

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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TONIGHT'S PUBLIC MEETING publishes a copy of the Minute of Council to the effect that authority is given to the Department of Railways and Canals to enter into an agreement with the province in a form to be determined by the Department of Justice covering the sections in question, express approval being given of the work being done by day labor and of payment of work done prior to the execution of the proposed agreement. Credit for bringing this matter to this satisfactory point is due largely to His Worship Mayor Jenkin, Councillor Rattray and Mr. K. J. Martin, K. C., who drafted the petition which "did the trick."

There should be a large attendance at tonight's meeting in the Market Hall. The four city candidates will speak, every one is invited and a special invitation is extended to the ladies for whom seats will be reserved. The city members, now candidates, have been invited to be present and have accepted the invitation. They are on trial for their four years' stewardship and will be given an opportunity to explain many things which their constituents have for four years seen demanding an explanation of, but which have not yet been explained.

Ranking in the breasts of all their constituents for four years is the as yet unfulfilled assurance given by Messrs. Higgs and Duffy in May, 1920, that they had the promise of the government that the provincial poll tax in the city would be reduced. Explanations have been offered for this but they have not been satisfactory. We have been told that after the government had made this promise they thought it preferable to exempt the soldiers from the tax and the promise made to Messrs. Higgs and Duffy was therefore abandoned. Whether the government consulted Messrs. Higgs and Duffy regarding this change, whether Messrs. Higgs and Duffy consented to sacrifice their constituents, whether the government acted tyrannically and threw their alleged promise to the winds, has not been revealed. Nor has it been revealed whether the citizens were asked by Messrs. Higgs and Duffy to make this sacrifice on behalf of the soldiers. There is no doubt that if the citizens had been asked to pay this poll tax for the soldiers they would have done it willingly but they very properly consider that in sacrificing the citizens even for a patriotic consideration without a "by your leave" was a rather high-handed act on the part of representatives elected to guard their interests.

Then there is the fact that only 14 citizens paid this tax, out of about 1600 who were equally liable. Why did the government exact this of the 314 while letting the remainder go free? Were Messrs. Higgs and Duffy standing between certain taxpayers and the tax collector in order to at least make a pretence of keeping their promise? Also there was the statement made by Mr. Higgs at that meeting in May, 1920 that arrangements had been made whereby the city was to receive \$40,000 from the Highway grant. What became of the arrangement? Then made? Why is it never mentioned again until the eve of the bye-election in November when the Hon. John E. Sinclair telegraphed from Ottawa that "the permanent work" on Water Street, Summerside, was to be done? Why has that permanent work not begun yet? Why the grant not yet been received? And now on the eve of this present election we have the Hon. John Sinclair on deck with another announcement. He has "shown the lot" a "certified copy of a federal order in Council showing that the city of Charlottetown is entitled (note the "entitled") to assistance under the Highways Act to the amount of \$57,120 and the amount of Summerside to the amount of \$14,922."

One would be better pleased if the citizens of Charlottetown and Summerside if the Dominion Government actually materialized have just got as far as the statement in the Patriot which appeared in the Globe, July 13.

Notes by the Way

The Patriot wants to know how the loss of \$30,000 poll tax is to be made up. That is an easy one! By economy, by putting a check upon the waste and extravagance practised by the Bell Government. We find it amusing, however, that the Liberal organ appears to take it for granted that this tax will be abolished. That is the conviction of every Opposition candidate. It is also the conviction of the Guardian. But we all know that the poll tax will never be abolished by the men now in power. They must be defeated before that can take place. The Patriot's question is clearly based upon anticipation of defeat!

Without the defeat of the Government no such question could arise. The question is therefore, singularly premature and absurd, coming from the quarter it does. Our Liberal friends now seem to be greatly in love with this tax. They were not so before the election of 1919. Nothing could exceed their apparent detestation of it then. The fact that the late Government had even asked the people in a plebiscite whether they would approve of a poll tax in order that the teachers might be better paid, was held up in scorn and condemnation of the "wicked Tories." The people had said NO to the poll tax. Who could believe that the men who had so decried it then would be the first to enact a poll tax in 1920 in defiance of the expressed will of the people? But so it was!

Never was there a stronger case for the repeal of an odious law. The deception practised upon the people, when it was enacted in defiance of their expressed opposition (called with trumpet voice for its repeal. Its unfairness and injustice, the rank favoritism with which it was administered, the ill-gation and costs involved wherever enforcement was attempted, made the demand for its abolition imperative. There will be no mourning over the poll tax when it has departed this life, no lamentation outside of the profiteering and office holding class, when the authors of the tax precede it on the way to oblivion.

The election campaign develops occasional severe heckling of Government candidates at the joint political meetings. Within due limits the practice has a wide vogue in all countries where freedom of speech is established and it is recognized as legitimate. It should never, however, be pushed so far as to debar any duly nominated candidate from receiving a fair hearing. The unpopularity of the Government is the undoubted cause of the strong expressions of hostility that have sometimes occurred, but on the whole good order and decorum have prevailed at the meetings.

The activity of Messrs. Sinclair, Hughes and McKinnon, M.P.'s in the provincial election campaign contrasts strongly with their inactivity during the recent five-months' session at Ottawa. No doubt their help is sadly needed by their local allies and supporters here, but it is not likely to be effective. Since the great Liberal slump in Ontario the King Government at Ottawa is only "holding on by its eyelids." Its position, precarious from the first, has now become desperate. The Solid Four from Prince Edward Island have so far proved themselves to be the tamest and most subservient followers of that feeble and tottering administration. Otherwise than as voting machines their political record of service to the Province during the past two years has been a blank.

During the war the bomb-shells that failed to explode were called "duds." The only noise they make is at the mouth of the gun which discharges them. So far the efforts of our Ottawa representatives in the political campaign have only produced a harmless bombardment of duds. Most of the ammunition of the Bell Government and its supporters has been of the dud variety, with an occasional missile of the boomerang class which has a trick of returning to wound the man who throws it. Such are the attacks made upon the late Conservative Government whose great services to the Province in obtaining the Car Ferry and subsidy are not forgotten by a grateful electorate.

We are told by Messrs. Bell and Lea in their copious discourses never use the words Car Ferry or Subsidy. To do so would be to suggest comparisons between these great achievements of the late Government which they have vilified and abused, and the puerile results of their own blundering administration. It might also show the wide contrast between one Government that always kept faith

The Public Forum

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion expressed by its correspondents.

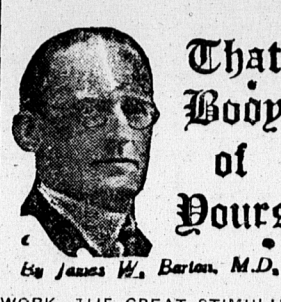
That Bogus \$253,000 Deficit

Sir,—During the election campaign of 1919 the Liberal candidates at their meetings and through the press promised and pledged themselves if elected to carry on the affairs of Government economically and efficiently without any increase of taxation, and on the strength of these promises and pledges the people returned them to power. It is evident that they never intended to keep their election promises, but only used them to deceive the people.

As soon as they took the reins of government they carefully scrutinized every department in the hope of finding something which they could use to discredit the outgoing Government. Not finding anything wrong in any of the departments they thought of another scheme. They knew that government taxes were generally paid late in the fall of the year, and that very little of the taxes of 1919 would be paid up to the seventh of September of said year, and consequently they knew that a statement of receipts and expenditures up to that date could not be made. Therefore, they instructed the Government Auditor, Mr. John Anderson, to furnish a statement of receipts and expenditures for year 1919 up to 7th September. The Auditor, of course, furnished the statement he was instructed to make, which showed a balance of expenditure over receipts of \$253,000, to which they added \$116,000 unaccounted subsidy. Besides this they deliberately neglected to collect the 1919 taxes in order to make the receipts as unfavorable as possible. The Patriot and Government candidates are making a great pretence of defending the Auditor from any criticism or blame in the matter, which defence is entirely unnecessary and might lead some people to think the Auditor was at fault. No one, however, thought of attributing the slightest blame to the Auditor for furnishing the Government with the statement they required. Mr. Anderson is too well and favorably known throughout the province as a worthy upright citizen, and capable conscientious official to need any defence of his honor or integrity. Every fair-minded man, however, whether Liberal or Conservative, rightly and justly blames the Government for publishing the bare statement of receipts and expenditures without taking into account the large amount of uncollected taxes and the other assets such as supplies for the different Government departments and institutions which were provided and purchased by the Conservative Government and were left for the uses and purposes of the Bell Government. Does the merchant when stock-taking, only take account of his receipts and expenditures during the year to find out his financial standing? Does he not also take account of his book debts, goods and chattels and all other assets of the business? If a banker in examining a merchant's books to ascertain his financial standing would only strike a balance between his receipts and expenditures would not the great majority of our merchants be pronounced bankrupt? The statement of receipts and expenditures as published was unfair and dishonest. The Conservative Government and its members intended to further mislead and deceive the people and was, to say the least of it, highly discreditable to the nine honorable gentlemen representing His Majesty's Government in our province. But behind it all there appears to have lurked an ulterior selfish motive. They made use of the bogus \$253,000 deficit to justify them in raising the land tax, income tax and in levying a poll tax to enable them to carry out their salary grab and increase their salaries and sessional indemnities by one hundred and fifty per cent. in defiance of the people. Thus, their trumped-up deficit is a greater deception on the people even than their shamefully broken election pledges and promises. I am glad to see that the Conservative press and candidates are not only keeping the Liberal broken pledges and promises before the people but also demanding a statement of receipts and expenditures for year 1922 up to 7th Sept., similar to the one they issued for year 1919 up to the same date. So far, none of the Government candidates or speakers have produced the statement asked for. I notice by a report of a meeting in Queen's County that one of the Government candidates stated that it would take the staff of officials three weeks to prepare such a statement. But he was merely trying to evade the question. The Government have the information at their finger-tips and could furnish it in less than half an hour if they thought it would help their cause, but they know it would not and therefore they refuse to give it. The electors are entitled to the information asked for and should have it before casting their votes.

with the people and another Government that has strewn every mile of its tortuous path with broken promises and violated pledges. Two gifts to the people of the Car Ferry district, made by opposing governments stand out in bold relief—the Borden-Mathieson Ferry and the Bell Poll Tax. Which of the two gifts is most valued by the electors of the Fourth District of Government that always kept faith

THEIR FUTURE IS SAFE. Daddy has an IMPERIAL LIFE ASSURANCE POLICY. Have you? P. A. Farquharson, Branch Manager, Charlottetown.



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