

# Alleged Government Surplus

(Continued from page 13)

We find in the report of the Department of Agriculture, on page 29, a statement that is not creditable to this Government. In the past we have boasted that Prince Edward Island could produce fine eggs. The Egg and Poultry Association accomplished marvellous things in the past and our farmers were receiving large profits from this industry. Eggs from this organization commanded high prices everywhere. But we find that last year this remark in the report of the Minister of Agriculture:

"In past years Prince Edward Island stood second to none in Canada as to quality of eggs, but unfortunately we are now in a position where unless improvement is made, we are going to experience difficulty in marketing our eggs."

This is the second branch of the farming industry in this Province going down; first the dairy business, and now the quality of Island eggs and poultry. That is a very poor advertisement for our eggs to appear in our public reports, and some reason should be given for it, whether it is only a transient condition or whether it is to become permanent.

### SMALL EXHIBITIONS

We recall at the very beginning of this Government the Minister of Agriculture was opposed to small exhibitions. He was opposed to the exhibition at Edmond Bay. That is a splendid institution which has been carried on for many years and is a great asset to the people there. Yet the Premier threatened to abolish it. It was only after fighting on the floor of the House that we succeeded in having it continued, and I find that today they are only receiving \$400 while the Alberton fair is receiving \$500. This amount I would like to see increased when the Estimates are brought down. They are now constructing a large building which will afford greater opportunity to the people to exhibit their products and I think this Government should encourage it, as the Stewart Government and other Governments in the past have done. Perhaps our Premier has changed his attitude towards smaller fairs; but we know that it is a mighty hard thing to change his opinion at times, and he was so set against them that I do not believe, although he has continued the grant, that he is very much in sympathy with them.

I might also go into the report of the Falconwood Farm. Last year we had much to say about it, and of course what was said last year could be repeated this year. On page 105 of the report of the Department of Agriculture we find they again sold the milk for \$2.25 per 100 pounds and that they did not produce as much as we produced.

We produced 240,000 pounds of milk in our last year; they produce only 220 pounds.

They are not producing as much pork, either. In 1927 we produced 4,287 pounds; last year they only produce 3,700.

PREMIER LEA: That is only in hogs, live.

MR. ARSENAULT: I do not see the rest here. And what about hay this year? They do not mention it at all. There is nothing to show that they have any hay. Perhaps they are buying their hay, as they are their beef, from Ontario.

I notice that some of the cattle are charged in the Falconwood report, on page 37: 1 cow, \$256.50, J. B. R. Lea; 1 cow, \$175.00, William Lea; 1 cow, \$140, Wendall Lea. These cows were purchased at these figures, were they?

PREMIER LEA: You will see where there were four sold for \$120 also.

MR. ARSENAULT: But this was buying.

PREMIER LEA: They were also sold.

MR. ARSENAULT: You bought them and you sold?

PREMIER LEA: They were sold at a profit.

MR. ARSENAULT: I suppose the increased value was from the advertising they received in connection with this farm. But it is strange to see that these cows do not produce as much milk as the ones we had when we were there.

### CRANBERRIES

This Government also promised to promote the growing of cranberries, blueberries and small fruits and vegetables, and to establish a canning industry in connection therewith. I do not know that any attempt has been made during their regime to can any small fruits. During our time we did at-

tempt to establish such an industry at Mount Carmel. We made some mistakes, it is true, but the members opposite are afraid to attempt anything. I am sure that today, if the present administration had continued the experiment, profiting by the minor mistakes made by us, our farmers would be reaping large benefits. But nothing was done. The people are anxiously waiting to see what this Government is going to do, because they were promised this assistance in the Liberal election platform.

We had an encouraging report by an expert on the cranberry industry in 1927. But this Government wanted to make a report from some expert of its own, and where did they go? To the United States, and consulted Dr. Franklin, who came here and after some investigation reported to them that perhaps it would be wiser for us not to enter into this industry as we would be in competition with the potato growers! (Laughter) He also said we had no experience or knowledge. We have a Department of Agriculture that is supposed to impart the knowledge required to carry on new industries. Is it possible that this American expert, after examining the qualifications of the minister and staff of that Department, came to the conclusion that we could never acquire the knowledge and experience? He told us, as his third reason, that he had no sand in this Province. His fourth reason, an equally silly one, was that the frost would destroy the cranberries in July! His last reason was that we might produce too many of those small fruits and compete with the United States, and we were discouraged from attempting to do so. The Premier was credulous enough to accept that advice as final. Yet this industry was deemed sufficiently important in 1927 to be included in a special plank of his election platform, and he asked the people to vote him into power to carry out this policy.

### SHORT COURSES UNDER CONSERVATIVES

In the same platform we find the promise: "And generally to promote agricultural education within the Province." They were going to educate the people how to farm. For years in this House we have heard complaints from the Premier, launched against the Stewart Government, for having abolished the Technical School, notwithstanding the fact that we explained at the time that we were compelled to do so. We recognized a certain amount of good to be derived from such a school, but we were faced with the condition that we could not, in this small Province and with its revenue at our disposal, carry on such a large institution, because the King Government at Ottawa had discontinued the agricultural grant.

Mr. Arsenault dealt fully with the Technical School question, showing that the courses given were impracticable, that it was largely an experiment. He explained that the short courses given by the Stewart Government were more economical and served their purpose much better.

Now, continued Mr. Arsenault, the Premier announces that these courses are being supplied the farmers by means of radio. I have tried to get some of these lectures coming over the radio, but have not been successful. Farmers are not going to listen to the Minister preaching over the radio on the farm. Unfortunately perhaps, they would rather listen to Mr. Howatt playing "Speed the Plough." It would be much better if he would send men from his Department through the Province and hold night schools and instruct our farmers in better methods of farming.

### MOUNTING EXPENDITURES

The expenses in the Department of Agriculture seem to have been increasing every year, though the benefits derived are not so apparent. The fact is, however, that we do not really know what that Department is costing. On page 17 of the Public Accounts, part 1, we find that the cost last year was \$58,322.19. Again, in part 3, page 15, the estimate is \$51,900 and the expenditure is \$5,440.84. If you turn to Appendix 8, page 189, you will find the expenditure mentioned there as \$33,240. Why not have the same amount all through! I take it that this is a very important year for the Liberal Government, and these accounts, no doubt will be circulated all through the Province. By having four different amounts on different pages, a man will look at one page and perhaps be satisfied. He may go to another item and find that it is smaller or larger; then he may turn to the still larger amount of \$58,322. In this way you are preparing the people, step by step, for the final shock that comes on seeing that

the expenditures have so greatly increased.

I might cite another example from the Falconwood expenditure. The estimate last year was \$112,200. On the same page you will find the expenditure given as \$120,330.20. If you turn to part 1, page 7, you will find a greater amount, namely, \$125,278.80. Why have the amounts differed in different parts of the report? I think the explanation should be given right there, so that people would see it immediately.

The expenditure in the Public Works Department is presented in the same way. Anyone looking for this item will find a certain amount on one page, and if he looks somewhere else he will find a greater or smaller amount.

### MISLEADING FIGURES

Again, on page 188 we find that the total capital expenditure was \$248,212.28. On page 7, part 1 we find its capital expenditure given as \$27,353.88. Why not arrange the Accounts so that people will see clearly what the expenditure actually was. The change that was inaugurated this year to make the Accounts "clearer" have simply confused the people. This is the first year I have noticed so many different ways of stating the figures. Perhaps it was to make the "surplus" clearer! But it is hard to see a "surplus" when we have a large increase in debt.

In part 3, page 15, the estimate for Department of Public Works is given as \$350,405 and the expenditure as \$405,268.73, while in part 1 page 7, the expenditure under the same heading is stated to be \$325,486.35.

Again, on part 3, page 15, we see estimated for "Interest" the sum of \$78,000. On the same page the expenditure is given as \$84,206.92, while on part 1, page 7, the interest is shown as \$148,137.90. To the ordinary voter these accounts are certainly very misleading.

Mr. Arsenault then dealt with the question of prohibition enforcement and the failure of the Government to implement its pre-election promises in this respect. Referring to the humiliating confession made by the leader of the Government at the last session of the Legislature, Mr. Arsenault said:

"The then Premier described conditions in the Prince County Jail, where inmates were making home-brew, getting drunk, fighting among themselves and setting fire to the jail; and he even suggested that the liquor was taken to them by some of their lady friends. He showed how the schemes of the bootleggers have multiplied 'a thousand-fold' and he said the conditions had become so appalling that they were almost beyond the comprehension of man. 'We did everything we could,' the Premier told us. 'We even imported a detective and had him for over a month. We paid him \$1400, but unfortunately the detective was a drunken beggar who was full from the time he started on the job until he left, and all the information he had laid against certain individuals were withdrawn. We found he was not reliable.'"

### DETECTIVE TOO ACTIVE

The Premier said he paid \$1400 and received no value; but perhaps our Liberal friends may reap the benefit this year, for among the persons against whom informations were brought by this detective were a good many strong Liberal workers, and that may have been the reason why this man was paid off and sent home. We know that this detective had a good record before he came here, and those men are not so easily led that they can be spooled even by our expert bootleggers in the short space of six or seven weeks. There is something very suspicious about the whole matter; something that does not satisfy the electors. They will have to give a better explanation of their doings along these lines.

We find that a good many of these bootleggers are known, and are left alone. An employee or agent is caught sometimes and fined \$200; and if that man has proven to be an efficient salesman for the head bootlegger his fine is paid and he does not have to go to jail. If he is not an efficient salesman, if the head bootlegger has no further use for him, he has to serve his sentence. Perhaps that accounts for those 83 cases that are "pending"—cases of persons that are out around today when they should be in jail. They are good "salesmen."

The trouble today is that you do not know who is in the bootlegging business. You would be surprised to hear the names of the respectable people that have been tempted by the large profits in this business. It must be a thrilling game, when you have to watch 30 or 35 prohibition officers. Youngsters who are in this business imagine it is a great thing to beat these officers.

### BOOTLEGGING BY AEROPLANE

They are even landing liquor in the Province by aeroplane nowadays. I presume the next expenditure that will have to be incurred by this Government will be to organize a flying corps to chase those aeroplanes and not allow them to land. (Laughter).

This Government lays the blame for the non-enforcement of the law at the door of the Prohibition Commission. In the campaign last fall I believe that was the defense that was attempted, both by the Premier and by his candidate. But they cannot evade responsibility in that way. It is rumored that very often influence has been brought to bear on the Government to go easy in certain cases, where it might prove detrimental to the interests of "the party." That, at least, is the opinion throughout the country. The people are against paying \$35,000 a year in salaries to officials who are not enforcing the law as it should be enforced. I think they could do the work very much more cheaply and more efficiently if some of that money was spent in procuring advantages to our farmers and in securing the sympathy and good will of our people. When the people see that the money is squandered in the administration of the Act they have a disregard for the offense, and we find boys of respectable parents going into the business. There was a case heard lately where a boy even mortgaged or pledged his insurance policy to buy a keg of rum. It is bad to see these conditions getting worse and worse, and nothing being done to check the evil. My hon. friends will have to answer for their sins in this regard when they go to the country. It will be useless for them to try to throw the blame upon the Prohibition Commission or any other body.

Conditions have grown worse not only in Charlottetown but in Summerside, where we find, from the returns of the police officials, the following illuminating figures: Convictions for drunkenness in 1926 in Summerside: 42. In 1927, the last year of the Stewart Government: 41. In 1928, when the present Government assumed power, with all their amendments and machinery to enforce this law, we find convictions for drunkenness were 62. In 1929 they had increased to 84, and in 1930 to 96, or more than double in the three years and a half that this "Prohibition" Government has been in power!

### PUBLIC WORKS

The Minister of Public Works must be judged, not on his record of one year only, but on his whole record of three years. We find that immediately after he assumed office he went to the expense of ordering 100,000 of road machines by telephone. Those machines have since cost \$77,000—nearly as much as their purchase price, in three years. Besides this, he bought last year road machines to the amount of \$80,000. By the time the bonds mature that were issued for these purchases, the machines will all be thrown away. At present the sinking fund amounts to only about one-third of the cost, yet in three years the additional expense of their upkeep has come to nearly the full amount of the purchase price. The Province cannot afford to spend that much money. It is time that more economy was practiced in the administration of the Public Works Department.

Continuing the debate on Tuesday evening, Mr. Arsenault reviewed further the expenditures incurred in the Department of Public Works. The road patrol system under the Conservative Government had been designed to keep the surface smooth for the traveling public, especially the automobile owners. On assuming office the present Minister disbanded the patrol men and engaged his own men late in the fall, who did nothing but draw their monthly cheques. There was nothing done that fall and next year the Minister boasted of his big power machines. He threatened to blow the dust off the roads, to scoop the hills into the valleys and drain the water into the ditches. He also introduced a system whereby the roads would be divided into 25 sections under a road superintendent who would have to travel fifteen or twenty miles before he could reach the point where he was required. Statute labor was abolished and very often work that should have been done early in the spring was delayed until a certain Liberal family could do it. Very few Conservatives received any employment except in the winter time when they could be asked by the road superintendents to go and fill in the ditches. They did not attend to the winter roads last year and we know what the conditions were.

### CONSERVATIVE POLICY

They accuse us of having built only a few miles of gravelled roads, but we had at the head of our department the Hon. Mr. MacDonald, now a member of the Federal Government, and he, like all public men with a knowledge of the mode of financing any public works was opposed to pledging the credit of this Province and to incurring large debts, for such expenditure. We felt that at no time should money be borrowed for public works that will not outlive the life of the bond.

You will answer: But the Stewart Government borrowed money for public works. True, but why did we? It was because of the federal highway grant, passed by the Conservative Government at Ottawa, giving to the provinces 40 per cent of the cost of building improved roads. While this province was paying only 60 per cent of the cost, and while at the time we had large wooden bridges and culverts that were just about ripe to be replaced, it was deemed favorable for us to borrow money for the purpose of taking advantage of the federal highway grant, with the intention of spending that money on the permanent portions of such work.

During our regime we replaced many wooden bridges with steel

### ROUGH ROADS LAST SUMMER

One would get the hiccoughs going over the pitches. When, a few days ago, a Statute Labour Act was re-introduced, we on this side of the House suggested that they should give the people the right to commute their taxes by performing statute labour in the winter time if the work could not be found for them during the summer months; but they refused.

### IMPORTED GRAVEL

And now their three years' programme is practically over and they come to us, and in their report of the Public Works Department on pages 22 and 23 we read: you cannot go on forever in this orgy of spending money lavishly and having no work of permanency to show for it. (Loud applause).

There is abundance of local material available in the western section of the County (Prince) suitable for gravel surfacing which could not only be used for future work in that section but in paying distances for use in other sections of the County. As it is evident that no matter what the trend will be in road building in the future there will be always use for a certain quantity of gravel in the County, the purchasing of a number of available gravel pits ought to be considered, or at least a standard set price should be made for the value of gravel in the pits so that satisfactory arrangements could be made at any time with the different owners for any quantity required.

That is the statement, after three years' contracts were given to Liberal friends to supply gravel from the Province of Nova Scotia. No serious attempt was made by the present administration to test our native gravel and to use it. The Nova Scotia gravel cost \$2.75 a ton the first year, and \$2.85 the second and third year it was brought here. We have no way of estimating the actual cost when our native gravel can be dug and hauled to any point on the road within ten miles at \$1.50 per ton. We know also that our shore front contains large deposits of shore gravel, suitable for large portions of our roads, that could be hauled by our farmers when they are not busy on the farm. This \$500,000, or whatever portion of it has been expended, on gravel, might as well have been returned to our own people, and the work would have been done with native material. Instead, the money has gone to a neighboring Province, and our people have been deprived of the benefit.

Costly Experiment

Last fall another expensive "experiment" has been made. I refer to what is known as the McIntyre Highway a stretch of less than a mile of road, sixteen feet wide and about 3 1-2 inches thick, which cost over \$26,000. This expenditure is not shown anywhere in the Public Accounts, but the amount was tabled in the House in answer to a question placed on the order paper. They admit that it was rather extravagant. In fact, they say it should have been built for about \$6,000 or \$8,000 a mile. Yet after the money spent upon it, some members, including the member from the First District of Prince (Mr. Gordon) have suggested that it shows nothing so far, that we are not sure whether such a road can withstand the effect of the severe winter, or whether it will be of any permanent service to the Province.

The Premier said that they tried as much as possible to keep this road uncovered during last winter in order to let the frost at it. But we do not know yet whether such a road is feasible. The Government in its great ambition, is quite willing to go further, and it was suggested by no less a member than the Premier himself that they were considering the question of borrowing two or three millions or more to go on with this program.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the time has arrived when we should go slow in our experimenting. We should not borrow money for works that we know will not be of existence in five or ten years. With the extra revenue that this Government has enjoyed since taking office—about \$300,000 a year more than we had—they could well look after the roads of this Province, gravelled small portions, so much every year, as could be paid for out of ordinary revenue.

### SIGNIFICANT COMPARISON

The hon. member from Rustico abused the Conservative Govern-

ment because for a certain time under our regime we had a young man "not mature," as Minister of Public Works. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this Province who have met and known our Minister, Mr. H. F. McPhee, agree that he is a gentleman of great ability and promise. He did not make such large expenditures as the present Minister, it is true, but in that he showed a sounder judgment.

### HON. MR. MCINTYRE: He spent according to his size.

MR. ARSENAULT: That is the trouble with the present Minister. We used to tease him at times upon being the biggest Minister of Public Works in Canada, and I believe now that his expenditure can be accounted for by his size. If you go to his office you will see the big chair he has installed there. It cost a tremendous amount of money; he bought it the first year he was in power. Some of his big notions, I presume, he got while attending these road conferences, where he got the idea that he should compete with Ontario and Quebec and those other provinces of immense revenues, and with state roads built at exceedingly large expense. But although our Minister is large himself, he must realize that he is framing legislation for an agricultural province without the means and sources of revenue that those larger provinces enjoy, and he should come down to the size of our budget and the requirements of our people. He should remember that the biggest and most experienced men cannot claim at all times to possess the judgment and the brains that some smaller or younger men possess. I believe the electors of this Province realize this, and the Liberal press has so expressed it when they said that the Stewart Government had such a record that had it not been for the policy of Government Control, introduced in an endeavor to remedy the liquor situation, they would have been returned to power.

### EXTRAVAGANCE AT FALCONWOOD

Mr. Arsenault went on to cite the increased expenditure at Falconwood Hospital under the Lea Government. Last year this expenditure was \$125,778, while the average expenditure under the Stewart Government was \$100,000. At that time supplies were dearer and there were more inmates, yet the expenditure was about \$20,000 less per year. If there was proper business management in that institution the cost today would be much reduced. In 1928 the cost was \$105,000, in 1929, \$117,000 and in 1930 \$125,000—an increase every year, while the cost of supplies is decreasing.

It is difficult for our people to realize that the Minister of Public Works spent last year \$524,000 in his own department; over half a million dollars.

### HON. MR. MCINTYRE: You are

not correct. I spent more than that.

MR. ARSENAULT: He wants to "blow" about it! (Laughter.) Continuing, Mr. Arsenault said that last year the people were given an example of the political possibilities of the big road machines. We saw how active they were, how quickly they were moved from one district to another at the call of the Liberal candidates. We saw how they marshalled them in the Second District of Prince, in the attempt to elect a Liberal Attorney General to this House. We may expect that in this election year the increased expenditure in the Public Works Department will be greater than ever before. It was over half a million last year—it will probably be a million dollars this year.

Shortly this Government will be up for the approval or disapproval of the people, according to the measure in which they have carried out the promises they made in the campaign of 1927. They promised to establish old age pensions and they have failed to do so. In the Speech from the Throne and the Premier's speech on the Draft Address it is admitted that the Government is dependent on the action taken by Premier Bennett at Ottawa. We find another plank in their platform which concerns Charlottetown and Summerside. They promised to the city and incorporated towns and villages the payment of an equitable portion of railway grant in lieu of taxation. We have asked the question every year: "Has anything been done to pay any portion of that grant?" and the answer came back on every occasion: "Not yet." Now, at the last moment, they make a gesture towards paying this grant because an election is in sight.

The Government will face the electors with many broken pledges with an increase in the public debt of \$758,000 and more, because we know that there is a large number of unpaid bills that are not entered in the Public Accounts. The people, I am sure, will tell the Government that they have been extravagant in spending borrowed money, that they have broken many pledges. They will say: "The lesson we gave you in the Second District of Prince last summer has not profited you any; you have continued this year without any sign of repentance and now we will give you a lesson that will teach you for many years to come that you cannot go on forever in this orgy of spending money lavishly and having no work of permanency to show for it. (Loud applause).

### "Oh, no; he's been married before Clarence.—The engine's dead, Phyllis, and I can't get it to start! Phyllis.—Well, if you're kidding me I'm going to walk back to town and if you're telling the truth we'll both walk back.



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