

HON. H. D. MCGEEN SPEAKS ON BUDGET DEBATE

(Continued from page 1)

Liberal Party Record

Trade Opportunities

In my visit to the various islands I examined the blue books very carefully. My report, I think, will show the trend of the West Indies trade—the amount of what they buy, where they buy it and where they sell their stuff. The great bulk of West Indies products that come to Canada is molasses, sugar, coffee, and rum. There are possibilities of a much greater trade with this country, but it will take some time to work it up and it is a very much bigger question than we imagine. In my opinion, it should never be a party question. It is a question for the biggest men in Canada, irrespective of party, to undertake.

I understand that tenders have been called under this new Federal treaty for ships which will cost about \$9,000,000.

I have my doubts whether any tender will be received, unless it is for a very large amount of money. It is not so easy a trade, or as convenient, as some imagine. The Royal Mail lines go down there and they get a subsidy of about \$340,000 a year for carrying the mails. They have three passenger ships and one freight ship. A piece of business is a ship a week to the Eastern Group, and a ship every three weeks to the Western Group, besides two others owned by a private company.

If the time permitted I could tell you a lot about the different islands, as they impressed me, but I will leave that and go on to other matters. My report will cover many details that cannot be reached in a Budget speech.

I will say this, that publicity received, whether good humored or otherwise, has caused me to reconsider a certain matter. I said last year that I intended to go out of politics at the end of this term. If I am spared and have my health, you will find me in the game again. And if I go in the game I am coming back. (Laughter and applause.)

I don't think I need refer to any more figures. I think the speeches on this side in that respect have been quite a sufficient answer to all we have had from those on the opposite side. What I propose to speak of will be remembered by a nod many here tonight, but the younger people will not remember it, and I am going to speak for a while for their information. It is the business of the Opposition to criticize the Government's business to defend what they have done. That is quite proper; I have no objection to a lot that has been said by the Opposition, but I would like to have heard a little more constructive criticism and a little less petty fault finding. If we could get a few more suggestions for the betterment of matters it would be very much more in order than a lot of the Billingsgate scolding we have been hearing—that is about all I am going to say.

A Little Political History.

Away back in 1891 a Liberal Government came into power in this Province, and they remained in power for twenty years, until 1911. And in those twenty years there never was a year in which there was a surplus. In one year alone they had a deficit of \$198,000. They came in with a deficit of about \$168,000, and they left with about \$1,000,000 in 1912, when the Matheson Government came into power.

The Matheson Government remained in power from 1912 till about 1919. In 1907, the Liberal party, then in power, sent a delegation to Ottawa for the purpose of getting increased subsidy. They got nothing. But very shortly after the Matheson Government came into office, and in fulfillment of their promise, while in Opposition, they went to Ottawa and presented our claims so strongly and convincingly that we got an addition to our revenue of \$100,000 a year, besides other concessions.

I was in this House when the late Bell Government were in Opposition, and I heard their story. It sounded very nice, but they got into power after a while, and when they did they went back on almost every promise they made. They told us in this House that there was plenty of money to pay the teachers their extra salaries if they would only spend it aright. They were going to do away with the School Salary. They didn't do away with it, but they got a lot of revenue out of selling school supplies to the people of the Province. They promised concessions to returned soldiers—and we know what they did. They promised to reduce salaries—and we know what happened. They promised to help the fishermen. They promised to push our claims at Ottawa. They denounced the "nefarious" highway scheme that the Tory party was going to foist upon the country. And what did they do? They raised their salaries, they put on a double tax, they more than doubled the "speedway" they started to build in a more expeditious manner when in Opposition. During the Matheson regime the first surplus, I think, for forty or fifty years in this Province was made. That Government built public services possible and kept many public works, and they didn't issue debentures to pay for them, either. They paid for them out of revenues. I think history will show that the Matheson-Arsenault Government was one of the most business-like governments that ever ruled in this Province—when his-

have not enough money, and the question is, where are we going to get it? I think the present Government is just as able and just as willing to go to Ottawa and present our claims for additional subsidy as any Government heretofore.

I was particularly pleased with the business-like stand taken by the Premier on this matter. He struck the right note when he said that conditions have changed since Confederation, and that new arrangements must be made. The Fathers of Confederation in 1873 had a dream of a prosperous and progressive Maritime Provinces. They had no idea that after fifty years we would be strangled to death, as has happened. Things have changed since that day. We then had ship-building going on here and in Nova Scotia. Today steel ships have taken the place of the wooden ships, and the ship-yards are vacant in Nova Scotia as they are in this Province. We had lots of manufacturers turning out our requirements—furniture, factories, canneries, wagon shops, and places for making nearly all the agricultural implements required. We had a population of nearly 100,000.

Since that time, as the Premier pointed out, our industries have gone West, our industries have died out, and our young people are leaving us. Nova Scotia is just the same, only they have natural resources where we have none. The only source of taxes in this country is the farmers, the workmen, the fishermen; and they are taxed as much as they can stand. And this Government has no intention whatever of increasing the taxes upon our people.

It is in the homes of our people that lies the foundation of our success as a country. If our people are prosperous we have a prosperous country; but if they are burdened down with heavy taxes, they will become discontented, and they will want to go away. We cannot afford to let them go. The best blood of our island is leaving, though we are hoping some day to get them back. In Nova Scotia the situation is the same. It is stated that there are more Maritime people in the Eastern States than in the Maritime Provinces. And it is said that there are over half a million Canadians in New York City.

Maritime Sentiment

I have been gathering some clippings from Upper Canadian newspapers regarding the situation in the Maritime Provinces. They say the talk about Secession is meaningless; but I believe if a plebiscite were taken on the question in the Maritime Provinces today these people would get out of Confederation, but they are pushing us. We must be loyal to our families and our homes. Our ancestors left the Old Country, not because they didn't love the old land, but because they wanted to live and prosper. We have Secession now; our young men are going every day across the line into a foreign country. Isn't that Secession? This is a matter that is of very much more importance to this Province than the small, quibbling questions about whether we are giving the Asylum inmates too much tea or not.

A Challenge to the Opposition

If my hon. friends are sincere in their criticism, why do they not oppose specific items of expenditure when it comes to a discussion of the Estimates? Let them start at the beginning. There is a certain amount voted for the administration of Justice. Why don't they move that a certain amount be struck out, if it is not wanted? Why then in that whole expenditure last year that was wrong? Will there be any this year? If so, we will expect you to object, and to give your reason for it. Take the items of County Court and Jails in the same way.

Here is a big item—Agricultural Department. Can't some of our good friends point out an item in this Department which the Minister of Agriculture should strike out? The Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader could tell us.

MR. DENNIS: Mr. Speaker, since the gentleman has referred to me, I haven't got a copy of the Estimates.

MR. MCGEEN: You haven't got the Public Accounts in your desk? You had them today. Tell us what items of last year you would strike out this year.

MR. DENNIS: You are on the job now. Go on, (Laughter).

MR. MCGEEN: Yes, but I want information. I want to know where you would economize. I would like to know what items in this year you would strike out, or if you can't strike any of them out, why do you keep up this general, petty fault-finding, and scolding, like an old fish-wife? Go over the whole list, over every item in every department, and see if you can strike out anything! (Applause.)

MR. DENNIS: (Did not reply.)

This is the expenditure we must meet. We cannot let the public services go down. But still my hon. friends will come here and say: "You are spending too much money, and you have nothing to show for it." The people know the difference. They know that the business of the Province is being carried on as carefully as we can do it. I would like to know where you could get a more genuinely representative body of men than you can find on this side of the House. We have farmers and fishermen, doctors, lawyers—and plenty of potentialities. (Laughter and applause.)

I will say this, that I never saw a more earnest body of men sitting down at a table to discuss public affairs than the present Executive. They are doing the very best they can to give this country the best possible public services possible and keep the expenditure down as low as possible. And what more can any Government do? They can't starve the public services; the business of the country must be carried on and the money must be found.

The Vital Question

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Provincial Claims

Our share, as a Province, of the cost of the railways of Canada is nearly \$30,000,000. Figure it out, and you find that we are paying for the railways in Canada! There are many other ways in which we have been contributing to Confederation. Take in 1912 when they took over 700,000 square miles of the hinterland of Canada, of which we own a part, and divided it between Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba. One proportion of that would be over 7,000 square miles, and who can tell what the value of that will be in mineral wealth and otherwise?

What do you think of that? I can tell Premier King that there are people in the Maritime Provinces whose ancestors are just as loyal as his, and who are thinking seriously of Secession; not that they want to, but because they are forced to do so. There is no use talking; we have come to the parting of the ways. And I believe, if our Maritime members go to Ottawa in the right spirit, and put the facts up to the Dominion Government, they will get the sympathy not only of Ontario and Quebec but also of our Progressive friends in the West. But there is no use in mouthing conditions down here. I have gone through towns in Nova Scotia and I have discussed our situation with people in all walks of life, and it would surprise you, the Secession feeling, in people whose ancestors for generations back were British in the core. The situation is getting very serious indeed.

Fisheries.

I have always held the opinion that we have not given the same attention to Fisheries as we have to other occupations in this Province. In my opinion there should be a Department of Fisheries here in connection with the Department of Agriculture, so that something could be done for this industry. Let me quote from the "Canadian Fisherman":

"In Canada few of us realize that there are about one in seven of our population earning their living by fishing, in the United States the proportion is about one in every eighty. The industry is worth to the country some thirty-nine million dollars and yet we have very little in the way of knowledge so that we may be able to compete with all other fish producing countries in the marketing of our produce."

"Why is it more necessary to give the cultivation of the land, or rather those interested in it, every opportunity of acquiring technical knowledge and leave those associated with the collection of food from the waters in ignorance? We are told by some that the fishermen do not want technical education, and further, that it is unnecessary for the large staff associated with our various Federal and Provincial Departments to gain the knowledge one would have thought so necessary to their calling."

"Finally we are at a period in our country's development when the future must be considered more carefully than in the past, so far as our natural resources are concerned, we must not let our raw materials drift into the hands of foreigners just because we are too indolent to acquire the necessary knowledge to develop them ourselves. We have already several examples in our fishing industry of this already. What do we do with our fish waste of some 260,000 tons annually, when industries are calling for high grade oils for the drug, soap and other trades for glycerine for explosives, feed for our cattle and pigs and fertilizer for our soils, all obtainable from this waste; have we got to

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That shows, to my mind, the spirit that is spreading through a great many thinking people in Upper and Western Canada. I could quote many other articles along the same line, all recognizing that the Maritimes have valid claims because we have not had the same success out of Confederation.

Here is the statement of the General Manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia, in a recent report:

"I am not unmindful of the fact that these Maritime Provinces, with which our Bank is proud to be so closely associated, have not enjoyed their full share of that development. The reasons for this comparatively slow growth, which are now the subject of public discussion, cannot be entered into here, but these provinces must be under certain disabilities which are not adequately appreciated by the rest of Canada, and are not attributable either to lack of natural resources or to lack of initiative on the part of the people, seems to me to admit of no doubt. It is highly important that in bringing this question before the people of Canada, the subject should be discussed with due regard to the interests of the whole country. Sectional difficulties will be overcome, not by any province playing a lone hand, but by recognizing that we are each a part of a great whole and that in this country of conflicting interests, there must be a certain amount of give and take in the settlement of provincial questions. On that basis and if demands are just, as I believe they will be, these Maritime Provinces can, I feel sure, count on receiving fair play from the other provinces of Canada."

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