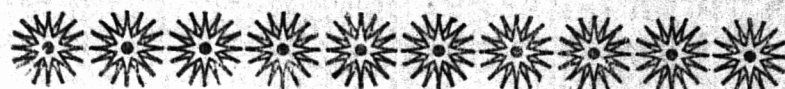


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WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PROWSE BROTHERS

LOCAL LEGISLATURE.

Mr. Shaw then resumed the debate on the resolution regarding the proposed bridge across the Hillsborough. He pointed out that up to the present time the people south of the Hillsborough have been deprived of the advantages of railway communication, and said he would be recreant to his duty as a representative if he did not do everything in his power to promote the branch line for that vicinity. He thought, however, that the present proposition savored strongly of a Dominion election. Several years ago Sir Louis Davies promised that if elected he would press this matter of a railway upon the Government. Subsequently Sir Louis took the ground that this railway should run from Murray Harbor and Peake's as it would be preposterous to run it to Southport. This would obviate the necessity of spanning the Hillsborough with a bridge. But Mr. Martin, after his election, clearly showed the injustice of running the railway to Peake's although it would be cheaper for the Government. The justice due the people of Murray Harbor and Belfast in respect to railway communication is fully recognised. They entered confederation on the same lines as people of the rest of the province and they should receive the same measure of justice. The Opposition asked the Government for the official estimate of the cost of the proposed bridge. But the Leader said they had no estimate and they all seemed to be in blissful ignorance as to whether it would cost \$500,000 or \$800,000. He (Mr. Shaw) asked the Attorney-General on Friday the length of the bridge according to the plans they had received. He also asked the Attorney-General regarding the length of the approaches to the ends of the abutments. But he had no information to vouchsafe in either case. He also asked for information as to the width of the traffic portion of the bridge and the reply was, after considerable shuffling, 12 feet on each side. He (Mr. Shaw) would tell the Attorney-General that according to the plan the width is 6 feet 9 inches. They know nothing whatever as to the cost of the bridge, and yet they are prepared to vote \$400,000 of the people's money towards its construction. The Attorney-General has given us a rehearsal of his trip to Ottawa. Current rumor has it that this spring, under guise of pressing our claims, the Leader of the Government went to Ottawa to press for the governorship. However this may be, it is a fact that he came back empty-handed. He (Mr. Shaw) earnestly hoped that the Leader would be shelved so that he would not have the mortification of leading a party that has no use for him. The senior member for Charlottetown, it is said, also had any eye on the governorship, and in connection with the position visited Ottawa. It is rumoured also that the object of the Attorney-General's visit was in connection with the Queen's County Judgeship, although it was given out that he went to the Federal capital to press the bridge movement. This is how they are preparing to desert the Ships of State which is rapidly sinking under its load of debt. The Attorney-General never asked the Minister of Marine about the cost of the bridge, because he was not on that mission. Some years ago a similar resolution to this came before the House. The Attorney-General manifested great interest at that time, and after moving the resolution said:

"I might also cite the case of a certain bridge company at St. John, N. B., of which a Mr. Temple, member of the House of Commons, was a principal partner. This company built a bridge across the St. John River, which they allege cost them \$375,000. In order to assist them in their laudable enterprise the Dominion Government kindly advanced them \$230,000, or within \$45,000 of what it cost them."

If the Dominion Government wish to follow the same course now they would give us \$700,000 to assist. There would be no hesitation about voting the extra \$100,000. They should pause before voting for the resolution before the House. The debt of the province is now between \$500,000 and \$600,000. It was only last year that the Government sold \$18,000 worth of debentures for the Prince of Wales College. But they only used \$8000 of this sum for the purposes for which it was voted and appropriated the other \$10,000 for other services. The contract for the new college is \$28,500, and they must borrow another \$10,000. The Government is also committed to the building of the annex for the asylum. They borrowed \$75,000, part of which was for this purpose; but the money has been spent and not one stone of the annex has been placed in position. The conclusion must therefore

force itself upon us that the finances of the province are in a deplorable condition; and that however anxious all may be for the bridge, care should be taken in forcing burdens upon the people that they cannot bear. The passing of this resolution means that in two years time the debt would be one million dollars. The Land office receipts are decreasing every year. Last year, although the public works were starved there was a deficit of over \$25,000. Are the farmers, who pay the principle share of the tax, prepared to vote the money? It is not right for those who are about to receive lucrative appointments to hang this millstone of debt about the necks of the people. When the Liberals were in opposition they were always whining about the cost of the ferries. But when they assumed power they lost all control of that expenditure. There will be planking 2000 feet in length on the proposed bridge. The plank covering on Montague bridge scarcely lasts two years, and travelling there is nothing like it would be on the proposed bridge. The traffic space is over 6 feet 9 inches while the ordinary cart is about 6 feet. The local Government must light the bridge, and this will mean an expenditure of about \$1000 a year. The Attorney-General says that if the bridge is built, the Jacques Cartier, which runs to Vernon River, will be withdrawn. He asked the hon. member from Springton if he would deny the people of Crapaud the advantage of this boat? She must get \$2400 wherever she runs. The steamer calls at Vernon River and China Point. The railway will not accommodate the people of China Point, Orwell, Flat River, Pinette and Point Prim. Then the countrymen must pay \$2.00 for return railway fare when he could come to town and return by boat for 50 cents. Everyone knows that steamer should be kept on the route to accommodate those who are not benefited by the railway. Those living along the line of railway will to a certain extent come by the cars, and the receipts on the traffic portion of the bridge would be decreased. If, as the Liberals say, there has been a material increase in the traffic across that ferry, the receipts should be correspondingly increased, which they are not. It is a notorious fact that in 1893 nearly \$1,000 less appeared in the receipts from the Hillsborough ferry than in the preceding year. This was because free passes were given to the electors of Belfast and Fort Augustus. He had asked for the names of season ticket-holders, but the information was withheld, the word "season" being erased from his question. They had also asked for details regarding the proposed bridge, but the Government have none to give. The Attorney-General has submitted a statement regarding the cost of the ferries, which is not borne out by the facts. The steamer from Rocky Point docks at Prince Street wharf and the West River steamer also at times docks there. Why, if the Attorney-General wished to be fair, did he charge the entire cost of that wharf to the Southport ferry when it also accommodates the Rocky Point and West River people? If the bridge is built will the boat from Rocky Point be stopped? Will the Leader of the Government say that it will be can be saved by building the bridge and taken off the route? The flow and ebb tide is undermining the wharf and that is what causes the expenditure for maintenance. This expenditure would be as large if the Rocky Point boat alone docked there. The entire cost of the floats of Prince Street wharf are charged to the Southport ferry, and no value is credited to the steamer Hillsborough. This steamer cost \$17,800, although the contract price was \$13,500. The Attorney-General does not give credit for a dollar in the shape of receipts, although from 1887 to the present moment receipts have been derived. If \$12,000 a year is voted for the bridge, what part of the public expenditure would be saved? If it can be found that money dispensing with the ferry—then build the bridge. But, if perhaps three times as much is to be spent for the bridge, then it is our duty to vote against the resolution. Prince street wharf must be maintained for the Rocky Point service. The floats where the Hillsborough now docks may be saved as well as the floats at Southport. But the main wharf must be kept up. The cost of running the steamer between Charlottetown and Southport is all that can be dispensed with. Mr. Shaw here submitted a statement showing the cost of the two floats and the maintenance of the steamer since 1883. This statement had been compiled with great care and he invited the most rigid criticism. The total for each year is as follows:

1887.....	2259.12
The ferry was let by contract these years.	
In 1888 when the government assumed the management of the ferry the expenditure was \$6,430.52 and the receipts \$4,133.26, leaving a deficit of \$2297.26. This was the first year that the Government ran the ferry on its own responsibility. The Attorney-General did not credit one dollar of this \$4,292 in his statement. The people just pay the difference between the receipts and expenditure, and it is as a people that we are considering this matter. Proceeding Mr. Shaw submitted figures for the subsequent years as follows:—	
Expenditure.....	\$ 6,669.27
Receipts.....	3,261.04
Balance.....	\$ 3,408.23
1890.....	\$12,682.81
Receipts.....	4,236.10
Balance.....	\$ 8,446.71
1891.....	\$ 8,242.09
Receipts.....	4,023.68
Balance.....	\$ 4,218.41
1892.....	\$ 8,005.31
Receipts.....	4,362.47
Balance.....	\$ 3,642.84
1893.....	\$12,901.68
Receipts.....	3,770.58
Balance.....	\$9,131.10

1894.	
Expenditure.....	\$ 16,687.92
Receipts.....	4,073.90
Balance.....	\$ 12,614.02
1895.	
Expenditure.....	\$ 12,457.79
Receipts.....	4,594.49
Balance.....	\$ 7,863.30
1896.	
Expenditure.....	\$ 9,774.62
Receipts.....	4,495.16
Balance.....	\$ 5,279.46
1897.	
Expenditure.....	\$ 7,351.87
Receipts.....	4,514.33
Balance.....	\$ 2,837.54
From 1883 to 1897 the total expenditure, over and above receipts was \$84,774.15. The average of said amount, for 15 years is every cent that can be saved. All other expenses in connection with the ferry would continue. Besides the steamer Hillsborough would be on our hands. This steamer cost \$17,800, but the Attorney-General evidently considers her worthless as he does not regard her as an asset. This he (Mr. Shaw) regarded as a sad commentary upon the party which built her three or four years ago. It is absolutely necessary that the boilers of the ferry steamers be inspected. Under Liberal-Conservative rule these boilers were inspected, but when the Peters Government came in the Leader refused to allow them to be examined claiming that they were in the harbor service and were therefore not subject to inspection. Those boilers may now be in a bad state and dire calamity	

may at any time overtake the passengers. At the evening session Mr. Shaw resumed his speech. Allowing \$800 for the depreciation in the value of the Hillsborough, the average annual cost of the ferry, so far as works to be abandoned by the construction of a bridge is concerned, would be \$4,511.60. He believed that a company could be formed within twenty-four hours to run the ferry properly without one cent of subsidy. But what are our obligations if we carry out the resolution? If the bridge is built according to the resolution the province will pay \$12,000 a year, as interest at 3 per cent, on \$400,000. The Government would be bound to keep their portion of the bridge in repair. We are told that 3 1/2 feet in the centre of the bridge is to be the property of the Dominion Government. They will grade this portion like a railroad. A staff of men will be required to keep the bridge in repair. The approach to the bridge will be 629 feet from Mutch's Point to the abutment. On the Kensington side the approach will be 1880 feet. The cost of keeping the wharf in repair is insignificant compared with what will be required for these approaches. Besides, this, the plankway will be 2000 feet long and it will take a tremendous amount of money to keep in repair. Every nut and every rivet must be kept fast. The bridge must also be painted every year. There will also be the cost of lighting. After two or three years the annual interest to be paid in connection with the bridge and its maintenance will be \$18,000. Is this a bright outlook for the farmers of the country? What is the financial outlook at the present time? We owed the banks \$117,146 on the 31st December. The debenture account was \$173,216.

The debenture account for the the Prince of Wales College was \$18,000, besides the students had been assessed \$5 a head but this amount had not been spent for the purpose for which it was obtained. There is also owing \$159,855 on private loans account. There was loaned \$75,000 a portion of which was to build the asylum annex. This money has been spent; but the annex has not been built. Counting the large amounts carried over from last year the total indebtedness of the province is found to be about \$600,000. Are we justified then in rounding up the million dollars indebtedness by voting, without any information, the additional \$400,000, and thus absorbing in interest every cent of taxes raised from real estate in this province? It is our duty to guard with jealous care the privileges we enjoy rather than plunge the province into a helpless condition of bankruptcy.

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