

Work of the Session.

We regret that we cannot congratulate the country upon the Legislation of the Session just closed. The only measure indicative of progress is the "Act to Incorporate the Starch Manufacturing Company." Of the thirty-one Acts passed no less than eleven are amending Acts. Among these is the Act to amend "The Assessment Act, 1877." We fear that the additional machinery and cost, and the additional provocations to discord, which this Act contains will render the Assessment more obnoxious than ever; and we feel certain that the country will resist the apathy and neglect or worse, with which their demands for the repeal of the Assessment Act were treated by the Government and its supporters. Five "Private Acts" were passed, a County Court has been provided for Montague, and a subsidy for the ferry at Georgetown. The "Interpretation Act"—which a Philadelphia lawyer only can interpret; an Act relating to the Appointment of Constables; and another respecting Domestic Animals; an Act to authorize the levy of an Assessment for 1878; and the inevitable Appropriation Act, complete the list. The latter provides that some \$9,000 be paid to "Honorable members" for performing the distinguished services to which we owe this magnificent result of five weeks Legislative labor.

The Lunatic Asylum Job.

We have, hitherto, carefully refrained from expressing an opinion upon this job. We have done so, partly because the contractors are strangers in the Province—and, therefore, deserving of special consideration; and partly because we had no desire to judge the Government (with whom alone the people has anything to do) before the job had been thoroughly inspected by competent men and the result of their observations had been made known. But, now—with the testimony of Messrs. O'Rourke, Rodd, Corbett, Cunningham, Bailey and Sterling before the House and before the country, we may fairly comment upon the Lunatic Asylum Foundation Job.

- Briefly and mildly stated the testimony amounts to this:—
1. That from a quarter to a half of the stone is bad.
 2. That small stones have been put in the wall where large stones should be.
 3. That the mortar is bad and will not "set."
 4. That the sand put into the mortar is not according to specification.
 5. That the workmanship is very inferior.
 6. That the foundation is not laid sufficiently deep, nor is it laid on a level surface.
 7. That the "French Drains" are not up to specification.
 8. That the "heart" of the wall is very defective.
 9. That the wall, or a large portion of it, will have to be torn down and the foundation built over again before any bricks are laid.
 10. That the deviations from the contract were "unwarrantable."

This is, in brief, the description and the opinion given by impartial and competent men of a work performed within a mile or two of the office of a Commissioner of Public Works to whom the Province pays two thousand dollars a year! This is the evidence laid before the House of Assembly and the country; and yet Mr. W. D. Stewart is permitted to remain in his office, to enjoy its emoluments, and exalt his horn by reason of the honor it gives him. He is continued as the responsible official—responsible to the Province for every public work done in the Province. Is this not a mockery of "Responsible Government?" What man of business, what man of sense, would continue in his service, for one single hour an official, proved by indubitable evidence, to be guilty of such gross neglect of duty? Mr. Stewart and Mr. Stewart alone is responsible to the Government, to the House, and to the Province for the state in which the Inspecting Committee found the Asylum foundation. Yet he continues to enjoy the confidence of the Government, of the House, and of the—ah no, not of the country. But Mr. Stewart holds his office and draws his salary nevertheless.

Suspicious of a "Ring" are entertained and freely expressed by some members of the House of Assembly. There is, so far as we can see, no direct evidence of a "Ring." But the fact that the contract expressly states and stipulates that there shall be no deviation, whatever, from the specification without the knowledge and consent, in writing, of the Commissioner of Public Works, and the fact that "unwarrantable"—we quote the word used by the Committee—"unwarrantable" deviations and departures from the specification—and everyone of them in favor of the Contractors—have taken place,—these facts, taken together, afford strong circumstantial evidence that there is some understanding—some collusion—some secret arrangement existing between the Commissioner of Public Works and the Contractors. We cannot refrain from saying that, in view of these suspicious facts, further enquiry should be made.

If such an investigation does take place, we have no doubt that much more than the public dream of, will be unearthed; and that facts and circumstances will be brought to light, which will completely throw into shade the good ship *Fleeting* and her magnificent cargo of oats.

EMIGRATION to Manitoba is assuming large proportions. Twenty-four men left Montreal for that part on the 15th inst.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

THURSDAY, April 18.

CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

At four o'clock this evening, His Honor Sir Robert Hodgson, Lieutenant-Governor, etc., etc., came down to the Legislative Chamber and was pleased to assent to the following Bills passed during the present session:—

- An Act relating to the Church of England.
- An Act entitled the "Interpretation" Act.
- An Act relating to Fines and Penalties.
- An Act to Amend an Act relating to Roads and Bridges.
- An Act to vest certain lands in the Trustees of Zion Church, Charlottetown.
- An Act to continue a certain Act therein mentioned respecting Special Voting.
- An Act entitled "The County Courts' Amendment Act, 1878."
- An Act to amend the Public Schools' Act.
- An Act to Incorporate Wilkey Lodge I. O. O. F.
- An Act to amend the Act to procure a steamboat for Georgetown Ferry.
- An Act to Incorporate the Charlottetown Starch Manufacturing Company.
- An Act to amend the Assessment Act, 1877.
- An Act to amend an Act to render a written memoranda necessary to the validity of certain promises and engagements.
- An Act relating to the appointment of Constables.
- An Act to Incorporate the Church of Christ, Charlottetown.
- An Act to amend the Act 24 Vic., Cap. 34.
- An Act to amend the Registration of Electors' and Ballot Act of Prince Edward Island.
- An Act to amend the Act 23 Vic. Chap. 9, entitled an Act for preventing fraud by secret Bills of Sale of Personal Chattels.
- An Act to authorize the levying of Assessment for the year 1878.
- An Act relating to the Sale by License of Spirituous Liquors.
- An Act to revive and continue a certain Act therein mentioned.
- An Act to Amend the Act to Incorporate the Town of Summerside.
- An Act entitled the "Chancery Act, 1878."
- An Act to enable Trustees and others to convey estates to the Commissioner of Public Lands.
- An Act to alter and amend the Act relating to the Court for the Recovery of Small Debts for the City of Charlottetown.
- An Act relating to Accidents by Fire in the Town of Alberton, and the removal of nuisances in the streets thereof.
- An Act relating to Physicians and Surgeons.
- An Act to amend an Act relating to a Law Society.
- An Act entitled "The Domestic Animals' Act."
- An Act entitled "The Appropriation Act, 1878."

The following Act was reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General:—

- An Act to Incorporate the Provincial Grand Orange Lodge and Subordinate Lodges.

His Honor then prorogued the Legislature with the following

SPEECH:

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:
Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:
It is a matter of congratulation that your close and constant attention to public business enables me, at this early day, to relieve you from further attendance on your Legislative duties.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:
I have to thank you for the provision you have made for the public service of the present year. You may rely upon an economical and judicious application of the supplies you have voted.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:
Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:
The amendments made by you to the Assessment and Registration of Voters' Acts will, I trust, ensure their more efficient working.

The consolidation and amendment of the County Courts' Act will, I have every confidence, promote the efficiency of those tribunals and the public generally.

In now taking leave of you, I earnestly hope that your labors will, under Divine Providence, tend to advance the prosperity of the Province.

The Session.

THE Alberton Pioneer thus criticises the work of the Session:—

The work of cutting down the expenses of running this seven-by nine Province does not meet the hearty and general response that was expected at the time the House met. The hitherto abortive attempts at retrenchment has met but indifferent success, putting us in mind of an incident (no doubt familiar to our readers) in the history of a very poor family who were reduced to such extremity of want that the parents resolved to sell one of their children of whom they had a good many. Having fixed on the price, they arranged with a rich neighbor who had no "olive plants" of his own, to become the purchaser. At night, when their loved ones were fast asleep, the sorrowing parents took a candle and went over one by one with a view of making a selection. They came to the first-born,—no they couldn't spare him, giving sufficient reasons for the decision; they passed on to the second,—no couldn't spare her, that was settled; the third,—no, that was out of the question; and so on till they had gone over their whole treasure, when they resolved to tough it out, as come what would, they could not spare one of their darlings. In like manner has our congregated wisdom dealt with the various questionable items of expenditure that nearly all are agreed should be curtailed, or lopped off. A few items of needless expenditure have been mentioned as being unnecessary,—debated a while and allowed to remain. What is required is a general cutting down of such salaries as may be deemed out of proportion with the

extent and present condition of the country. What is the reason that any "Government job" is generally expected to be paid for at twice the rate an equal amount of work can be accomplished, or a person in Government is paid at the same ratio,—at least so far as the best offices are concerned. For instance, we find the three officials in the Public Works' Department costing the country \$4,600 a year,—two at \$1,700 each and one at \$1,200. The prevailing opinion among those who have to pay the money is, that the three gentlemen in question would be well paid with half the amount represented by those figures. It is not our intention to make this paper a vehicle of hard names or abusive language, but we contend it is little short of imposition to pay out \$4,600 a year for the work performed in the department under consideration, and at a time when the people are struggling to free their lands from the hated rental system,—at a time when, owing to unprecedented financial dearth, it is all but impossible to obtain money,—at a time when many of the taxpayers are struggling in the battle for bread (the toughest of all fights), and with their cattle dying for want of hay and fodder.

The Quebec Outrage.

(Correspondence of Halifax Herald.)

THE SCENE IN THE HOUSE.
The scene in the House and galleries after recess was very fine. There had not been a finer one since 1873. It had been known, of course, that Sir John was going to speak, and so after dinner, long before the hour of opening, which had been fixed for five minutes to eight, the galleries were full. All round the public galleries thousands of people were packed, the most respectable and intelligent of audiences. Even standing room was not always available, and the little avenues of access to the ladies' galleries were also filled gradually up, till the four sides of the House were just packed with people like sardines in a box. In the ladies' galleries there was, of course, a brilliant gathering. The three galleries in which ladies have special privileges were filled with the lady friends and wives of members and ministers, and the officials, and a large number of ladies were also in the public gallery. And all the night long they sat patiently and pleasantly watching the proceedings; a considerable number remaining till half-past two this morning.

SIR JOHN'S MANNER.

The manner of Sir John's speech was exquisite. He began calmly, and continued his long oration in a strain of dignified and academic eloquence which was captivating. At times he would rise into indignant protestation; at times he would silence the lightest whisper by his solemn and warning tones; very seldom did he flash any light of his humor, for the subject was one that involved the history of those Parliamentary struggles which have made the constitutional history of England the most brilliant and memorable, the most sparkling and splendid in the world. He read a good deal from the great parliamentary writers and his manner of reading was admirable. At times, too, he would quote from memoirs and biographies, showing that he had given a most careful study to the case. And what was remarkable was the aptness with which he would characterize each book and author, showing that in his busy life he had yet given much time to the pleasures of literature, and that his taste, as well as his memory, was perfect. I have given but a faint outline, and a fainter description of a speech which, covering as it did, the whole field of British constitutional history, would have been a memorable effort even in the Parliament of the Empire.

The English Budget.

Sir Stafford Northcote, in explaining the Budget in the House of Commons, stated that the revenue for 1877 and 1878 had £79,762,398, and the expenditure £78,933,495. The surplus for the past year was consequently £829,903. Of the six millions voted, three and a half millions had been actually expended, and some further liabilities were incurred. The surplus was thus converted into a deficit of £2,640,000. To meet this deficit and further liabilities Government had applied £750,000 of surplus revenue, and issued Exchequer bonds for £5,750,000 running a year only. They thus commenced the year with temporary debt of £2,750,000. Estimated deficit for 1878 and 1879 is £1,560,000. This does not include any provision for redemption of Treasury bonds or further liabilities, £500,000 of which has been incurred for army and £200,000 for navy, which would have to be met by supplementary estimates. They further estimated the expense of calling out reserves at £400,000, which is allowed for their being under arms three months. They estimated the expense that would have to be incurred for new docks and extra labor at £400,000, thus raising the supplementary estimates to £1,000,000 or £1,500,000. All of these estimates combined showed a total deficit of £5,000,000 or £5,800,000. They proposed to meet, during the present year, the deficit on ordinary expenditures, supplementary estimates, some portion of outstanding and the Treasury bonds. For this purpose they proposed to increase the income tax to two pence on the pound, which, they estimated, would produce £3,000,000; to increase the tobacco duty four pence per pound, which, they estimated, would produce £750,000; to increase the dog tax in a manner estimated to produce £1,000,000. They proposed to make some allowance in assessment of income tax for depreciation in value of machinery, and grant some exemptions from house tax. These reductions would cause a loss of £80,000. Thus about £1,550,000 of deficit would be left over to the next year.

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D. O'M. REDDIN, Jr., Sec'y.

April 18—3i

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