

THE DAILY EXAMINER.

APRIL 15, 1896.

MR. PETERS' APOLOGY.

It will be admitted that Mr. Peters had much to explain and account for. He led the people to believe that under his administration the expenditures of the Province would be lessened, and they have been largely increased. He led the people to believe that he would "make ends meet," and deficit has followed deficit as regularly as the years have followed each other. He led the people to believe, that "the day of taxation was far off," and that they would be consulted before taxation was applied; and taxation of land, taxation of incomes, taxation of incorporated companies, taxation of banks, taxation of telegraphs, taxation of the dead, was without an appeal to the people, applied within a year. He exploited the Land Office and obtained a loan of \$185,000 in order that he might pay off the old debt, thoroughly repair the Provincial Building and have a small balance to start with in addition to the \$91,000 of subsidy payable at the beginning of each year; but the \$185,000 is gone and \$127,000 in addition is gone, and the \$91,000 was gone, too, at the beginning of this year, and the Province is sinking deeper and deeper into debt. Mr. Peters is not to go down to posterity as an arch deceiver of the people and a man who won office and power upon false pretences, he must give good reasons for his disastrous failure to make his performances square with his promises. He is a trained speaker. He labored long and he labored hard, last evening, to put the best possible face upon his conduct of affairs and maintain the confidence in his administration which his followers are either rapidly losing or have already lost. But he failed as completely as he has failed to make ends meet to justify his conduct, in the light of his pre-election pledges.

Instead of this, he tried to explain that certain increases in the expenditure were unavoidable. In this connection the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, aptly and pungently, the great difference between Mr. Peters' tone now and Mr. Peters' tone a few years ago. Then there was no account taken by him of the increasing cost of education or of unanticipated expenditures as a result of accidents or storms. But now he is so anxious about these things that he enters into minute explanations as to the difference between the pay of first-class teachers and second-class teachers and actually manufactures storms and freshets with hundreds upon hundreds of bridges wrecked or carried away to be repaired or replaced at unexpected cost. The people know very well that last year was just an ordinary year in which there was no extraordinary expenditures on account of either education or public works. Where are those 800 bridges, new or repaired? Nowhere except in the lively imagination of a special pleader who is in a tight place and must needs get out of it if possible.

As last year, then, was only an ordinary year, and a non-election year, as the expenditures of last year reach the round sum of \$310,000, and as the Premier has not shown how he can or will lessen the expenditures, how can an intelligent people conclude that the expenditures of this year, when a Dominion election is inevitable, will be only \$250,000? Such a conclusion is contrary to experience and to reason. Equally questionable are the Premier's estimates of revenue. We cannot, in reason, expect a Land Office the workings of which have been dried up by reckless and extravagant mismanagement, to yield an increased amount. If in addition to paying their taxes the farmers of the Smith estate, lately purchased, should within the year be able to make full payment for the fee simple of their holdings, there will simply be so much more drawn from the capital of the Province and gone forever, necessitating increased taxation in all future years. In any case, it is evident to every discerning man that the experience of this year will be as last year and every year under the present administration—a year of taxes and deficits and added debt.

Mr. Peters scarcely disguises his own belief in the result of his management of public affairs. But he says "the hour of deliverance is at hand," "there is to be an election this year," "the honorable man who led the Liberal Party will at once consider our just claim—a claim established beyond doubt by our predecessors in office—and this Province will receive so much more money from Ottawa that our debt will be wiped out and we shall go on swimmingly in the future." This is in substance the persuasion delivered last evening by Mr. Premier Peters. It will be interesting to note what the Toronto Globe and Sir Richard Cartwright will have to say about it. We feel sure that Mr. Peters were a Tory Premier the Globe would denounce his proposition as one of the most corrupt that could probably be made to the people of a Province on the eve of an election. There was a time, not long past, in which Mr. Peters left-hand supporters declared with one accord that the acceptance by Messrs. Sullivan and Ferguson of \$10,000 a year was in full of our claim upon the Government at Ottawa and that we could never henceforth expect to obtain an additional dollar. But now, presto! Mr. Peters declares that that amount was an account and that the payment of it establishes our "well defined claim." This opinion will, we have no doubt, be pleasing to the friends of the late Government, for it is in accordance with their opinion. But what are the leaders of the Liberal Party likely to do? We know that it was the opinion of the late Mr. McKenzie that the terms of confidence with this Province had been failed to the "almost possible extent," and we know that this opinion descended to the party which he formerly led. We know that the Toronto Globe has pronounced the Liberals of Ontario and Canada against what

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

TUESDAY, April 14.

House met at 3.30. On motion of Mr. H. C. Macdonald the bill incorporating the Central Mutual Insurance Company was read a second time in committee. Mr. Warburton in the chair. The third reading was set down for to-morrow.

Mr. McKinnon moved the second reading of the bill incorporating the Trustees of St. Andrew's Church at Moncton in connection with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The bill was reported agreed to, and the third reading was set down for to-morrow.

On motion of Mr. Bell the House went into committee on the bill respecting the rights of property of married women, with Mr. Robertson in the chair. The bill was discussed at considerable length by the promoter, Hon. Mr. Peters, Hon. Mr. Cartwright, A. J. Peters, McKinnon, Warburton and Rogers (Alberton), after which it was referred to a sub-committee of five to investigate. Progress was then reported.

THE BUDGET.

After recess Hon. Mr. Peters moved that the House go into committee of supply. He said that before dealing with the finances of the Province he would review its actual condition, and point out in what way he proposed to meet it. No press, either a house or a politician, should deny the credit of the country, and assert that the Province is sunk in debt and not worthy of credit. As a matter of fact this Island is in a first-class financial condition, and compares favorably with the other Provinces. He then proceeded to show how the debt of the Province was made up, claiming that the total debt on the 31st December last was \$392,494.77. Against this he placed assets, the amount of \$900,000, and claimed that the Province therefore had over half a million to its credit, \$5 each for every man, woman and child. He then proceeded to contrast the financial condition of this Province with that of the other provinces, quoting from the statistical year book to show that our debt was a mere bagatelle in comparison with theirs. The debt of the Province was not sinking into debt. But it may get into debt in the future if care is not taken to make ends meet.

He then proceeded to show how, in some instances, the expenditure last year exceeded the estimates. This increase was principally in roads, bridges and ferries. First, we estimated for roads \$2,000, while \$19,000 was spent, an excess over the estimate of \$17,000. They had hoped that the road machines would have lessened the expense under this heading, but had been disappointed. But our anticipations in respect to this matter will be more fully realized when some necessary amendments to the Road Act have been made. They had only done what work the people could not do without, and the expenditure was not excessive. On bridges they had estimated \$7000, and spent \$19,000. The freshets, had on roads, had been doubly bad on bridges. At Dunk river not a bridge had been left standing, and this caused an excessive expenditure. Last year the Commissioner had to undertake the repair of 800 bridges, and many of these had to be rebuilt. No person was more anxious than he to keep the roads and bridges up at the least possible expense. But what could be done but make the necessary repairs?

With regard to bridges only in two years did the expenditure fall below that of last year, and one of these years was during our regime. The present government had done no small share of permanent work. They paid \$1200 for building an abutment at Mount Stewart, which is included in our bridges and will stand for 100 years. In Murray Harbor, hills had been levelled, and in other sections other permanent work had been done.

The next item on the estimate is our ferries, \$39,998, including ferries all over the Province. A large portion of this work is done by contract. With regard to the Southport and East and West River ferries, he proposed giving facts and figures later on. Then there is the estimate for schools. In 1884 the expenditure was \$105,000, and in 1895 it was \$122,000, showing \$17,000 of an increase in that one item alone. The school report shows how this increase was brought about. In 1891 the expenditure was \$111,154, against \$122,000 in 1895, an increase of over \$10,000. This increase came from (1) increase in school districts, (2) increase in second-class teachers. He pointed out that late governments have been careful not to increase the school districts where there was a possibility of doing so, and that the second cause, however, is the principal reason of

the increase in the cost of education. He pointed out that the percentage of attendance for last year was the largest in the history of this Province, and the largest in Canada. It proves the deep interest taken by the people in educational affairs, and it shows that by the earlier forms of school districts the Government has enabled the children to attend where they ought to. There was an immense number of children studying the practical subjects, and he looked up at this as another sign that the money spent for education is not being wasted.

Whilst we have this large expenditure, as well as other large expenditures, including the amount spent for a new steamer, the other side of the account, however, is that we have endeavored to cut down on matters which were not of vital importance to the people. The amounts for legislation and the administration of justice are both less than formerly.

Now we come to Hillborough ferry. Some suggested handing it over to a contractor. This sounds very reasonable, but looking back over the records it would be found that when that was done we had to contract a most unsatisfactory state of affairs existed. Nearly one-third of our population is accommodated by the Hillborough ferry, and the numbers who use the other ferries is also high, simply to give the people accommodation. He pointed out that from 1887 to 1895 the average loss to the Government on the ferries was \$13,000, and while under Government management the average was \$14,000. That is only \$1,000 more and the service was far more satisfactory conducted. If the expenditure can be reduced the Government are willing to reduce it. The East and West River ferries may possibly be contracted for less money. Heretofore the Rocky Point ferry was a very small affair, but this was not the case now when the accommodation was vastly superior to what it was at that time.

He submitted a statement showing the estimated revenue for the year, as follows:—

Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Includes Dominion subsidy (\$183,010.00), Public lands (\$30,000.00), Provincial land tax (\$33,500.00), Income tax (\$5,500.00), Commercial travellers licenses (\$4,000.00), Incorporated companies tax (\$5,000.00), Ferries (\$8,000.00), Probationary offices (\$2,500.00), Registry offices (\$4,700.00), County courts (\$1,500.00), Provincial secretary office (\$750.00), Peddlers licenses (\$900.00), Vendor's licenses (\$450.00), Hospital for lunatics (\$960.00), Prince of Wales College fees (\$1,200.00), Fines and penalties (\$200.00), Casual revenue (\$490.00), Prisons (\$150.00), Succession duties (\$3,000.00). Total: \$286,610.00.

This brings revenue and expenditure very close together. The extraordinary expenditures will be taken up distinctly. He then took up the estimates of expenditure. In the matter of education it goes up to \$122,500 this year, an increase over last year. We have to estimate an increase in teachers' salaries and an increase in supplements. In the matter of roads our estimated expenditure is \$6,925. The estimate for interest last year was about correct, and it is much the same this year. Although we owed more last year, and the year before yet our interest was less. Under the late Government the interest on the debt would have been \$20,000 instead of \$14,000. We saved money in the matters of interest, legislation and the administration of justice. These savings hurt nobody, and are not cheese-paring like cutting down a man's salary below what he can live on.

On ferries this year we estimate an expenditure of \$25,000. This service ought to be maintained in an efficient condition, and every care would be taken to maintain its efficiency. In regard to bridges, he thought they should get through with \$13,000, and on roads \$16,000. He said it was intended to bring in some amendments to the Road Act, and these changes would, he hoped, facilitate a reduction in the estimated expenditure. They had bought ten road machines, and these, with the ones already purchased, would admit of one being put in the hands of every supervisor.

The sinking fund will, of course, go on, and is not necessary in the same sense with respect to that item. All the statements are now before the House, and it is not necessary to go over them at greater length.

Last year, at this time, we thought an election was at hand, now we know it must be near. He thought there was every indication of a change in the Federal Government, and when that change took place he felt sure that our just claims would not be longer ignored.

Hon. Mr. Gordon in reply said he had listened to the Leader with great attention for an hour and three quarters. He had heard him before and must say that he never knew him to labor so hard to make black appear white. He did this very well, but all must have noticed the contradictions in his statements. The Leader said that the Government spent less than the previous Government on roads, and this is quite true. But what surprised him (Mr. Gordon) was his statements regarding the floods of last summer when it was generally agreed that it was a very dry summer. The only food they knew of in Prince County was one of bank notes, and it occurred just before the election. The Leader tried hard to make it appear that the Province is progressing, and said he would never forgive anyone who derided its credit. Although we were going behind he (Mr. Gordon) was not going to say that our credit was bad. No long ago gentlemen now in the Government introduced the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this House the system pursued in the past by the Government for this Province in expending annually large sums of money in excess of its revenue, is detrimental to the best interest of this province."

What stronger words could he use than these? This resolution was voted for by a number of gentlemen now in the Government, including the Commissioner of Public Works, the hon. member for West River, the hon. member for Milton and the hon. member for Bideford. These gentlemen are now members of the present government. How can they sit in the government when their actions are detrimental to the best interest of the country? Some years ago, he (Mr. Gordon) and several of his colleagues were denounced as traitors because they retired from a Government that was leading the Province into debt. Revenue and expenditure should be made to meet. The leader of the Government is said to be a dictator, and the Government said to be a one-man institution. If this is so, the Leader could put a stop to the extravagant policy. There are times in the history of a country when a bold man is needed to control its affairs. The present time seems to be opportune.

The Leader had spoken at considerable length with regard to the Hillborough ferry. This ferry is a veritable maelstrom and is swallowing more money than any other institution in the country. The loss on the three boats is \$25,000. If one third of the population uses the ferry, how is it that only \$7,000 was received from passengers? If the Government were to offer \$5,000 subsidy and let the ferry out by contract, some \$17,000 would be saved on that service alone. The people are crying out to stop the extravagance, and action must be taken.

TELEGRAPHIC.

SPECIAL DESPATCHES TO THE EXAMINER.

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA.

The Obstruction Continued. Dissolution Imminent—Organizing for the Fray.

OTTAWA, April 15.

Sir Charles Tupper made yesterday what he termed the last appeal to the House to pass the Remedial Bill. It is expected that the obstructionists will continue their work over Wednesday, and that to-night or Thursday Sir Charles Tupper will announce the Government's decision to withdraw the Remedial Bill, as it is hopeless to try to pass it this session. A few essential Government measures and certain unfinished private legislation will be disposed of, and then an effort will be made to pass the supplementary estimates. Prorogation is talked of for St. George's Day.

Heavy Loss by Fire.

NEW YORK, April 15. The five-story building at 78 Grand Street, and the adjoining buildings were burned last night. Loss, \$500,000.

Death of Col. Denison.

OTTAWA, April 15. Col. Denison, M. P., died at midnight.

Young Liberal-Conservative Association.

A Public Meeting of the Electors of Charlottetown will be held in the Philharmonic Hall on Thursday evening next, the 16th inst., at 7.30 o'clock. The meeting will be addressed by several young men and also by some of our local M. P. s. All voters of Charlottetown Common and Royalty are invited to be present. J. B. DAWSON, President. A. J. QUINN, Secretary.



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