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appointment on its present basis was that inspectors could not be induced to enforce the law. It was for this reason that it came to be generally recognized that it would be better to make the officials a portion of the system of responsible government. Turning to another point in Mr. Meredith's speech Sir Oliver said the hon. gentleman had charged the members of the Government with claiming credit for the way in which the finances of the Province had been used to promote agricultural and other interests, with speaking as if it were their own money that had been used in this way. There was no foundation for this charge. It would be absurd to speak or to think of the finances of the Province in this way. What the Government did say was that the disposition of the money of the Province had been a good one, and that it had been expended in the interests of the Province. The Government has deserved the same credit for this as for the good legislation it had accomplished, no more. Mr. Meredith had charged him with saying there was no use in economy when we have so large an income.

Mr. Meredith remarked that this was not his charge.

Sir Oliver said the object of the Government during the whole of the time it has been in office was to be as economical as was consistent with the public interest. Every detail of expenditure had been closely watched, that there might be no waste of public funds. They had had the disposition of large sums of money, and what they claimed was that those moneys have been applied properly and to those objects to which they should have been applied. He maintained that there was as little waste at the hands of this Government as of any Government in the world. If any particular Government could be suggested with similar duties to perform and similar means of performing them he would like to have an opportunity of studying their methods, for he had never yet met with such a Government himself. It was in speaking of the lumber question that Mr. Meredith had made this remark on economy. He referred to the Government having refused the appointment of a committee or commission—it was a committee, he thought, that had been asked for—to investigate and report upon the quantity of timber owned by the Province. If there had been any real advantage in such a course there was as much to be gained in it for the Government as for the Opposition. A committee of the House would have been powerless to do anything in the matter, and all that a commission could have accomplished was being done now in the reports of Crown lands agents and of surveyors, but at a much less cost than by way of a commission. No particular good would have resulted from such a course of action as Mr. Meredith blamed them for not following. As to the sales of timber, he thought the public was satisfied that the sales were properly conducted. Mr. Meredith had spoken on this matter as if the Government had been acting in spite of the Legislature; instead of which every sale had been approved by the Legislature, had been made at the best possible time, and had produced prices that had astonished many experts in the business. There was not in even one case disappointment at the price obtained. The Government had no power in the matter save such as was given them, and they used that power in the best interests of the Province. (Applause.) Every sale of any importance had been by public auction. Purchasers had been found among members of both political parties. No favor or preference had been shown to anyone. He wished, however, that his hon. friend would use his influence to have his ideas regarding the sale of timber adopted by his political friends at Ottawa. He had never noticed Mr. Meredith nor any of his supporters advocating reforms in connection with the conduct of timber sales at Ottawa. There was of course a regulation as to selling by auction, but he could not remember any case of such a sale occurring. He had no doubt money would have been saved to the country had the Provincial method of sale prevailed. Mr. Meredith had quoted something said by Hon. Mr. Wood as to the preservation of timber, in 1869. Mr. Wood was not, however, any special authority on the subject, and he did not know the circumstances under which the speech was made. All he could say was that the Government had done their best to preserve the timber. No doubt the country derived far more revenue from the timber under the present policy pursued than would be the case under any other policy. It would be a permanent source of income for the Province if it continued to be conducted as it had been. The effect of not selling now would be to impose taxes on the present generation to save future generations who would, in all probability, be far better able to pay them. The Government

saw no reason why the present generation should not receive the benefits of the resources of the Province instead of leaving them all for the benefit of our descendants. There was not a State of the Union that acted on the lines suggested by the hon. gentleman. Mr. Meredith said it would be far better for us to run into debt than to use our timber resources.

Mr. Meredith took exception to this. He had said: "Better run into debt than exhaust our timber resources."

Sir Oliver thought he had heard Mr. Meredith correctly. Continuing, he said Mr. Meredith complained of the surveys of the country. He did not say the surveys cost too much, but that they were surveying too many townships. The Government on this question simply proceeded on the view that the survey of a country should be gradual. They did not make them all at once, but made some every year. In respect to mining, Mr. Meredith complained that the Government did not spend money enough. He complained on the one hand because we have a great expenditure already. He wanted to confine the expenditure to the interest on certain large sums that he mentioned. And on the other hand he wanted to increase the expenditure a great deal more. He argued as if the whole Province, outside the mining district especially interested, were in favor of such an expenditure. Everybody knew that one great difficulty in connection with the establishment of a mining industry was that of finding a market. That was a matter not so much for the Government to deal with as for the Government at Ottawa. Mr. Meredith had then passed on to the question of holding biennial sessions instead of annual sessions. He did not think Mr. Meredith had ever brought in a resolution on this subject, though it had been occasionally mentioned. Biennial sessions would be very convenient for the Government. The Government would not suffer, whatever the country did. It would be to the advantage of the Government to go on spending money for two years without having to meet the Legislature. But he knew of no case where biennial sessions were held in connection with a system of responsible government such as Ontario enjoyed. In some American States they prevailed, but the system of government there was entirely different from that of Ontario. There was even there, however, a provision for the holding of special sessions, and he thought his hon. friend would find the special sessions were very numerous. Mr. Meredith had said his (Sir Oliver's) only objection to interfering with the rule of annual sessions was that it was an old established rule, intimating he would not lay his hands on anything that was old. He had never hesitated laying hands on anything that required improvement, no matter how old it was. Mr. Meredith had urged there was too much legislation, and that our legislation was too crude. He (the Attorney-General) ventured to say that if Mr. Meredith investigated he would find our legislation no more crude than that of any other country, and not so crude as that of those places where biennial sessions prevailed. In connection with the subject of prohibition Mr. Meredith had spoken of the possible delay in obtaining a decision as to the powers of the Province. He did not think they need apprehend any serious delay. He expected the decision would be given long before next session. The Supreme Court and the Privy Council had to deal with it, and the Privy Council did not now delay its judgments long. Any delay would be with the Supreme Court, and he did not expect it there.

Mr. Meredith had referred to the question of the secret ballot once more. The system followed in Ontario was precisely the system followed in England, Scotland and Ireland. It is not pretended there that it is a secret ballot. The Government of those countries recognized the importance of being able to separate fraudulent from good votes when it became necessary. That could not, of course, be done without a violation of secrecy, but it was a matter of virtual necessity that there should be such an arrangement. His hon. friend said the idea had got abroad through the country that the ballot was not secret, and was working just as much harm in that way as if it were what he claimed it was. If such an idea prevailed it was because Mr. Meredith and his friends had induced people to believe it, though there was not any ground for the belief. Mr. Meredith had said the ordinary revenue did not meet the ordinary expenditure of the Government. That depended on the expenditure which they chose to meet in that way. The revenue was far more than the expenditure for government. But far more was expended than that. The Government spent money for agricultural and other purposes not necessarily a part of government at all. But by so doing they had relieved the municipalities, which would have had to