

MR. J. D. STEWART, K.C., IN TELLING SPEECH

Shows the Fallacy and Falsehood of Opposition Fault-finding. Every Supposed Argument Advanced by Liberal Oppositionists Shown to be Absolutely Groundless.

MR. J. D. STEWART, who followed Mr. J. J. Johnston, said: Mr. Speaker, we have now come pretty well to the end of the second debate of this session, and of necessity almost all the matters of public interest have been pretty fully discussed, and I cannot be expected at this late stage to say anything more than reiterate statements made. I will therefore not take up very much of the time of this House. During this debate I was struck with the quality of attack of the gentlemen of the Opposition; of the absence of any helpful criticism, anything that is really in the interests of the province; but on the contrary; I was struck with the vast amount of unreasonable fault-finding. Another thing I was struck with was the fatalism which seems to drive those gentlemen to the discussion of those very matters which the present Government have made a success of, and which the Liberals altogether overlooked or completely mismanaged. In the first instance, I might only mention the question of mussel mud. As the honorable member from St. Peter's said, those beds were at St. Peter's for twenty years, while the Opposition held the reins of power. The same necessity then existed, for the use of this mud by the farmers of this province, but nothing was done. Those gentlemen never thought this mud was there, and that it might be of use. When this government came into power they took up the matter, and they have supplied mud to the farmers to the extent of over 10,000 tons a year; and now we hear the criticisms from the other side—we are not doing enough; and this coming from men who never did or thought of doing anything. Take the question of Education. During the twenty years the Liberals were in power, what did they do for the teachers in this province? They did one thing, and that was they cut off the supplements and the teachers were more poorly paid than when they came into power. We have largely increased teachers' supplements, just as largely as the revenue of the province could permit. Owing to the stringency of money, and the high cost of living teachers are now compelled to look for more pay, we appreciate the justice of their demands and are preparing to meet them, we trust adequately but meantime the Opposition are putting out the cry that we bungled this question and are starving the teachers.

Unfair Criticism.

Then, take the Exhibitions. Last year it became necessary to suspend the grant for exhibition because of circumstances existing on account of the war; and I think every fair-minded man would agree with the action of the Government in so doing. But previous to that, what are the comparative records of the two governments with respect to exhibitions? I remember when there were no exhibitions up to 1906 in King's County, under the Opposition. Today we have two exhibitions there. The total annual grant made to exhibitions up to last year, exceeded the grants by the Liberals of over \$2,000. And now they have raised this unreasonable cry because under the particular circumstances that grant was suspended for one year.

Those are two or three examples, but I might multiply them, and you will see there seems to be some evil genius following them and driving them on to those subjects, of which they make an utter failure themselves when they had the reins of power. But the honorable Leader of the Opposition says: "You have no right to measure yourselves by us." The honorable member from Cardigan says: "This government is on trial."

I have no apologies to offer for the government; we are not ashamed of our record, or to place it before the people. But when the record goes before the public it will be a comparative record. The question for the judgment of the people will be whether it will be to the gentlemen of the Opposition or to the present Government, they will entrust the reins of power. It is a matter of comparison, and I say the only way we can measure is by placing the records side by side and deciding which of those parties is to be trusted with the reins of power.

Now these men on the Opposition are bound by the record of the previous Liberal Government, and they are successors in title of that administration.

The honorable Leader of the Opposition and the honorable junior member for Cardigan both deal with the finances, and both attempted to show that the auditor's reports, both that of the Government Auditor and the External Auditor were astray, and that notwithstanding those reports this Government had increased the public debt. I think it would be almost unnecessary for me to say that both of these gentlemen in making that attempt ignominiously failed.

Lady Wood Estate.

There were two matters which both of those gentlemen dealt with. The first is the question of the Lady Wood estate. I presume the facts and circumstances are familiar to this House.

Dame Louisa Augusta Wood was proprietress of certain lands in Lot 67, and other lands in this province. The Government of this province did not take over some of those lands; they remained with that lady, but by mistake the public lands department many years ago sold those lands, believing they had been bought out from the proprietress and received the purchase money, to the amount of \$8,000, or thereabouts. There were other lands of Lady Wood's besides those which were sold, and which belonged to the estate, very much more valuable than those to which I have specifically referred. It was discovered that the Government had improperly sold those first mentioned lands, and it was proposed to reimburse the estate under the apprehension as it

then existed that this province was in duty bound to reimburse the money which they received for those lands; and a statute was passed providing that debentures should be issued for the purpose of paying it off.

The Opposition raised the contention that this was a liability for which the present Government was responsible. This liability, if any, had existed very many years before. It was created when the money was taken by the Government for lands which did not belong to it. This statute created no liability; it only provided a means of paying off a liability, if one existed. But this is not all. As I have said before, the funds under a trust in Dame Louisa Augusta Wood's will were to be used for relief of Indians, and the blind, and for many years this province has been contributing to those institutions. Recently it was found that the province had really contributed more toward these institutions, and which would be properly chargeable against this trust than the amount the Government had received from the land they improperly sold. And upon the readjustment taking place, instead of liability being against the province, there will be something coming to the province. I think that completely disposes of that.

The Liberal Deficit.

There was another argument raised by those two gentlemen. That is, there is an alleged difference between the amount due the bank by this province according to the outside auditor's report, and the amount shown due by a letter published in the auditor's report, and signed by the manager of the Bank of Montreal, which Bank has its account with this province. The letter from the manager of the Bank is at page 9.

If we turn to the Provincial Auditor's statement we find the amount due the Bank as shown then is \$366,935.51, a difference of somewhere about \$30,000; and the honorable gentleman wishes this House, and the people in this province to draw the inference that we are that much more in debt. They know the balance struck by the manager of the Bank was the amount actually shown as due on the books at the bank on the date the balance was struck, with the money actually paid into the bank, and cheques charged against it, and it is \$30,000 greater than the amount shown by the auditor. The auditor made his audit in April, following, and he did not take the Bank balance as the Bank showed it, because that is not the actual balance in making up the accounts of the province. Their assets belonging to the year then ending, had not all been collected at the 31st December, but when we reach the April following, and those amounts had been collected the outside auditor properly gathered up all those items which had been paid, belonging to that fiscal year; and carried them back and placed them where they belonged and struck a correct balance which actually was due to the Bank at that time. Those gentlemen certainly know the difference.

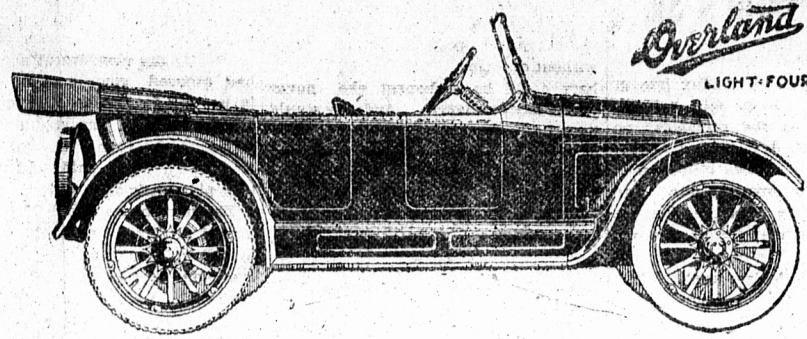
The Bank would not interfere with the balance on the 31st December. Suppose there was no Bank at all. When the accounts were kept in the treasury and payments made direct, how did it balance then? By calculating revenue and expenditure that belonged to that year, and striking a balance accordingly. I think I have made those points as clear as is possible. I do not think any further explanation is needed.

My honorable friend from Cardigan further claimed "that the actual debt in 1911 was \$1,008,000. We are quite satisfied with this account. It is arrived at by crediting the outstanding assets at that time. They were practically useless, but we are not particular; what was true then is true now, and the calculations made then must be followed out today, and we will find the debt is \$1,008,000, and we still have a reduction of debt. Those are the only matters taken by those two gentlemen to support their argument, that the auditor's accounts are not correct. Having failed there, they undertake to attack both auditors personally.

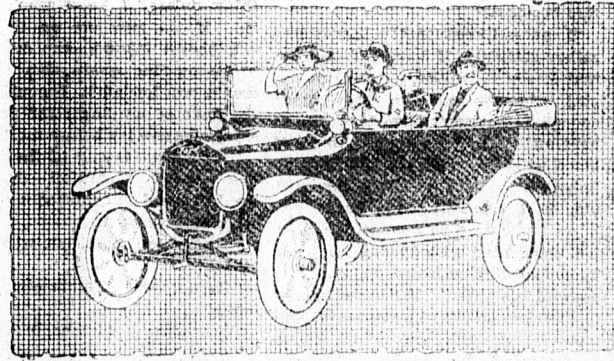
The honorable Leader of the Opposition says "you cannot trust you public auditor." It seems to me that the public auditor is just as worthy of trust and bears as good a name in the eyes of this province as the honorable Leader of the Opposition. He is a gentleman standing high in this province for many years, a man of good ability, and I say it is very poor policy and it will not look well in the eyes of this province, for the honorable gentleman to justify his criticism by a personal attack on the public auditors. He has no ground on which to base that.

As my honorable friend from Cardigan would say "There must be something behind it." I have heard that gentleman ran an election in the Bedeque district many years ago; he was not successful, but he made it warm for others, and perhaps there may be something in that. Both those honorable gentlemen attacked the outside auditor; what reason

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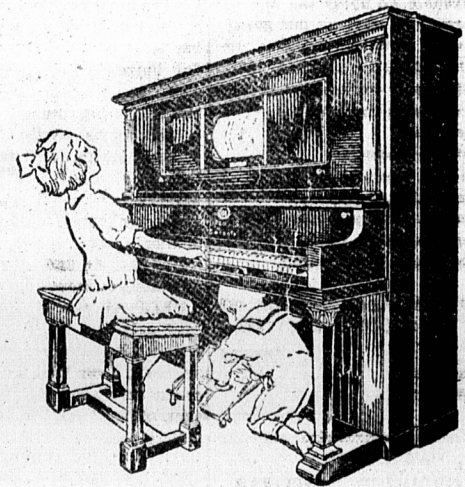
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