

# MR. JEREMIAH BLANCHARD SPEAKS IN BUDGET DEBATE

(Continued from page nine)

Resuming the debate after recess, Mr. Blanchard said that when the prospectus sent out by the Government to the bond markets was prepared in 1923 the outside audit or employed by the Government in Charlottetown and at work, and his statement bears date the 15th of October. The ink was not dry on that prospectus when Mr. Blanchard's report was in. How then could the Government excuse itself? It would have been far better had the hon. member for Charlottetown never mentioned it.

Hon. Dr. McMILLAN: Better for you! (Laughter.) In 1924 the External Auditor places the debt of the province at \$1,574,000, continued Mr. Blanchard. The Public Accounts Committee accepted that statement. But in 1925, in the Journals of the House, what does the committee say. It was composed of the same men, with the exception of one. They say that the outstanding tax collections proved to be more of a liability than an asset. Mr. Blanchard could believe that they had some difficulty in collecting the whole of the poll tax, but in the campaign of 1923 the Conservatives said that every cent due to the Government would be collected. And here we have the admission of the Committee that the best part of that \$215,000 has not been collected, and is more in the nature of a liability.

Mr. Blanchard wished to make a brief review of the deeds of both parties from 1877 to the present time. The Liberals, he said, built all the public buildings, the Court House, the Asylum, the annex, the Infirmary, the Prince of Wales College, the steamer Hillsboro. Where are the public buildings that the Conservatives built? Can they be seen, can they be located in any part of the province? We have two buildings that have been bought by the Conservatives and they have been paid for out of the agricultural grant from Ottawa;—the agricultural building here and another one in Summerside—two old wooden buildings that are no credit to any Government. Winter navigation was made by the Liberals when they placed the steamer Northern Light on the route. Next we have the steamer Murray branch, the Murray Harbor branch railway, the Hillsboro Bridge—

A MEMBER: The car ferry! (Laughter.) The Liberals gave us the standard gauge from Summerside to Georgetown, Mr. Blanchard said. He hoped that the standard gauge would be put on the Murray Harbor branch in a short time. Besides these things the Liberals got an increase of \$100,000 to our subsidy. What do we find under the Conservatives? The very first thing they did was to draw \$200,000 from the capital that we had at Ottawa, thereby cutting a loss of \$5,000 every year for all time to come. They got an increase of \$20,000 to our subsidy; they got \$100,000 under the Matheson Government; they got the car ferry (applause) and the pier. As regards the car ferry, the Conservatives sold the steamer Minto and the Earl Grey and got enough money to pay for the car ferry. (Laughter.) What happened? Just as soon as the Dominion Government gave us the car ferry in 1911 our freight rates began to rise, and they raised and raised until they came next to prohibitive.

MEMBERS: Prohibition! (Laughter.) In other words, continued Mr. Blanchard, they are making us pay for the car ferry and the improvements they gave us in the shape of freight rates. During all the years that the Liberals got the Murray Harbor Branch, the Hillsboro Bridge, and so on, the freight rates were not raised. That is the difference between the two parties. It is left today to a good Liberal Government at Ottawa to reduce the freight rates in the Maritime Provinces by twenty per cent.

Mr. Blanchard next took up Prohibition. In looking back over the last fifty years or more he well remembered when we had the license system on the Island. He was living in Rustico then. The time came when the people of Rustico, New London and Hope River would have to look out to get home before dark, or they would meet trouble on the way. Things got so interesting that he knew of a young girl who was shot one Sunday afternoon by a couple of drunken boys, when she was coming home from church. He remembers that when a young boy was shot at

Rochford Square here in broad daylight. That was the state of affairs under license. Both churches, Catholic and Protestant, united in order to put this curse down. Bishop McIntyre accompanied by Mr. Murray, addressed meetings in every part of the province, calling upon the people to give all the assistance they possibly could to put the curse down. He well remembered the last remarks of Father McGillivray before the electors. In his closing words he said, "I hope on the evening of the election that the Scott Act will be carried by a handsome majority, and I will clap my hands and dance with joy." The Scott Act was carried. Things went fairly well for a while. But the rum sellers, or the bootleggers, as we call them, began to find ways of selling. In other words it drove the rum from the licensed houses into a great many bad holes in this province where people gathered, drinking and carrying on all night. People got dissatisfied with the law, and Prohibition was introduced, which prohibited the entry or the sale of liquor of every description in the province.

The hon. member for Egmont Bay made the statement the other night, which is very true, that we are free men, and we can take a drink of whiskey whenever we want to. We have that right, without taking any harm. Mr. Blanchard member also said the principle of Prohibition is wrong, inasmuch as it denies the right of a citizen to take what he has a right to get. Mr. Blanchard was with him there, too. That was all very fine, but there is another side of the question. Unfortunately, there is a class of people that makes an abuse of liquor, and something has to be done. It is not possible to put them all in jail or to fine them. If you fine the father of a family who spends all his earnings in drink, what then? It makes matters worse. If you put him in jail, does it make it any better for his family? The only way is to keep Prohibition from him. That is why Prohibition was introduced.

Mr. Blanchard was introduced in the field he would stand by Prohibition, and if defeated he would not be ashamed to show himself before the public. Something was said by some of the previous speakers about hypocrisy. Mr. Blanchard did not know to whom they applied that term. Did they apply it to the clergymen who worked so hard and meant so well in favor of the Scott Act and also of Prohibition? Mr. Blanchard understood that under the proposed new law all that will be required will be a certificate, and you can walk in and call for what amount your certificate be he did not know what was it not opening the door to men who are addicted to drink? That is wrong. There should be no law that would legalize the sale of liquor in that shape.

Who is asking for this change from the Prohibition Law? Is there any society from one end of the Island to the other that is asking for a change? Is there a respectable body of men who have asked for it? Who, then, is asking for the change, he would like to ask the Leader of the Government. More than that, he had been told by Government speakers that they know home-brew being made, and perjury in the Courts. The Attorney General is the man who is supposed to enforce the law. If the members who made that statement are correct, what are we to infer? If they know of places where liquor is sold or moonshine is made, why don't they report it? "Give me," said Mr. Blanchard, the name of one place where liquor is sold or manufactured, and in forty-eight hours it will be put out of commission.

A MEMBER: Muddy Creek. (Laughter.) They say things are in the worst shape possible, continued Mr. Blanchard. Yet the House is in session. Why does not the Government introduce its legislation now instead of allowing twelve months to go by? The leader of the Government has a large majority at his back, and if he has a law which he says is in the interests of temperance and morality why doesn't he introduce it now? He shouldn't hesitate a moment. But it was just an election dodge, Mr. Blanchard argued. The Minister of Agriculture tendered his resignation some time ago and met with defeat in the federal field, and the Government has not had the courage to call a bye-election to fill the vacancy because they thought they would get defeated. There was not the ghost of a chance to win the next general election unless they brought this on, because the next election is going to be fought on the "wet" and "dry" question. The finances of the country and everything else will be left overboard, and that will be the fight. The liquor question should not be made a political football. By what process of reasoning can the Government arrive at the conclusion that their law is going to be better enforced than Prohibition? This liquor question is before every government of them up to the present time has been able to pass a satisfactory law. Take the Province of Quebec; go to the United States; go to any part of the world. Not a Government has been able to pass a better law than we have at the present time. No matter what law is introduced, it will be hard to put it in force. Why? What is the trouble nowadays? That is the trouble nowadays. We cannot depend on the men employed to put the law into force; that is one trouble. Won't the same trouble take place under a new law? That is one of the reasons why Prohibition has not done what it should have done, or what the people ex-

pected it to do. But in any case, comparing the state of affairs now and in time past, children can go aboard the trains at any place and they are safe; women can go to tea-parties and they are safe. Was it so in the years gone by? Not by any means. Why all this talk of people knowing where liquor is sold? Mr. Blanchard just wanted somebody to give him the name of a place and he would put it out of commission in forty-eight hours. But no one will tell him where they are. (Laughter.) Every man in the Province is an instrument to administer justice in some way. If someone knows where liquor is sold against the law and does not report it, what kind of a man is he? How many men were like the member for Egmont Bay and could take a glass of liquor and see no harm in it? That was all right; Mr. Blanchard agreed with that; but those men will not in any case report where liquor is sold because they want to get some themselves.

How many laws have we in this Province that are put in force to the letter; that are not disobeyed? Take the question of smuggling. It is not only liquor that is smuggled. Take the report of the Commission of Enquiry and what do we find? Everything else besides liquor is smuggled. Would you abolish the Customs laws for that? Take the fishing regulations, the close season for fishing in summer. Is it obeyed to the letter? Not by any means! Do we want to cancel that? And is it because Prohibition has not put a stop entirely to drinking that we want to put away?

Under the Bell Government there were 100 prescriptions allowed to each doctor. This Government, Mr. Blanchard said, is giving them an unlimited number. That is the way they are enforcing Prohibition. They say they want to work in the interest of Temperance; and yet they are making it easier to get liquor. They say, "We will give the people permits, and whoever acts the blackguard his name will be cancelled." Where will the bootlegger be then? Just as soon as they put one man on the black-list, that is a customer for the bootlegger or the smuggler can't get it. Mr. Blanchard professed to know a little about how boys act with liquor, and men too. He never saw a young boy or a man buy a bottle of liquor and drink it by himself. He had known men call at ten o'clock at night and rouse out their friends to give them a drink. Will the boy who drinks have any trouble getting it? You say he will be reported? You are afraid to report the man that sells now and will you report the man who gives liquor to the boy of eighteen or fifteen? No matter what law we have there will be trouble, and the best way Mr. Blanchard could see was to stick by Prohibition and ask everyone to lend a hand to see it enforced.

He blamed the Government for not doing its duty because offenders against the Prohibition law serving terms in the Jail had been pardoned. Was that helping Prohibition any? Mention has been made of the grants made by the present Government to the Red Cross Society and the Orphanages. Mr. Blanchard professed himself altogether in accord with that. But the Government was going to introduce an Act that will counteract all the good that the Red Cross is doing. Doctors will tell us that the greatest cause that leads to tuberculosis is liquor; that in the case of pneumonia beware of the alcoholic heart. This Government, Mr. Blanchard argued, wants to make it easier for men to get it. They are opening up a road to the Lunatic Asylum, and another to the Jail. Under present conditions, if a young man comes home drunk, what do his parents say? They are not at all pleased. If he got it from the bootlegger or in an illegal way, and if they take pains they will find out where he got it. But if he comes home with a bottle of Government booze with the permit from the Government on it, what can they say?

Mr. Blanchard announced that this line of argument was going to be his canvass among the women of his district. The Government, he believed, has made a mistake. They have launched their bomb too early, and there is a reaction away with. In closing Mr. Blanchard moved that all the words after the word "That" in the resolution now before the House (the resolution to go into supply) be struck out and that by way of amendment a resolution thanking the MacKenzie King Government for implementing the report of the Duncan Commission be substituted. The Speaker ruled that the motion was out of order. Mr. Blanchard was followed in the budget debate by Hon. Mr. McEwen.

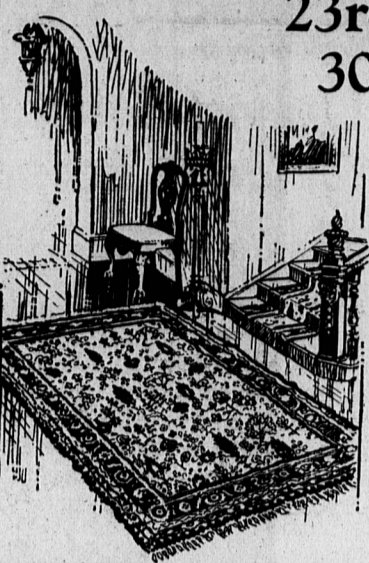
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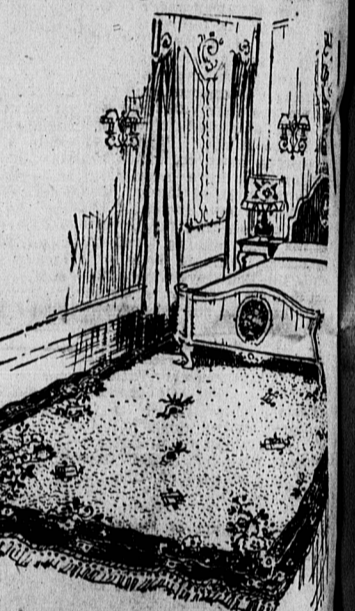
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