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Record Of Failure And Incompetency

Trenchant Review Of Saunders Government's Mismanagement By Dr. W. J. McMillan In Budget Debate.

Continued From Yesterday's Guardian

Following is the speech delivered in the Budget debate by Dr. W. J. P. McMillan, senior Conservative member for Fifth Queens. Dr. McMillan followed Hon. Dr. McNeill in the debate. He began his address on Thursday evening, April 3rd:

PAGE THE TEMPERANCE ALLIANCE

There never was a year under the Stewart Government in which fifty prohibition cases were "pending." That is a record that has been left for this Government to make. I wonder what the people think about it. I wonder what the Temperance Alliance think. Why didn't you take this list when you attended the annual meeting of the Alliance in order to smooth them over, after the meeting had been called for the specific purpose of considering means for the better enforcement of the Act?

MR. ALLEN: You will have to table it so that we can take it down. DR. MCMILLAN: Table it? MR. ALLEN: Yes. You say there are fifty prohibition cases pending. Why don't you table the list? DR. MCMILLAN: It is already tabled, man. This is the report of the Prohibition Commission—your agent. (Applause.)

MR. ALLEN: So you say. DR. MCMILLAN: So I say? (Laughter) Go and ask the Clerk for the reply to Question No. 16. You had better get posted on the transactions of your own Commission, my hon. friend. (Applause.)

Here are the expenses of the Prohibition Commission. We find one curious item, "Temperance Alliance, \$1200." What do you think of that? The Prohibition Commission pays the campaign expenses of the last election! My hon. friend from Summerside always likes to ask, "I wonder how much the liquor interests are putting up?" I will ask the hon. gentleman what he thinks of the payment of \$1200 for campaigning purposes for the Temperance Alliance to elect a Liberal Government? There is the item as it appears in the Prohibition Commission accounts.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: What is the date of that?

DR. MCMILLAN: That is the revenue and expenditure account for the year ending Dec. 31, 1929.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: We have no control over the Prohibition Commission.

DR. MCMILLAN: Haven't you. HON. DR. MCNEILL: Not in the election of 1927.

FUNDS MISAPPROPRIATED DR. MCMILLAN: No, of course not; that was our commission. We

never paid money to the Alliance for campaign purposes, nor did the Commission pay money to us for such purposes. But here we have the item, \$1200 paid the Temperance Alliance by the Commission appointed by your Government. What was it for? Can any member on that side of the House tell me what this money was for? They say they have no control over the Commission. But the Attorney General should have control. He should now whether the Act's being violated or not. My hon. friend from Summerside should know the Prohibition Act. What are the objects of it? What about the money that accrues over and above the carrying out of the Act? Does he know anything about it? Is this a misappropriation of funds, or is it not? Talk about maladministration! Could there be anything more glaring than this. A few years ago there was a great howl raised throughout the Province because \$500 was paid by the Prohibition Commission to the Government for the purchase of a car. That was something terrible. But here we have a payment of \$1200 to the Government or any department responsible to the people of this Province, but to the Temperance Alliance, and no accounting is made of that at all. I would advise the Attorney General to go busy. He had better find out where that \$1200 went, how it was used and for what purpose. If he had that \$1200 to add to his wonderful "surplus" of \$3700 he would have \$4900 now, because if that money hadn't been paid to the Temperance Alliance he would have had it. He took \$16,800 out of the Prohibition Commission last year, and he took \$5,000 to pay for a plebiscite. May I ask if that is what he thinks the Prohibition Act was instituted for? Does the statute provide that you can take money out of the liquor revenue to pay for a plebiscite? This was the "blood money" that they wouldn't touch; they wouldn't put their holy hands on it or they would be ruined. The hon. member from Rustico wouldn't touch it under any consideration, nor the hon. member from Summerside. It was tainted money, that money that he himself had a good deal to do with gathering together; because they say that he has the reputation of writing more certificates than any other doctor in the Province.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: Do you say that?

DR. MCMILLAN: I heard the Minister of Agriculture defend my hon. friend for it in a political campaign.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: But you wouldn't say it.

DR. MCMILLAN: I couldn't say it until I saw the record. And the record has conveniently disappeared.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: You wouldn't say that if you saw the record. I am telling the truth, you wouldn't.

DR. MCMILLAN: And I am telling the truth, that the Minister of Agriculture tried to defend you for writing so many prescriptions. He is so used to taking colleagues out of the "hole" that when he saw the hon. member from Summerside going in he put his long, generous claw down and tried to pull him out. (Laughter.) He said it was because another doctor in Summerside was away on a vacation and consequently my hon. friend had to write more prescriptions. That was one reason. The second reason was that there was an epidemic at the time in Summerside. But the only epidemic at that time was an epidemic of thirst, because there was no epidemic of sickness when those prescriptions were written. (Applause.)

HON. DR. MCNEILL: Do you write "Notes by the Way"?

DR. MCMILLAN: No; it is I. O. U.'s that I write. (Laughter.) How does my hon. friend justify the taking of this \$16,800 of "blood money"? I would like to hear him clear himself on that point. I wouldn't mind some of those gentlemen on the other side, but the hon. member from Summerside and the hon. member from Rustico are the twin apostles of Prohibition in this Province, and they should be able to uphold their reputation at all times. They have told us about the horrors of Government Control, of the deficits that follow its introduction in every Province, and they have assured us that the brains of Canada are right here in Prince Edward Island and that every other Province is wrong. Yet the money is gone; and their promises are all broken that there never would be a cent taken out of the Prohibition Commission and used as ordinary revenue. The Premier has said that on many occasions, that he would never touch that money. But he took it just the same.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: To enforce the Act, I always said so.

DR. MCMILLAN: You never said so until last year, when you intimated what was going to happen.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: I said it on the public platform at every meeting.

DR. MCMILLAN: Was the taking of \$3000 for a plebiscite enforcing the Act, or was it to carry out an election promise that you had no bus-

ness making in the first place?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: It was part of the carrying out of the Act. (Cries of "Oh, Oh.")

DR. MCMILLAN: Was it to enforce the Act that \$1200 was taken out of the Prohibition Commission and paid to the Temperance Alliance?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: Did I take that money?

DR. MCMILLAN: I said you are responsible, as Attorney General for that money. (Applause.)

PREMIER SAUNDERS: You make a statement that is absolutely not correct. I never took any money except for the enforcement of the Act.

DR. MCMILLAN: Was the payment of the plebiscite enforcing the Act?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: It was part of the enforcement of the Act.

DR. MCMILLAN: It was not part of the enforcement of any Act. It was an election bill.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: It was a plebiscite to determine the continuance of the Act.

DR. MCMILLAN: Is that enforcing it?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: It was in connection with the Prohibition Act.

DR. MCMILLAN: It was all in connection with the Government, I know! and the Government is responsible for the actions of the Prohibition Commission. And if the Prohibition Commission is violating the law, the Government is responsible. (Applause.) If you can justify that expenditure, Mr. Premier, go ahead and do it.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: We have; and the people know it.

DR. MCMILLAN: All right. If the people are satisfied, all well and good; but we do not believe it. You know it was a pretty slim vote the last time. The Temperance Alliance regretted that the majority was so small; that it looked so doubtful.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: It will be bigger next time if you make it the same issue.

DR. MCMILLAN: Probably; because it takes the people of Prince Edward Island a long time to see anything.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: I think they see just as quickly as you do and have more common sense.

DR. MCMILLAN: It took us a long time to see the advantage of the automobiles; and finally we got that sight through Conservative eyes. (Ap-

plause.) Two of your chief assets today in this Province, the motor vehicle revenue and the gasoline tax, you would never have had but for Conservative foresight.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: Ha! Ha! DR. MCMILLAN: It will be the same, very likely, with Prohibition. Because, after all, when this Government has been in power two and a half years why should there be any such conditions as we find in this Province today.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: Those are imaginary.

DR. MCMILLAN: Imaginary? The conditions which you described on the floor of this House. Did you imagine that you hired a detective? (Laughter.) Was it imaginary that you paid \$1400 for his services? There was no imagination about that, Mr. Premier. (Applause.) Is that the way that you are trying to put it off now? I wouldn't call it imagination, at all; I would say it was incompetency, to bring a man down here that was no good. Why did you pay him? You could have employed Headley Weeks or Mr. Peter Bradley, and they would have given better service than that.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: We had him to investigate a fire at Summerside and he said it was of an incendiary origin.

DR. MCMILLAN: He couldn't tell what happened. He arrived at no conclusion.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: He did.

DR. MCMILLAN: But you didn't believe him. And what did he do in connection with the fox investigation?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: He came down after he was through and investigated the fox cases.

DR. MCMILLAN: And what did he find about the foxes? That the island was not big enough for him to work in. It was only big enough for him to get drunk in.

PREMIER SAUNDERS: I have explained all that.

DR. MCMILLAN: You have explained that this man was no good; that you couldn't rely on him. But if he rendered no services, why should he have been paid?

PREMIER SAUNDERS: He rendered services for five or six weeks. He found out that this fire was not of an incendiary origin.

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