

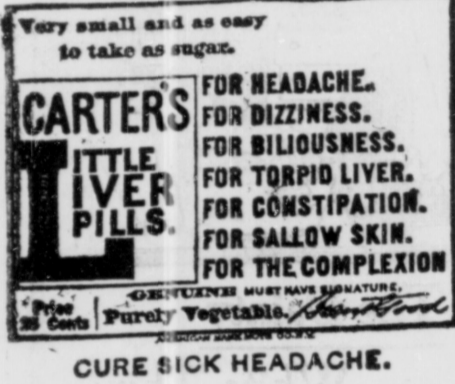
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PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

The Debenture Bill Further Considered.

STRONG ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE MEASURE.

How the Public Works of the Province are Looked After.

WEDNESDAY, June 6.

House met at 11.30.
On motion of Mr. A. Peters a bill amending the Act for the advancement of justice was read a first time. Second reading tomorrow.

Mr. A. A. McLean asked the Commissioner of Public Works whether a petition from certain electors of Wood Islands East, praying for the opening of a new road between Ewan McMillan's and Mrs. Henderson's farms (from Gray's Road to Post Road) was received by the Government, and if so, what action (if any) is intended to be taken in respect thereof.

Hon. Mr. McLean said the matter would be investigated. If deemed in the public interest the road would be opened.

Hon. Mr. Forbes asked the Commissioner of Public Works if a petition of certain electors of Caledonia and Middleton, concerning a road to extend from the County Line Road at the proposed extension of the Glen William Road through Caledonia West to Middleton had been received, and what action is intended to be taken by the Government.

Hon. Mr. McLean said that such petition had been received and if it is desirable in the interest of the public the road would be opened.

Mr. Campbell repeated several questions asked by him some days before, and the information was promised.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Richards the bill amending an act regarding fur-bearing animals was read a third time and passed.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Farquharson the bill amending the Income Tax Act was read a third time and passed. The clerk declared the division 13 to 13 and the Speaker gave his casting vote in favor of the bill.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Rogers committee was resumed on the bill relating to the taxing of persons other than commercial travellers selling goods to consumers. Mr. McWilliams took the chair, and the bill was reported agreed to with amendments. Third reading tomorrow.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Farquharson the House went into committee on the bill providing for the construction of a wing to the Asylum and for the construction of certain steel bridges and other permanent works, Mr. Forbes in the chair.

Hon. Mr. Gordon thought that in view of our lamentable financial position the Leader of the Government should pause before placing another burden on the shoulders of our people. The money now paid for interest on our debt would go a long way towards paying for roads and other public works. The Leader is following in the footsteps of his Liberal predecessors in regard to increasing the public debt.

Hon. Mr. Farquharson said the issuing of debentures for permanent works was a necessity in a progressive country. Permanent works were a necessity here, and the only way to get the money to meet the cost was to issue debentures. It would have been better to have issued debentures during the thirteen years of the previous administration than to have drawn the \$200,000 from capital. He believed the people would endorse the action of the Government in regard to this matter of debentures. This country is not in the deplorable condition the Opposition say it is. There is no place under the sun where the debt is less than it is in this province.

At the afternoon session Hon. Mr. Farquharson submitted statements regarding Victoria bridge and some other matters asked for by Mr. Campbell.

Committee on the asylum annex bill was then resumed.

Hon. Mr. Farquharson continued his remarks. He would like to know what the Opposition would do. Were they opposed to permanent public works? Are we going to neglect our public works? The province of Nova Scotia recently issued \$300,000 for steel bridges. The issuing of debentures would not add to the debt; they would increase the value of the assets. There would be good public works to show for the expenditure. The statute passed last year for \$26,000 was to be repealed and the \$48,750 take its place.

Mr. Campbell said he noticed there was a steel bridge here already. But only 100 feet of the 500 of this structure was permanent; the rest was perishable material. The public works of this province were never in a more deplorable condition than they are to-day. Yet the Leader says they are looking after the public works. If he is not mistaken this is the third time of asking for debentures. Some time ago \$75,000 was voted and eaten up. Last year they voted \$26,000, but that, for reasons best known to themselves, they did not float. He thought that the object of issuing debentures now was not so much to build the asylum annex as to repair some of the bridges throughout the country that they had allowed to fall into decay. The present government had no mandate from the people to run the country into debt. In

every instance where they appealed to the country the people declared against them at the polls. Every dollar of the estimates tabled a few days ago had already been eaten up except about \$1140. Under all the circumstances it was no wonder the Opposition hesitated to vote for these debentures now. The Government has lost the confidence of the country and have no right to vote away the money of the people. How does the Leader make out that the debt of the province is not being increased by issuing debentures? The Leader speaks of the debt of Ontario. But look at the resources of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. But what are the resources of P. E. Island? The whole burden must fall on the back of the poor farmer. Mr. A. A. McLean failed to see how the issuing of debentures would improve the position of the country, as intimated by the Leader. It is simply mortgaging the resources of the province to do as he is doing. Last year he claimed that he could get money at 3 per cent, now he comes in and says he cannot get it under 3 1/2 per cent. There is no sinking fund in existence to-day. All we have is \$4000. The Premier is not dealing with the business of the province as he would his own business. How is the Leader going to pay the \$160,000 he owes the bank to-day? Where is the difference between the cost of the asylum annex and the \$48,750 asked for to be expended?

Mr. A. Peters held that the building of the annex would be improving the assets of the country.

Mr. Shaw said the idea of Mr. Peters seemed to be that the greater the debt the greater the prosperity of the people. If we continue to add to the debt by debentures where are we going to end? We are overburdened with debt at the present time. The Government last year paid \$19,000 for interest. In other words for every three dollars paid in by the farmers two was paid out for interest. About \$22,000 will be required next year. When the Hillsborough bridge is completed the entire land tax will not be sufficient to pay the interest. The Opposition are decidedly opposed to the building of the annex in view of the commissioners recommendation to build cottages. The contract for the construction of the annex was let after the commissioners met. The Premier should have waited for their report before letting the contract. He believed that these cottages could be built out of the ordinary revenue without adding to the debt of the province. The so-called permanent bridges should not be classed as permanent works as much of the material is not permanent.

Mr. James E. Macdonald pointed out that the debt of the province was \$550,000, and the interest after next year would be \$22,000. Speaking of the matter before the House he said that his idea is that the Government should get an expert report regarding steel bridges. This expert should report on all bridges costing from \$20 upwards and also the number of steel bridges that would be needed in the province. Then they would know how much they would have to expend. They would also know as to the material for the approach. This was of the highest importance. The road system is not giving satisfaction. The road machines were idle last spring when they should be at work. The main post roads should be let by the mile. It was certainly high time for a change in the policy regarding the keeping in order of the highways.

Hon. Mr. Farquharson approved of Mr. Macdonald's suggestion regarding an expert. But he didn't go far enough. They already had an expert's opinion, as to steel bridges and knew now where to build them. The building of such permanent works as these was adding to the assets of the province.

Mr. Macdonald said he did not approve of going ahead without an expert's opinion. They should know all about the cost and where the money was to come from before proceeding with the work.

Mr. DeRoche did not think it advisable to go ahead with steel bridges in the face of the present large debt of the province. But the asylum annex might be necessary. The whole burden of the taxation will fall on the farmers. The highways and roads should be attended to before proceeding with steel bridges. The road machines were comparatively useless and a great bill of expense. The quicker they were done away with the better for the finances of the province. In his district this year the road machines cost the Government \$80. Prince County is grossly neglected in the matter of public works. The roads were in a bad and dilapidated condition. Not half enough money was voted to keep the highways in proper repair. There is a debt of \$600,000 hanging over the farmers of the province. They will never be able to pay the interest on the debt unless a halt is called.

Hon. J. R. McLean was favorable to the measure before the House. He approved of the building of permanent works, and spoke well of the work done by the road machines.

Mr. J. A. Macdonald spoke of the bad state of the roads up west. He thought it was high time a change for the better was made.

Mr. Birch did not approve of mortgaging the Island for the purpose of building so-called permanent works. The Government can give \$6000 for an exhibition in Charlottetown, but we cannot get \$500 for an exhibition in Prince County or King's County. The roads up west were in a bad way. The bridge at Little Tignish is in a bad state. The supervisor says this would be a good place for a steel bridge.

Mr. John Kickham pointed out that the Commissioner of Public Works represented the Souris district as well as he (Mr. Kickham) did, and it was therefore not his intention to say very much on this matter, as the electors would hold the Commissioner responsible. But when the Commissioner of Public Works says that the roads are good he could not refrain from contradicting the statement. As a

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