing from the opening of the road. This Government could not be held responsible if there had been people foolish enough to think they could go to Yukon by that route. From the President of the Board of Trade at Edmonton he learned that the trade of that town from 1st Sept. 1897 to 1st Sept. 1898 amounted to one and one quarter millions of dollars; the trade of the town had increased 50 per cent. over the former year, and one half of the increase was due to the Yukon trade That was to say the trade of Edmonton had increased by $675,000, and the opening of the road to Peace River led to $337,000 of the increase. That fact in itself was ample justification for the expenditure. From Mr. Morris, of Calgary, a banker and a reliable authority, he learned that the northern trade resulted in the sale of horses to the value of $40,000 and in general business in supplies to the extent of $100,000 at Calgary. Many parts of the Territories could give like experiences. The districts of Indian Head and Regina he knew had sold horses and oxen and dogs for the northern trade. Even if no Yukon existed it was right and proper for the Government to take hold and develop a portion of the Territories having such possibilities as the Peace River country. If the Assembly and Government did their duty, they would not have to pass resolutions in the House to save their territory, but the people in all portions would pass the resolutions and show their desire to remain as a part of the Territories. (Applause.)

THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT.

The House at last session had made provision for a department of agriculture, but no estimate was made for the engagement of a deputy. When the department was organized the Clerk of the Council, Mr. Reid, took charge of it. Mr. Reid's time, however, was so fully taken up with other duties that, even working night and day for weeks and months, as he had done, he could not attend to the duties, particularly when the brands registration business had to be taken hold of. Mr. Ross said he wished now that they had allowed longer time in which to effect the change in the brands system; a longer time would have saved himself a very great deal of trouble and worry. Mr. Reid had tackled the work with a will, but although he worked almost without ceasing, his many other duties prevented his proper attention to the brands business. Mr. Ross saw that in the interests of the department and of the people there should be a chief clerk. As he had done in the case of the public works, he looked around for a suitable man, and finally selected Mr. Peterson. This gentleman was not a deputy head yet, but Mr. Ross hoped he would be one in a very few days. He ventured to say that the House would find that in his choice of Mr. Peterson he had been no less successful than in the choice of Mr. Dennis. The member for Yorkton had sized him up, and had sized him up well. Mr. Peterson was well equipped for the post. He was not only a first class office man, but was a practical agriculturist and had been an experimenter himself. He took a very deep interest in agriculture. Mr. Peterson had come out to this country and had farmed in Manitoba where he had to carry water ten miles for use on his farm; he had farmed also at Calgary where to succeed the farmer was obliged to apply water to his land. In connection with the brands administration Mr. Peterson had proved a treasure. He came in on the 1st of May and ever since had devoted all his time, even the time that should be his own for recreation, to the work of the office. Mr. Ross was glad of the occasion to express his opinion thus publicly of Mr. Peterson; he would not have felt like doing so had the question of Mr. Peterson's qualifications not been raised. He would again say that he had not the slightest doubt but that the country would endorse the appointment when his work had time to be seen. After speaking of the work of the department with the brands system, Mr. Ross said the department was also charged with the collection and publishing of general statistics. Very little in that line had yet been done, but they hoped to do something this fall. The deputy would also be of assistance in preparing legislation dealing with agriculture, as for instance in relation to agricultural societies. Mr. Mowat had accused him (Mr. Ross) of having prepared a good scheme in this connection. He admitted that he had been thinking out a scheme. But there had been no bill printed. He submitted his views in type written form to the Agricultural Committee. Mr Mowat could scarcely be in earnest in his suggestion that his (Mr. Ross's) fears had induced him to withdraw his proposition. He thought no member would accuse him of being afraid to press his views. The accusation had always been the other way,—that he was too apt in pressing his views. He had not changed his views about the scheme proposed, but doubted whether the time had quite come for applying it. The plan was not thoroughly digested; he hardly thought he had all the information required. He had placed the matter before the Agricultural Committee to get the views of the members; he was always willing to learn. He was going to go further, and place the scheme before the agricultural societies of the country. He did not claim to know everything about every subject, and was perfectly willing to seek advice from those qualified to give it. He hoped next year to be able to bring in a bill dealing with the subject on the lines of the scheme. While on that subject he might say that it was his intention to have a section of the Agricultural Societies Ordinance amended to enable a society of 50 members to draw the grant. Last year, having this scheme in view, the House had raised the minimum membership to 100 The object sought for would be reached in another way. While the societies had undoubtedly done an excellent work, they were too much disposed to hold small shows. It would be proposed to hold larger district shows in which more than one society might join. If nothing untoward occurred in the uncertain meantime, the scheme would be introduced at the first session of the new Legislature. Other very important subjects to which the attention of the department of agriculture would have to be given were Noxious Weeds, Estray Animals and the administration of the votes passed by the Assembly for Hospitals, Charities and Public Health. With such branches as these, added to those regarding which he had entered more into detail, the House would recognise that the Department was one of very great importance. There was full scope for all the organisation which they were providing. Mr. Ross was sorry to hear anyone suggest that it was a minor department, and preferred to believe that Mr. Mowat thought that as yet the size of the department and the amount of work it could do made it a minor one. Every member must recognise that the future of the North-West Territories depends upon the agricultural interests; and it did not need to be demonstrated at this date that it was possible for a great deal of assistance to be given agriculturists and stockraisers through a well organised department whose business it was to devote attention to those interests.

THE ASSISTANCE SCHEMES.

After devoting some remarks in answer to the hint that the agricultural policy was invented to catch votes, Mr. Ross said he was perfectly satisfied as to the advisability of endeavoring to assist the stockraisers to improve their grades. It was evident that within the past few years the quality of the stock had been deteriorating. He had had an opportunity of seeing an example of what might be done in the line of improvement. Anyone who had been up the Manitoba and North-Western railway and had seen the thoroughbred stock farm at Binscarth and the quality of cattle raised in the district surrounding, would realise the benefit to be derived. There was already an arrangement in force with the railways for reduced rates on shipments of thoroughbreds, made at the instance of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa. But the fact of the arrangement did not seem to be well understood. One of the aims of this department would be to spread information of the advantages of that arrangement, and, in addition, the House was asked to vote a sum to give a small bonus for each head of thoroughbred stock brought to the country. The proposition was this: The department would receive an application from a man who wished to import one head of male stock; the importer would have to make his own provision in regard to selection and purchase, because the Government were not going to leave themselves open to any charge of collusion in buying animals. The bonus would be given in such an amount that the cost to the man of bringing the animal to his own station would be $5, that was to say, the cost of the animal would be precisely its cost in Ontario plus $5. The bonuses would be so applied that the resident in any part of the Territories could secure an animal at the same cost as a resident in any other part. The man would have to notify the department of his purchase in the east, and the department would, whenever a certain number had been purchased, have a man to collect them, come in charge of them, and distribute them at stations to which they might be destined. Mr. Eakin had feared that some section of country or some collection of individuals would get in their applications first and scoop the whole fund and the whole advantage. Mr. Ross did not share the fear. In the first place every portion of the country would be given notice at the same time, and in the second place his fear was that for the first year anyway the scheme would not be taken advantage of to even the full extent of their small vote. Before a man could take advantage of the scheme he must be able to pay the first cost of the thoroughbred animal. The average cost to the Government per animal would be from $12,00 to $18.00 according to the locality to which the animal was taken. If there were 100 applications in the first year it was all they could reasonably expect. He expected that in time the settlers would become able to take more advantage of the scheme and hoped that in future years the House might have to vote a larger sum for the purpose. The Government's arrangements in connection with this scheme were all but completed, and they would be ready very shortly to receive applications as he had explained. The next item was the one of $2,500 to initiate experimental work in the Territories. The whole House would agree that great advantage had accrued to those sections of country where experimental farms had been located. The farms were an object lesson to all who could get to see them. He would not claim that all the good work done in Indian Head district was attributable to the experimental farm there, but no one could doubt that the farm had greatly benefitted that district. If the good work was to be taken full advantage of, then it had to be brought nearer home to a greater number of farmers. What advantage was the Indian Head farm to a farmer in Edmonton district? Even if he could go to see it, the conditions on his own farm and on the farm at Indian Head were entirely different. What advantage to Southern Alberta would be the establishment of an experimental farm at Prince Albert? Not very great, certainly. Mr. Eakin said that the experimenters had advocated certain grains and grasses but now found them unsuitable and unsuccessful. That showed precisely the great value of experimental work. Was it not cheaper for one experimenter to prove the unsuitability of a certain grain, than for a great numbers of farmers to have to learn the fact from their own experiences and losses? The greatest work of an experimental farm was not in showing what should be done, but in showing what should not be done. The sum to be devoted to the work by this Government was small; it was for initiatory work. They did not expect to be able to start experimental work everywhere at once, but he did hope that in time this Government would be able to do something practical for the advancement of the interests of agriculture in this country. It was all very well to say that the Dominion was doing the work and that Prof. Robertson was doing the work. He hoped that the Dominion would continue its good work, and that Prof. Robertson would continue and increase the amount of his good work; but after all that the Dominion would or could do, there was a great deal left to be done, and he believed that it was time for the local Government to commence to organise and to supplement the work done by the Dominion. The cry that the scheme was an election dodge was the veriest bunçombe. The farmers of the country would not thank the man who raised that cry. If the Government might not dare to adopt any policy for the benefit of the farmers the farmers would be left in a poor position. If they heeded that cry, nothing could be done near the close of a term. The cry that the scheme was an election dodge was the poorest kind of an argument. The department had been in existence less than a year; this was the first opportunity it had had to make through the Executive Council to the House any proposition, and he thought it was a matter for congratulation that upon this, the very first opportunity, the department was able to propound, and had propounded, a policy and a scheme to benefit the agriculturists and ranchers of the country. The House must have some faith in the Government and in their proposals. When it was found that a scheme was unwise, then would be the time to condemn.

THE SCHOOL DEBENTURE QUESTION.

Mr. Mowat had criticised the proposal to pay certain school debenture indebtedness, arguing that a bad precedent would be established. Mr. Mowat unfortunately was not aware of the conditions which made it necessary to propose that vote. The leader of the Government had overlooked the explanation of that item. They did not justify the payment of the debentures on the plea that the districts had failed. They were not paying the amounts to save the debenture holders. In one of the districts affected every settler but one had left, and this unfortunate one might be pounced upon for the whole debt of the district. The cases were in reality a legacy to this Government from the days when the Lieut.-Governor conducted the business of the Territories. In those days sufficient caution was not observed in allowing districts to raise money on debentures. Such cases were not likely to occur again. They were very careful now, and demanded evidence showing that sufficient lands within the district were patented to form ample security for the debt. There was no danger of a precedent. Such cases would not occur again. The cases were an old score, and payment was proposed first to save the unfortunate man who might be crushed out through no particular fault of his own, secondly to remove the bar against the re-settlement of lands; with the debt hanging over them the lands would never be settled, and thirdly in the interest of the credit of the school districts of the Territories which it would be unfortunate to have injured.

RESENTS BASELESS INSINUATIONS.

Mr. Mowat had renewed his complaints and insinuations about the non printing of the Consolidated Ordinances. Mr. Ross thought that the House realized that Mr. Haultain had made a full explanation of that matter, and he had himself stated to the House the reasons which induced the Government to withhold the printing. The manuscript had not been finished when expected. He had already stated the facts respecting the tenders. Mr. Mowat was mistaken on one point. The tenderer he had in mind was not the lowest; he was the lowest tenderer in the Territories. The Government were of the opinion that unless there was a great difference in the tenders, they would not be justified in sending the work out of the Territories. It could not be conveniently done out of the Territories on account of the time which would necessarily be taken up with the sending of proofs. The Queen's Printer had made a recommendation in favor of the acceptance of the lowest Territorial tender. Then they found that the contractor was not willing to agree to complete the work within any certain time; the contractor gave as his reason for refusing to agree to any time, that two years had been spent in preparing the work. Did the House ever hear of such an argument? The contractor didn't seem to know whether he could do the printing in 12 weeks, 12 months or 12 years. While the Government were thus negotiating with the contractor, the Chairman of the Consolidation Commission suggested to them by letter that it would be well to delay the work until after a further session. The Government agreed to this suggestion because they believed it was in the best interests of the country. Any insinuation of improper motives in relation to the contractors he would

HURL BACK IN THE TEETH

of the man who made it. There were no records since the hon. member for Macleod became entrusted with public business in the North-West Territories to show that he had ever in any way favored one contractor against another. (Applause.) He would tell the hon. member for South Regina that there should be something stronger than mere vague suspicions to warrant such charges as he had made, and if he were going to make such insinuations he had better produce some evidence to back them up. (Applause.) Such damaging charges were not to go unchallenged, and Mr. Mowat would need better ground than suspicions if he were going to asperse the character of any member of this Government. (Applause). Continuing, in reply to Mr. Eakin, the Commissioner stated that the important Ordinances of 1897 had been printed separately and distributed, as for instance the Statute Labor, Brands, Estrays, etc., but possibly they were not distributed thoroughly enough. A mistake had been made in not printing more copies of the Ordinance Book of last session, but the reason was that they expected to have the Consolidated Ordinances out early in the year, which would have superseded all other Ordinances, and they had tried to be economical as they always did. Mr. Mowat had also made insinuations of favoritism towards Mr. Maloney and his district. He (Mr. Ross) had not looked into the estimates carefully enough to find out how Mr. Maloney fared. He remembered having asserted last year that the Estimates would show a fair distribution of the moneys between the great divisions of the country. He believed a fair analysis would show that to be the case; and he thought the wants of all the areas and districts had been fairly well attended to. He could only say that if Mr. Maloney did fare as well as Mr. Mowat thought he did, then the member for St. Albert had not dealt very fairly by him (Mr. Ross) in kicking as much as he had done about the unfulfilled needs of St. Albert. It was perfectly natural for hon. members to believe that their districts were entitled to large improvements, but his duty was to hold the scales equitably, and he hoped to do so as long as he occupied the position he was in. With the present Supplementary Estimates they were providing for many works which members had desired done last year, and which there had been a right to expect last year, only that there were no moneys available for the purpose. Mr. Ross concluded by asserting in the hearing of all the members who were certainly aware of the fact or otherwise of his statement, that none could allege that through the patronage or through the public works expenditure the Government had ever or on any occasion endeavored to influence any member of that House. (Prolonged applause.)

DR. BRETT, (BANFF)

the hon. leader of the Opposition, spoke very briefly as the hour was approaching midnight. Dr. Brett had only arrived on the evening train after an absence of several days from the House, having been called to Chicago by the illness of a relative. He regretted his inability to hear the speech made by the hon. leader of the Government, and was sure that it had been a lucid and acceptable statement. He congratulated Mr. Ross upon the readiness of his possession of the details relating to his departments. The House could not help noticing the large amounts they were voting in the Estimates before them; it was proof of the fact that the Territories were progressive, and that their business was growing larger year by year. He did not wonder that the amounts were large for expenses of government, but it did seem that the expenses of government as compared with the revenues were very large. He did not intend to critisise the departments. He recognised that in inaugurating a new system, the officals would be new to their work; they would become capable of handling more work after practice in the offices. He endorsed the policy of selecting the best available men for the deputy heads. As the business of the country grew, the responsibilities of the Government became larger. As the amounts they were spending enlarged year by year, it became more necessary for them to watch closely the management and policy of the Government. Dr. Brett believed the new policy in regard to the stock interests was in the right direction. Mr. Ross had waxed eloquent over an insinuation made by someone that the scheme was for an election purpose. Dr. Brett hoped that if the scheme did no good in the election, that it might do no harm anyway. The amount appropriated was less than would be justifiable. There was one policy which the members of the Government had not seemed anxious to explain,—that was the policy they had indulged in of ignoring the Assembly in certain matters. His reference was to the Yukon administration. They had made their regulations and sent an expedition without obtaining the sanction of the House. Their action involved a great principle, the principle of license or prohibition. They had established a license system without sanction. Before the license system was established in the organised Territories there had been great discussion, the Assembly had considered the matter in all its bearings, and came to a decision after a great deal of thought. No Government should have taken so great a responsibility as to institute license in any country without full discussion and the sanction of the people's representatives. Dr. Brett opposed the item of $1750 for paying school debentures. It seemed to him that this was making a bad precedent. Why not sell the lands if the speculators in the east who advanced the money had now to be reimbursed? It seemed to him that when speculators made a bad investment they had no right to come to the Assembly for remedy. Touching upon the loss of the Yukon territory, Dr. Brett said the fact of the loss gave rise to a certain amount of alarm. If it was the policy of the Government to allow the Territories to be disintegrated without resistance, then he could not agree with it. The delay of two or three years in the printing of the public accounts was another policy he could not agree with. The Government had not apologised so much for these omissions as they sought applause on account of the things they thought they had done well. On immigration the Government had no policy, contending that the funds were too limited, but he thought a fully organised government ought to be able to do something, even were it no larger than this policy with which they were now appealing to the farmers, namely to spend $2,500 on experiments. The Government were willing to rely entirely on the Dominion, were willing to allow the Dominion to select the classes of people for settlers in these Territories. On the whole the wants and revenues of the Territories were growing less rapidly than the expenses of Government. He would not say that these expenses were increasing too rapidly, but they were certainly becoming proportionately very great. Not having heard the Premier's speech, he did not know whether any mention had been made of provincial rights. Some policy in this regard should emanate from the Government, and he hoped and expected that Mr. Haultain had dealt with the subject.

MR. MITCHELL (MITCHELL)

just wished to allude to one matter which had been omitted, relating to education. During this year Mr. Haultain had visited the country north of Saskatoon, where the schools had not been running satisfactorily. In regard to these half breed schools there was great difficulty in securing and retaining teachers, who had been poorly paid. Many of the schools had been closed. Mr. Haultain had made a personal inspection, and found that in several districts the trustees were not able to properly attend to the business of the districts. It was suggested that Commissioners be appointed to carry on the business, and get the schools re opened. It was very important that some adequate provision be made for the education of those children, so that when they grow up they shall be able to perform the duties of trustees. Dealing with some remarks of the member for South Regina, Mr. Mitchell said that that hon. gentleman in examining the Estimates appeared to have a great deal of time to spare for figuring out the amounts for St. Albert. Mr. Mowat had probably forgotten that the idea was done away with of giving personally to members the public works moneys and thus furnishing them with "wads for voters." But it was the independent member's privilege to recommend works which he believed should be done; this idea did not seem to please Mr. Mowat, who changed his ground so often that it was difficult to follow him. Mr. Mowat had certainly paid the right side of the House a great compliment, and had taken up a great deal of time in mixing up his compliments with allusions to certain millstones in the Government and certain references to members interested in draining and others interested in bridging. He would just say to Mr. Mowat that he (Mr. Mitchell) had one acquirement, if no other, which was that he was able to close his mouth in six languages, whereas Mr. Mowat did not seem able to do so in one tongue. Something had been said about the policy of the Government. He would suggest that the Government's policy deserved the name of the John Bull policy, because it was a policy of integrity, for transacting the public business without fear or favor; and he hoped this Government would stick to that policy.

MR. BANNERMAN (EAST CALGARY)

warmly commended the proposal to initiate experimental work in agriculture. He said the farm at Indian Head was of little use to Alberta. He trusted that in the scheme the irrigation areas of Southern Alberta and the great wheat areas of Northern Alberta would not be forgotten. Mr. Bannerman admitted that Mr. Mowat in his speech that afternoon had had a heavy load to carry, and had carried it well. Mr. Mowat took umbrage at the salaries of the officials, seeming to forget that it was worth 25 per cent. more to live in Regina than anywhere else. Mr. Mowat himself had come to see this and had swapped with Vancouver. Mr. Mowat had also criticised the Peace River trail. The House would recollect that last year when the paltry vote of $10,000 was proposed, he (Mr. Bannerman) suggested that he was willing to forego any works in his district in favor of the Yukon road. Where was the member for South Regina then? He sat there in his chair as still as a frozen frog in January. (Laughter.) Now Mr. Mowat was finding fault because the Government did not proceed with the Yukon business at an earlier stage. The youth and beauty which had overflowed the galleries of the House that afternoon reminded Mr. Bannerman of the fact of the total inadequacy of the Assembly chamber. It had been his privilege to introduce a resolution on that subject, and he had been told that he should not have introduced the resolution because he was afraid to name the proper place for the location of the capital. He scorned the baseless insinuation. How could he be afraid? The City of Calgary was the second city in size and importance west of Pembroke. (Laughter.) It had a splendid system of waterworks, all modern conveniences, and two magnificent rivers, than which there were no purer streams in the world. Around Calgary there were millions upon millions of the finest agricultural lands that could be found under the blue canopy of heaven. (Laughter).

MR. BOUCHER (BATOCHE)

spoke as the representative of the French people of the Territories. Most of the members of the House represented a certain number of the French element, and all should be able to appreciate statements he would make, and which he personally knew to be true, respecting the French people. In asking for the printing of the Ordinances in French these people were asking merely for justice. The Act prescribed that the Ordinances "shall" be so printed; the Act did not say "may," but "shall," and it was simply asking for justice to ask for the printing in both languages. Mr. Boucher referred to the visit made by the Premier to the school districts in the northern settlements. He trusted that the schools which were standing closed should soon be re-opened, and the children given the advantages of education. He resented certain remarks of Mr. Agnew respecting the character of the people in Batoche district. He heartily endorsed the policy of the Government on the question of Dominion party lines, and wondered why Mr. Mowat had omitted any mention of Batoche district. The Estimates, he was glad to see, made provision for some very much needed roads.

MR. HAULTAIN

rose at a quarter past twelve to close the debate. He said there were just two points which he desired to mention. The first was in respect of the schools in Batoche and surrounding districts. He had visited that part of the country. The schools referred to were situated almost exclusively in half-breed settlements, and the older people had not enjoyed the advantages which he hoped the younger people will have. The difficulty in connection with the schools were, first, a deficiency in the management, and secondly, the difficulty of getting suitable teachers. The teachers must be possessed of the two languages, as an English teacher could make no headway with children who could speak only French. It was suggested to make use of the provision for the appointment of Commissioners to take the management of the districts, and he hoped soon to have in operation again the schools which were closed, and to have the other schools going on more satisfactorily. It was no small thing to have large communities of children deprived of the advantages of education. The communities were large and he found that there were a great number of children, most of the districts having from 25 to 30 children. It was lamentable to think of these children growing up in ignorance. The department was now being to a certain extent successful in an attempt to procure qualified teachers able to speak French. The other point was one raised by Dr. Patrick in connection with provincial status,—in regard to the position the Government would take as to borrowing. In his opinion it would be necessary for the carrying on of provincial business in the Territories that they should have the borrowing power. With vast undeveloped lands and other resources, it would be necessary to discount the future. The power to borrow was not bad in itself. He would be unwilling to go into provincial establishment deprived of any power possessed by the provinces. In the exercise of all the powers, they would take warning by the experiences of sister provinces, but possession of the borrowing power would be absolutely essential. He did not put this as the opinion of the Government, but as his own opinion. Mr. Eakin had seemed to fear precipitancy. He (Mr. Haultain) had certainly not intended to give the impression that provincial establishment could be arranged in any hurry. What he had said was that the question would have to be taken up by the next Assembly. He quite agreed with the view that the country would need education on the question, and it was altogether likely that the country would be asked for an expression of opinion when any negotiations should have reached a certain stage. It was quite likely that any Government in power would wish to get the verdict of the people. He did not want to jump into provincial establishment. But it was time to think about getting ready to negotiate; it was time to conclude that the period when negotiations would have to be entered upon would arrive before the end of the term of the Legislature about to be elected. Mr. Haultain said he was well satisfied with the line the debate had taken. The Government always expected criticism. There would always be differences of opinion. Referring to Mr. Mowat's withdrawal from the House and to the attitude he had taken in the House, the Premier said that the hon. gentleman and himself had had many tilts in debate, had had many differences of opinion which had often been expressed forcibly and to the point; but he would say now to Mr. Mowat and to others that however strongly he had ever felt he believed he could claim that he had never indulged in personalities, and he had at least never willingly been actuated by personal feelings of hostility in any debates or discussions in the House. He was glad that he could part with Mr. Mowat on perfectly friendly terms, and with the best of wishes for his future welfare.

The motion carried and the House resolved into Committee of Supply, passed one item, reported progress, and the House adjourned at 12:30 o'clock.

# FINANCE MINISTER FIELDING'S SUCCESS

## A Favorable Showing After a Long Succession of Bad Years.

### A Surplus on Consolidated Revenue Account Exceeding One and one-half Millions—Mr. Foster's Dismal Prophecies Signally Falsified—Proposal to Banquet Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Aberdeen Before their Departure from Canada.

OTTAWA, Sept. 17th.—There have been several partial and incomplete statements already published of the fiscal year which ended on June 30th last, but the complete returns have only just been made public. The preliminary indications were all favorable and there was every promise of a satisfactory showing, but the most hopeful scarcely anticipated that the final returns would show the splendid surplus of $1,575,881. After the long series of lean years, with their annually recurring deficits and growing debt on the one side, and no hope of relief or sign of commercial elasticity on the other, this is indeed an agreeable change, except, it may be, to the apostles of dire disaster and blue ruin, and to those who believed in their predictions.

FIGURES WORTH GLANCING OVER.

Figures are proverbially dry and uninteresting, but such figures as those contained in Canada's balance sheet for 1897-98 should surely prove good reading to everyone who has the best interest of his country honestly at heart. During the previous four years, the deficits had totalled nearly $6,250,000 but when the present Minister of Finance brought down his first statement a year ago, showing only a $500,000 deficit, after he had paid up hundreds of thousands of dollars of arrears in nearly every branch of the service, and in spite of Mr. Foster's prophecy that the new Government could not possibly get through their first year without a deficit of at least $3,250,000, it was a foretaste of the improved methods that had been introduced; and this, the second year's round-up, more than justifies the hopeful condition which was then beginning to manifest itself.

A SUCCESSFUL PROPHET.

As a prophet Mr. Fielding is a bigger success than his predecessor in the Finance Department, for while Mr. Foster's predictions have all been falsified, every one of Mr. Fielding's estimates have been more than realized. Six months ago in making his budget speech, the Minister of Finance anticipated a revenue of $39,000,000; the returns show that it is $40,275,704, an increase of nearly $2,500,000 over the previous year. The expenditure on the consolidated fund account was estimated by the Minister at $38,750,00, but it is $50,000 less and instead of $550,000 which he anticipated as his surplus last April he has over $1,500,000.

A POINT TO BE REMEMBERED.

So much has been said about the increased expenditure since the accession of the Liberals to power that it is worth while to call attention here to one other point which cannot be too strongly emphasised while Conservative speakers and writers persist in their contention that the slightly increased expenditure is indicative of extravagance. When the Liberals came into office, they found that Mr. Foster had prepared his estimates for the ensuing year and these estimates called for a total,—main and supplementary,—of $41,930,237. When it is remembered with what facility the extra supplementaries were always swelled by additional items in every department, it is not hard to suppose that amount would have been exceeded by two or three million dollars. In addition to this there was a number of heavy expenditures proposed out of the capital fund. Instead however of that $41,930,237, the actual expenditure of that same year, after the new Government assumed control,—main and supplementary and extra supplementary,—was but $38,335,086.

SOME HEAVY EXTRAS.

It should be further borne in mind that the heavy expenditure in connection with the government of the Yukon which is an item hitherto unknown in the public accounts, is included in this total; and another item which is destined to prove an invaluable investment to Canada is the money spent in deepening the St. Lawrence canals. It has been pointed out repeatedly in the Liberal press that expenditure and extravagance are not synonymous terms under the present Government, though they are so often used interchangeably by Oppositionists, and this very material fact cannot be too constantly borne in mind in considering the report of the Finance Minister.

STILL CROAKING OF FAILURE.

The High Joint Commission will resume its deliberations in Quebec next Tuesday and it is confidently hoped that the Commissioners will be prepared with definite proposals upon which action may be had. Though the Commission has been adjourned its critics have not taken a holiday, and numerous lugubrious prophecies of failure have been given publicity. One section has persistently reiterated the assertion that there is no possibility of any reciprocal trade arrangement, another has declared that there is no hope of settling the Alaska boundary dispute; while the Sealing controversy, the Inshore Fisheries trouble, and other momentous issues are declared to be hopelessly involved, and impossible of settlement. It is very satisfactory to realise that the Commissioners are statesmen, who will go about their business and attend to the duties of their high office without regard to those croakers. Patriotic citizens whether of the Empire or the Republic are still firm in the belief that substantial and lasting benefit will result to all parties before the Commission finally adjourns.

THE OTHER FELLOW CLAIMED THAT.

Speaking of the splendid harvest, the marked improvement in trade, and the general condition of prosperity which they are compelled to admit, the Mail and Empire editorial remarked the other day, "It is assumed that the electorate will attribute the blessings from above to the Ottawa people." That is just where the Mail and Empire falls into error. It is not the Liberal party that has shown a weakness in the past, or at any time, for appropriating to itself credit for the benefits conferred by Providence. That is a recognised tenet of Conservative faith, but all that is claimed for the present Administration is that they have honestly done their best to supplement Nature's benefits rather than depreciate them by unnatural laws and restrictions.

SPEED THE PARTING GUESTS.

Preparations are well under way for the farewell functions in connection with the rapidly approaching departure of the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen early in November. It is proposed to tender the Governor-General a banquet in the Russel House as was so successfully done when Lord Lansdowne was leaving, and the Local Council of Women are arranging a social at which the Countess will say good-bye. In other parts of the province and in the east the public manifestations of esteem and regret that the gubernatorial term is closing, will be as general and widespread as they will be gratifying to their Excellencies.

TRYING TO BRACE THEM UP.

Conservative leaders have been actively engaged this warm weather with organisation work in various parts of the Dominion, and the story continues to be industriously circulated that a general Federal election is approaching. Of course it is the unexpected that happens sometimes, but the politician who can see unmistakeable indications that the Government is preparing to appeal to the country has a fine intuition or else a great imagination.

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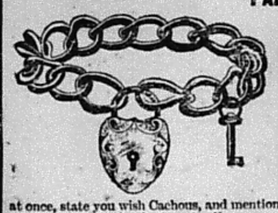

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