

THE Prince Edward Island Magazine

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MR. FOSTER AT TORONTO.

How Sir John Macdonald's Policy Upheld the Dominion.

"I ask any intelligent business man what would have been the condition of Canada if there had been no previous upbuilding time by the National Policy, if there had been no preserving tariff to keep the low-priced goods from flooding this country? (Hear hear, and loud applause.) Our factories were kept fairly well going; our workmen were not walking the streets; our banks were steady. That is one reason why we went through that period so well. There is another reason. When that period of stress and storm came, as Finance Minister, I said to myself and my colleagues, we can ease the burdens of the people during this period of hard times, and with one stroke of the pen every cent of taxation was taken from raw sugars in this country, and from 1890 to 1895 \$19,000,000 of taxation was remitted on sugars alone to the pockets of the people, and enabled them to stem the hard times. (Loud applause.)

"Between 1874 and 1878 what remission of taxation did Sir Richard Cartwright make to the people in that period of hard times? None, sir, but he laid on two successive layers of taxation amounting to more than a million and a half in all. Sir Richard taunts me with having a deficit in 1895-6. I had a net deficit in that period of \$1,600,000, and made an addition to the debt of sixteen millions; but if I had kept on the sugar taxation I would have paid every cent of the deficit. I would have prevented one single dollar of addition to the debt, and I would have had about three millions dollars to set over against the public debt of this country at the time. It was saved to the people's pockets; there is the difference between Sir Richard and myself in that respect. (Applause.)

PROMISE TO LOWER TAXES.

"Now, with reference to the taxation of the country, what do we find? If there was one promise that Sir Richard and the Liberal leaders made it was the promise from every platform in this country, from every hustings, that the taxation of this country was too high, that it was grinding down the people, and that it ought to be diminished, and that if they came in they would diminish it. They made the same pledge to the people of this country with reference to the expenditures of the country. Shall I weary you by reading what they say—(cries of 'go on')—in their platform of 1893? This was one of the planks of their platform:—

We cannot but view with alarm the large increase of the public debt, and of the controllable annual expenditure of the Dominion, and the consequent annual taxation of the people under the Government that have been continuously in power since 1878, and we demand strict economy in the administration of the Government of the country.

"Mr. John Charlton said that—
The Liberal party, if in power, could at once reduce the public expenditure and effect a saving to the extent of five millions of dollars per annum, without impairing the efficiency of the service.

"Mr. Davies, from Prince Edward Island, said:—

Several millions may be lopped off the present expenditure without injury to the public service.

"And Mr. McMullen, whom we must not leave out, declared:—

If we do not give you reciprocity in three years, and reduce the expenditure to thirty-five millions of dollars, turn us out, gentlemen, turn us out. (Laughter, and "We will, we will.")

"Mr. Laurier, on this platform, in the city of Toronto, declared:—

Has the expenditure gone down? No; it has gone up. It went up by two, three, five millions and more, until it is about thirty-eight millions and more; and Conservatives don't shrink from it, but swallow it. If we get into power we will follow the example of Mr. McKenzie, and I say that although we may not be able to bring back the expenditures to what they were under him, we can reduce the amount, yes, three millions of dollars.

"The Hon. David Mills says four millions. These are the statements they made with reference to economy.

PLEDGES UNFULFILLED.

"Now, that they have been in power for three years, when they have had a chance to prove themselves, how does their party stand on taxation? How does it stand on expenditure? How does it stand on the debt of the country? If there are any old-time Liberals in the Hall, let them listen to these figures. From 1892 to 1896 the customs revenue of the country was an average of \$19,839,684; in 1899 it has risen to \$25,382,553, an increase of five and a half millions, or a little more than one dollar per head of the people. That is how they performed their pledges with reference to the reduction of customs taxation. But, sir, there is the customs and excise taxation; add them together, and how does it stand? From 1892 to 1896, \$27,700,000; in 1899, \$35,023,000—an increase of seven and one third millions in the taxation of customs and excise.

"What, sir, with reference to the total revenue, which all comes out of the pockets of the people in one way or another? From 1892 to 1896 there was collected an average of \$36,400,000 in this Dominion, but last year that amounted to \$46,796,368, an increase of ten and one-third millions in the total imposts taken out of the people of this country in 1899." (Applause.)

AS TO EXPENDITURES.

Sir Wilfred Laurier said, "We will reduce it two or three, yes, four millions," and McMullen said, "If we don't reduce it, turn us out." What have they done?

Now, I am not going to juggle with consolidated revenue, and with capital account and with accidental charges. I am going to take the total expenditure of this country for all services, every cent and every dollar that was expended in any way whatever. That is the fairest way to do. The people have to contribute it in taxes, they have to pay for the borrowing of the money and the only fair comparison in this way is to take the total expenditures. What are they? I rely upon Mr. Fielding's report; it is a column introduced lately; it gives the total expenditures for every year from Confederation up. The total expenditure for all purposes on an average for 1892 to 1896 was \$42,141,000; for 1895, \$41,700,000; for 1899 it is \$50,892,000. (Applause.) Sir, you may juggle with consolidated fund and with capital expenditures, and other expenditures, and you may take them separately and make it appear a very different story where you cannot follow them all. There is an aggregation of all that was expended, and in 1899 it was \$8,700,000 greater than the average between 1892 and 1896. (Hear, hear, and loud applause.)

COMPARISON BY ESTIMATES.

Sir Richard was anxious to compare it by estimates. We will compare it by estimates. My estimates in 1896-7 were \$41,000,000 in all. The estimates of Mr. Fielding for 1899-1900, adding a proportionate amount for the supplementary in comparison with the amount brought down this year is altogether \$54,500,000, or an increase of \$13,500,000. (Applause.) Sir Richard declared that there were four millions and odd of supplementary estimates which I did not bring down but which I had prepared to be brought down Sir, I made a statement in answer to that in the House of Commons, and I told Sir Richard and Mr. Fielding that those tables were simply the calls of the department made upon them for the various services, aggregated together to be sent to the Council, and to be passed upon by the Council, as to what, if any, of these amounts would be submitted to the House at all. Why, sir, \$6,500,000 of the railway subsidies were brought down. But suppose I had got hold of the tabulated requests that went through the Minister of Railways to the Cabinet for railway subsidies, would I have counted them at six millions? More likely I would have found them to have been sixty millions. The year before last Mr. Laurier himself stated that though they only brought down a small amount of railway subsidies, some seventy millions in all had been asked for. This tabulated statement of mine was never considered in Council, it never was authorised, it never was presented to the House and it never was intended to be presented to the House. (Applause.) But, sir, suppose it had been presented there would have been four millions to have been added. Add it and what have you? The whole estimates then would have been still about six millions more in the year 1899-1900 than even that swelled estimate in 1896.

LIBERALS AND THE TARIFF.

"What have they done with reference to the tariff? Sir Richard Cartwright has adopted a new set of phrases. This grinding ruinous taxation he used to talk about he now denominates gross income. (Laughter.) The robber tariff he used to talk about he now calls a high revenue tariff. Let us see what it like. From 1880 to 1887 the National Policy was in force, and was fought as being in force by the Liberal party in parliament and out of it. The average of duties on dutiable goods from 1880 to 1887 was 26 1/2 per cent. The average to day is 28.38 per cent. Yes, this is only a high revenue tariff, but the one from 1880 to 1887 was a National Policy tariff. From 1888 to 1896 the average was 30.8 per cent. From 1897 to 1899 it is 29.13 per cent. and in 1898-99, taking the full work of their tariff, it is 28.98 per cent. But sir, it is fairer to take the average upon free and dutiable goods together, and taking that test what have you? The tariff rate on that basis from 1892 to 1896 was 17.4-10 per cent, the average rate for 1893-99 is 16.76 per cent., a reduction of 71-100 of one per cent, and no more. (Applause and laughter.) That is the way in which they have destroyed production. Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. Laurier went through this country from one end to the other declaring against the robber tariff, and pledging themselves to destroy every vestige of it and to take every vestige of it from the tariff of this country. They have been in

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power for three years, and the total that can be shown is that they reduced the tariff rate from 17.47 to 16.76, or 71-100 of one per cent. (Laughter.)

THE PER CAPITA TEST.

"Let us take this test of Sir Richard Cartwright. The per capita taxation from 1892 to 1896 was \$5.55 per head; for 1899 it is \$6.58 per head, or \$1.03 more. Take the total revenue; it was \$7.14 per head in 1896; it is \$8.30 per head in 1899—an increase of \$1.16 per head. Take the total expenditure, it was \$8.14 per head in 1896; it is \$9.57 per head in 1899, an increase of \$1.43 per head. So that the Liberal Government has gone back on the three great pledges they made when in Opposition, to reduce the expenditure, to reduce the taxation and to reform the tariff by taking away every vestige of the principle of protection, and these pledges are falsified by their own record, and today they stand as having heightened in every respect but one the burdens of the people, and of having reduced that only on the average duty of 71-100 of one per cent. on the whole." (Applause.)



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