

THE OPPOSITION LEADER REVEALS ALARMING SITUATION

Alarming Situation Revealed In Analysis Of Public Accounts By The Leader Of The Opposition

(Continued from page 1)

ferent story, if he would. He could tell how many accounts are scattered throughout the length and breadth of this Province that should have been paid last year and have not been paid and are not included in the Public Accounts. We do not know what they are, because they have done away with the External Audit. That is the situation.

Hon. Mr. McIntyre: "Didn't that happen in your time?"

Hon. Mr. Stewart: "Perhaps it did, but we disclosed it in the External Auditor's report. We were honest enough to show it."

Hon. Mr. McIntyre: We can't disclose anything that is not in.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: "Did my hon. friend disclose the expenditure of over \$13,000 in his department for building the 'highway' which bears his own name? What about that? That was completed before the 31st of December. Why was it not put in the Public Accounts? How many other bills that we have not heard of are scattered around? Why do we not get a list of those things? They don't want to disclose them! That is why they did away with the External Audit, the only protection the public had against these gentlemen who are so fond of spending money. (Applause.)"

Hon. Mr. McIntyre: No other Province in Canada has an outside audit.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: My hon. friend has the bad habit of interrupting and making statements that he knows nothing about. He tries to demonstrate knowledge that he does not possess. As I said, we have not the information that should be before this House in dealing with the Public Accounts. We know, by a statement tabled the other day, that work of some kind had been undertaken under the federal employment scheme and that provincial revenues had been expended on those projects in order to make the federal grant available; but we do not know how much, and perhaps we never will, at least so long as these gentlemen are in power.

That is the situation. We do not know where this Province stands with regard to its indebtedness.

INTEREST CHARGES

There is another matter in connection with the Public Accounts to which I wish to refer. That is the matter of interest charges. I shall table the figures just as I find them given here. The interest, of course, is payable by the Province on its indebtedness. That indebtedness may be in bonds, or bank overdraft, or short loans; but they are all lumped together as interest charges, and of course, the amount of interest should indicate the amount of the indebtedness.

With these facts in mind, let us view the financial situation. In 1926 the last full year of Conservative administration, the interest was \$74,544. In 1929 it was \$74,997, a slight increase of some \$300. We thought at the time that that was very strange. We knew that the debt of this Province had increased tremendously in that time and by searching the Public Accounts we found some entries that were not carried into this column at all that would have increased considerably the amount as given. But what do we find in the Accounts for 1930? Here it is, in the columns which they say are perfectly correct: "Interest on debentures loan and bank, \$148,137."

What a jump in one year from \$74,997 to \$148,137. Multiply seventy-four by two and it gives us one hundred and forty-eight—so that, according to their own blue-books, the interest on the indebtedness of the Province has doubled in one year!

Some "Fire":

Isn't that some "fire"? Is it any wonder there is some "smoke"? Is it any wonder my hon. friends have been trying to "smother" it? The figures I have quoted are from their own Public Accounts. What will the taxpayers of this Province think when they see that comparison? There was a member of this House with whom I had the honor to sit some years ago. He never made very long speeches, but there was one thing he used to tell the Bell Government on many occasions. That was, that "where there is interest there is debt." And after all, there is a lot of truth in it. If we apply that to this comparison of the debt of the

Province, on the basis of an interest payment of \$74,997 as against \$148,137, we find that it has doubled in one year. That is the situation as we find it right on the face of their own blue books.

I shall now make a comparison of the increase in debt under the past two governments. My hon. friend the leader of the House had a great deal to say—when he got away from The Guardian—about "assets." That was his principal topic apart from the newspaper criticism that bothered him so much. The same thing was dealt with last year by his predecessor in a most farcical manner. He capitalized, among other things, the roads that had been built. Now, I can quite understand, in the case of a merchant or tradesman owning property, that if he wishes to ascertain how he stands he will place a valuation on his stock and carry the figures over as assets. But why does he do that? Obviously because he can realize on them. That is what is done when you are winding up the estate of a bankrupt or a deceased person. You make an inventory and you value the assets because you have to realize upon them; you have to convert them into cash. But do we contemplate that this Province is going to convert its roads, its ferries, its bridges, its public buildings and all those things into cash? It is a strange suggestion, Mr. Speaker; but I am afraid if this Government remains much longer in power, adding to the interest charges as it has been doing during the past year, that we may have to do even that,—we may have to go under the hammer!

Valueless Statement

But let us not anticipate any such catastrophe. As a matter of fact, a statement of that kind, in working out the financial standing of the Province, is not worth anything. It is of no value whatever, because we do not contemplate selling our gravelled roads and other public works. What would we get for them if we did? A calculation of that kind does not help us in any way to pay off our debt. If the debt of this Province is paid off, let us hope and trust it will not be done by the selling of this old historic building or even our gravelled roads. We realize clearly enough, that it will have to be paid off by the people of this Province.

A TEST OF SINCERITY

If my hon. friend really believed that those expenditures are "assets" why did he not include them as such in the Public Accounts? Last night, in the course of his speech, he held up a sheet of paper, and said: "Here are the assets." His predecessor, a year ago, did the same thing. We do not know what was on that paper; we were not taken into his confidence to that extent. Perhaps there was nothing on it for all we know. But if my hon. friend believes that that is the proper method, why do they not take the taxpayers into their confidence and place those "assets" with their valuation in the Public Accounts so that we can all see it? The fact that they do not do it is the very best evidence that they do not believe in it themselves. It is simply a piece of camouflage, simply an excuse put up to "get by" with on the Budget debate.

I wish now to deal with the figures given in the Public Accounts, and I do not think they will be disputed by my hon. friends. The leader of the Government gave one set of figures last night. That was the increase in debt during our time, from Sept. 1923 to Aug. 12, 1927. These figures are taken from the External Audit. My hon. friends seem to have been disgusted with the Poole and Scarth audit and they did away with the outside audit altogether. However, the increase in public debt, roughly, was \$413,000 under Conservative regime.

INCREASE IN DEBT

Now let us take their period from 1927 to the end of 1930. I take the debt, as shown by their own auditors Messrs. Poole and Scarth as of Aug. 12, 1927, and I take the debt as shown by the Provincial

Auditor in this year's report and by subtracting one from the other I find that they have increased the public debt by \$758,994.

"But," my hon. friend says, "look what we did; look at our assets." Well, I have already expressed my opinion with regard to the "assets." He instanced gravelled roads; but I may remind him that he did not build the gravelled roads from that expenditure; he built them on borrowed money.

Not The Whole Story

But that is not the whole story. They went behind almost double the amount that we did, according to the figures of their own auditors; but what of the rest of the story? It is indicated in the increase they had in their revenues during that period.

In the first place, from the federal subsidy increase of \$125,000 and railway taxation \$40,000, they got during their period of office a total of \$660,000 and according to my calculation of what they received from gasoline tax and these other sources of revenue which we did not enjoy to the same extent, they received over \$800,000. In all they received over \$1,500,000 in revenue more than we ever got. We did get \$80,000 in railway taxes; but deducting that and adding the amount that they went behind in those years, we find that they went back to the tune of over two million dollars, altogether, during their term of office.

And yet, as I said before, we do not know all the story, because we have not got all the indebtedness. We do not know what it amounted to. I mentioned one item not accounted for in the Public Accounts, namely, the McIntyre Highway. How many other accounts are there of this nature, from one end of the Province to the other? My hon. friends talk about what they have done. After all, what has this Province to show? We have this pile of road machinery; we have some culverts and bridges, but we had those before they ever attained power. Governments have been carrying on that kind of work for many years in this Province, not only concrete bridges and culverts, but more permanent structures. So there is nothing in that contention.

A Sorry Record

That, as it appears to me, is practically the whole situation with regard to the finances. There is the record of this Government. They spent over two million dollars more during their term than we did, either by borrowing money or from increased sources of revenue which we did not enjoy to the same extent; and yet my hon. friend will say that we "bought the people with their own money,"—a most improper thing for a gentleman in his position to say, because it is as far from the truth as it is possible to be.

There is one thing that my hon. friend does not seem to understand, and that is that a Government should keep its word to the electors. He does not know what that means. He knows this, however, that when we came in we promised to get increased subsidy, and we told the people that if we got this increased subsidy we would give them some relief from taxation. And because we wanted to keep our promise we did it. (Applause.)

Let me tell my hon. friend that when he criticises us for that sort of thing he should begin to look at his own record within the last few weeks. He should not talk about "buying the people" or catering to the people before an election, when he is giving consideration to a Ticket of Leave Act, when he goes back to Statute Labour and all those things that are so plainly an attempt on this Government's part to buy the people—not even with their own money, but just fooling them.

I have already discussed governmental housekeeping when I was dealing with the revenue and expenditure. I think it is only fair, however, that I should make a comparison between the last year that our government was in power and the past year, 1930, which will be last full year under this parliamentary term. In that respect the years correspond to one another, and I shall take the classification of expenditures as they are shown in the Public

each department for the corresponding years.

STRIKING COMPARISON

Let us begin first with the Administration of Justice. In 1926 the expenditure in this department was \$37,199. Last year it was \$49,795,—or an increase of over \$12,000. Why that should be so I do not know. I will venture the statement that there was not any better enforcement in spite of increased expenditure.

Department of Agriculture: In 1926 the expenditure was \$35,393. Last year it was \$58,332. Of course, the Prime Minister will say that he did so much; but I do not think the people will stand behind him in that statement.

Premier Lea: Does my hon. friend mean to say that that is for Agriculture?

Hon. Mr. Stewart: It is in your department.

Premier Lea: But my hon. friend knows that we are paying for public health that was not paid for in that and for school teachers, for inspectors.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: Where is he getting the money for school inspectors?

Premier Lea: Well, we are getting it out of the technical grant.

(Continuing amid further interruptions by the Premier, Mr. Stewart insisted on his right to the floor. He had not interrupted the leader of the House when he was speaking and he demanded the same courtesy.)

Premier Lea: Your skin is tender.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: Not so tender as some of my friends'. It is not so tender that I would spend an hour in attacking a newspaper. (Applause.)

Department of Education: In 1926 the expenditure was \$280,669. Last year it was \$308,890; another increase.

Public Works: We expended \$122,539. Last year—note this—the expenditure was \$325,486. This is an enormous increase, practically three times the expenditure in 1926. I shall deal with this department later.

Falconwood Hospital: We spent \$106,579 in 1926. Last year the expenditure was \$126,278. Yet there were fewer patients last year, and there was no extraordinary expenditure that I can see in looking over the Accounts. But there is an increase of practically \$20,000.

Then we come to that item with which I have already dealt: Interest. It was \$74,646 in 1921; last year it was \$147,137. I need say no more on this subject; the figures speak very much louder than any words that I can use.

Legislative Grants: This is not a large expenditure but it is a place where money can be spent for travelling expenses by gentlemen who like to travel around at the expense of the Government. The legislative grants in 1926 were \$16,419; last year they were \$30,476, or practically double.

Auditor's Account

Auditor: In our time the expenditure was \$2,470. Last year it was \$4,582; almost double. There is something peculiar about that item to which I might draw the attention of the House. I refer to Part 3, Classification of expenditures. On page 12, under Audit Office, we read: "John Anderson, \$1800; Wm. E. Massey, \$900." Someone reminded me that the latter gentleman, if he was of any value as an expert accountant, was giving his services very cheaply; but on going carefully through the Accounts I found at the top of Page 11, among the Miscellaneous Items: "Salary, William E. Massey, \$750." I am not going to invite my hon. friends to interrupt me again; I know they will take very little invitation to do that; but I am going to invite some of them who follow me to explain why those items were split up and one part of the salary placed where they thought nobody would see it.

Hon. Mr. LePage: It is not hid. It is right there.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: I know it is there, but why put it where no one would think of looking for it. That will be an excellent thing for my hon. friend to take up when he speaks, as I suppose he will at the earliest opportunity.

There is another item to which I might call attention. The expenditure on the Provincial Building was \$5,397 in our time. Last year it was \$8,624. That just shows how the cost of everything has gone up under these gentlemen; how they have increased even the smallest items in

housekeeping in connection with this building. In connection with their expenditure there is not anything small! They do not stop at anything from velvet pile carpet to luxurious furnishings of all kinds. It is paid for by the taxpayers of the Province, so what do they care?

PUBLIC WORKS

Now I come to the Public Works Department. If I were to designate my hon. friend the Minister of that department I would not refer to him, as his friends do so servilely on the other side of the House, as "the greatest Minister of Public Works that this Province has ever had," and all that sort of thing. Instead, I would have a tag put over his door with the inscription: "Wasting and Squandering here."

Hon. Mr. McIntyre: Or, "abandon hope all ye who enter here."

Hon. Mr. Stewart: That is not what my hon. friend says. That is the trouble. If my hon. friend makes a speech like the speeches he delivered on other occasions in this House, he will go over every district and tell us what he did and how he gave them everything they wanted. That is why he is such a nice fellow! He has lots of money to spend, and if he hasn't got it he can always borrow it.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: You did too.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: Not to anything like the same extent, and my hon. friend knows it. The first thing that introduced our "big minister" to the people of this Province was a telephone order sent to St. John for the purchase of \$100,000 of road machinery. My hon. friend made a bad start, because, as I pointed out before, he violated the law. He bought without authority; but he tried to assure us at that time that he was saving this money because these road machines would be so economical in operation that they would be a saving in the end. Having made this big initial investment, he said, we would be able to go on without any great expenditure, and the saving throughout the coming years would be evident as we went along.

Costly Machinery

Let us see how true this statement was.

The cost of repairs and spare parts of these road machines in 1928, the first year of their operation when they were practically new, was \$12,926.49.

In 1929 their cost was \$24,224.22. Last year, their cost was practically \$41,000.

That was the money expended on these machines, just for upkeep and repair. It does not include the wages of the men employed on the machines, who carried on the work.

My hon. friend says that we were old fashioned, that our road system was antiquated, that we were doing the work with pick and shovel. I may remind him of the fact that we did introduce these machines. We did not make such a plunge into expenditure but we began the use of them and, of course, in the past few years many improvements have been made in road machinery.

However, there was one thing to be said in favor of the "pick and shovel." Many people have complained to me that they have seen roads last year that were done with road machines and that could have been done with a horse and cart for half the money.

It is one of the great troubles of this age that machines are doing so much that was formerly done by human labor. I am not speaking politically when I say that that situation has caused one of the greatest problems we are facing in the civilized world today.

Spending The Money

If we turn to page 108 where the expenditures of the Public Works Department are summarized, we find a total of \$642,587—over half a million dollars. And my hon. friend has been spending that amount of money practically ever since he assumed office. He is spending more than the total revenue of the Province a few years ago; and a good deal of that money, as we all know, is being borrowed. Where is it going to end? It is all right for my hon. friend to talk in a theoretical way about having "assets"; but they have not even using their own machinery properly, because in not one year have they had those machines on the roads in the Spring, when they could have done the work in a proper manner. They left it so late in the season that they did not do the work half as well as if they had got out in the Spring as they should have done.

There is another matter that I am going to mention, because, to my mind, it is a straw showing the way the wind blows; it shows the disposition of my hon. friend the head of

this great spending department. I refer to a matter in connection with his travelling expenses. I noticed an item in his expenses in 1928 when he went to Pictou, Ottawa and Regina. The bill was \$260. Of course, he had a pass; he had to pay no railway fare as we would have to do; that was just his personal expenses. But last year he went up to Quebec, and his expenditure there was something over \$200. His deputy went with him and paid his car fare, and it did not cost him that much. Those are small matters, but after all they are indicative of my hon. friend's disposition to spend extravagantly.

Road Graveling

We have never found any fault with our hon. friend's system of road graveling, but really I do not know where he stands with regard to that today, whether he intends to carry it on or to discontinue it. The leader of the Government denied having made a certain statement attributed to him with regard to this matter, but he has not told us what his actual policy is for the future on this important question.

There is another point in connection with road graveling as carried on by this Government which must not be lost sight of. It is all being done on borrowed money, and I am afraid, judging by the way in which the work has been done in many places, that we have not had value for that money, I tried to find out last year what check was kept on this work; I was not able to get that information. I do not know whether I shall be able to get it this year, but I may tell my hon. friend that when the Estimates are being passed he will have to give us some more lucid information than we have so far received. I have been informed from residents in districts where that gravel is landed, that it has been landed in the most careless way, and that the check is not what it should be on this costly material.

Well Christened!

We had a prophecy last night from the leader of the Government with regard to continuing this new road surfacing work that was begun last fall on the Malpeque Road—that mile which is called the McIntyre Highway. According to the cost of it, it has been well christened. We would know who built it, whether it was called the McIntyre Highway or not; for it cost \$56,797. (Applause.)

Now Mr. Speaker, I put it to you in all fairness: Can this Province afford to build roads at the rate of over \$26,000 a mile? That is a question which the people of this Province will ponder very seriously when they are asked to endorse the policy of the administration now in power.

Hon. Mr. McIntyre: You built clay roads costing \$8,000.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: My hon. friend is bubbling over too. I hope he doesn't bubble too much—he is a little large, you know. (Laughter.) It may have cost us \$3,000 a mile to build roads in some places; but I am not talking about that now. I am talking about their work. That is what is under review. If we had any political sins we have answered for them. My hon. friend has not yet answered for his, but he had better look out; the judgment day is coming, and coming soon! (Applause.)

That mile of road, christened so appropriately the McIntyre Highway, cost, as I have said, over \$26,000. The Premier tried last night to make excuses about the weather conditions when that road was built. But if I remember correctly, December last was a beautiful month. I think the weather treated him much better than the people will do this summer! (Applause.)

Still in "Experimental" Stage

At any rate, as the member from the First District of Prince (Mr. Gordon) said very properly, the road has not yet been tested. The Premier contradicts that statement. It is a matter for my hon. friends to settle between them; but I might point out that the Premier's excuses were very lame. He said the snow-plough went over the road and kept it clear, so that the frost got at it and it had a complete test in that way. Now I happened to be over that stretch of road in the month of January, when we had the coldest weather of the season. I just went a little beyond the edge of that road and I may tell this House there was no evidence of a snow-plough being over it. The road was covered with a heavy fall of snow, so much so that you could hardly drive a team on it. That was in January, and it is of no use for my hon. friend to bring in stories of that kind. We know better. We know that the road did not get a proper test and some of us will have very grave suspicions of what will happen to a road of that kind when it goes through two or three winters of severe frost.

Heavy Risk
We see what happens to the streets of this city under severe weather conditions—streets with a heavy foundation of stone and a thick layer of cement and asphalt. What is going to happen in the country, where the road is completely exposed throughout a severe winter? The risk, Mr. Speaker, is too great to accept, when one considers the enormous expenditure entailed.

PROHIBITION ENFORCEMENT

There is another matter about which the leader of the Government was invited to speak last night, and upon which I shall say a few words. That is the question of the enforcement of the Prohibition Act. The whole question which faces the people now is this: Has this Government, during its tenure of office, kept its pledges to the people with regard to the enforcement of the Act? Have we had enforcement such as we should expect from this Government after the pledges made at the last election? The people will be prepared to answer that question when the time comes, but we on this side of the House feel very strongly that they have not done so; and we have evidence to that effect on all sides. (Loud applause.)

It is perfectly true that they made amendments to the Act. Whether those amendments were of any assistance or not is another question. The leader of the Government said last night that the promises they made have been kept. Well, his platform sets forth that they were to appoint three Prohibition Magistrates, one for each County. Apparently they were able to get along with one; but they cannot have effected a complete enforcement of the law because we have had more evidence of the use of liquor during their regime than we have had for very many years in this Province.

I saw recently in their own party newspaper, published in Summerside an account of a most disreputable incident, in which a woman who was thought to have fainted was picked up on the street. She was found to be helplessly drunk. That incident was reported in the Pioneer.

Then we have had these highway robberies—cases of young men robbing others of rum and being sent up to the Supreme Court. These are incidents fresh in mind. Look at the car accidents caused by drunken drivers, that have never been attended to. All these things go to show the failure of the Prohibition enforcement that we have had. Yet this is the platform that elected my hon. friends to power. Having climbed up the ladder on the issue of prohibition enforcement, they have simply kicked the ladder away and forgotten about it. That is the situation.

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Established Foundation
That provision in the agreement, Mr. Speaker, establishes the foundation for a claim.

Premier Lea: They never admitted it.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: That is a poor and flimsy excuse. The Dalton Sanatorium was handed over to them on that agreement, that they were to give it back in the same condition as they received it, reasonable wear and tear excepted. Did they do that? They destroyed the conformity of it, so that it was absolutely useless for our purposes. Legally there is clear ground for damages in a Court, right there! (Applause.) But the trouble was that they delayed going after that claim. They simply dalled with the matter.

According to my hon. friend's own statement last night, there was some mention of money, of cash compensation, at the conference he attended at Ottawa in 1921 which was presided over by the Hon. Mr. McCurdy, Federal Minister of Public Works. The Provincial delegation returned. The Premier says he was not able to deal with that matter without the consent of his Government. Of course, I am not blaming him for that if he went up without any proper authority; but the matter should have been followed up. It should have been pressed immediately. Instead, my hon. friend has nothing to show but some correspondence between somebody here and a deputy minister at Ottawa.

Lost Great Opportunity
I maintain that with that foundation for a claim the Bell Government, if it had been alive, to its opportunity, would have sent some one fully authorized to Ottawa to complete that transaction. For it could have been completed. A claim of that kind would not have been disregarded at Ottawa if it had been properly presented. We know the Government at Ottawa well enough for that. That is where the negligence and the failure came in of the part of the Government of which my hon. friend, the present leader of the House, was Treasurer and Minister of Agriculture.

I wonder what part politics played

in those cases. I was looking over the names of these convicted persons still at liberty, and I noticed one from my own district. And do you know that person is the principal Liberal worker in that part of the country? So far as that case is concerned, I know personally whereof I speak.

My hon. friend spoke last night on Education. I shall not deal with that question at this late hour, as I know that some of my colleagues who will follow me are well acquainted with the subject and will deal with it adequately.

Teachers' Training Neglected
I might refer, however to the Premier's statement with regard to teachers' training. I still maintain that they have not filled the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Lloyd Shaw from that department. They put up the excuse that Mr. Shaw comes for a few weeks, after his own work is done, to give them a little assistance. But what does that amount to? Compared with the work he was doing formerly it is nothing at all.

Did my hon. friend tell you that they made any attempt to fill that vacancy? Not one word. Today the teachers' training at Prince of Wales College amounts practically to nothing, because Mr. Shaw, while he was there, was the whole support and back-bone of that work, and nobody has taken his place.

My hon. friend went back last evening to the Technical School. I have dealt with that question so often that I do not propose to waste the time of the House in thrashing any more old straw in that connection.

DALTON SANATORIUM

There was another matter, in connection with the Dalton Sanatorium, to which he referred. He stated last night that I have never taken any part in that controversy. Well, it is not because I do not agree with what has been said from this side of the House, because I certainly do think that they neglected a wonderful opportunity at the time that institution was handed back to this Province. I say there was a claim there. I might quote from my hon. friend's own speech as published in The Patriot newspaper, in which he cites the agreement that was made between the Province and the federal authorities, and which contains this important provision:

"And shall return the same or property in substitution thereof at the end of the said term in as good condition as they received the same from the board, reasonable wear and tear excepted."

That provision in the agreement, Mr. Speaker, establishes the foundation for a claim.

Premier Lea: They never admitted it.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: That is a poor and flimsy excuse. The Dalton Sanatorium was handed over to them on that agreement, that they were to give it back in the same condition as they received it, reasonable wear and tear excepted. Did they do that? They destroyed the conformity of it, so that it was absolutely useless for our purposes. Legally there is clear ground for damages in a Court, right there! (Applause.) But the trouble was that they delayed going after that claim. They simply dalled with the matter.

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