

## Hon. Mr. Harcourt Delivers the Budget Speech.

### SPLENDID SHOWING MADE.

Steady Decrease in the Province's Expenditure.

### SUCCESSION DUTIES TAX.

Account of the Disputed Accounts Arbitration.

Important Bill Dealing With the Education Department—Provincial Assets  
Wednesday, Feb. 19.

To-day Hon. Mr. Harcourt, the Treasurer of Ontario, laid before the House his annual financial statement, the annual stock-taking to which the people of this Province can look forward with a confidence unknown in most communities. This budget speech proved no exception to its long line of predecessors since the Mowat Government assumed office, and had the same cheering tale of expenditure kept within the estimates, of receipts exceeding expectation, of careful, sound and prudent management. One important feature it had to show: the steady decrease in the gross expenditure of the Province, which has been the characteristic of the last two or three years. A full statement of the important and intricate arbitration between Ontario, the Dominion and Quebec also marked this year's budget speech. It was well received, and during the two hours which its delivery occupied the attention of the House was steadily maintained, and frequent bursts of applause testified to the appreciation with which Hon. Mr. Harcourt's statement was received.

There was no night sitting, Col. Matheson moving the adjournment of the debate when Hon. Mr. Harcourt concluded. The debate will consequently be resumed this afternoon.

### OPENING BUSINESS.

The usual list of petitions was presented and two or three Government bills were introduced. Hon. Mr. Hardy brought in a bill respecting City Councils and other matters. Hon. Mr. Ross brought in two bills, one to consolidate and revise the laws relating to the Education Department and another to consolidate and revise the High Schools act.

The order paper took up little time, but one of the motions on it being pressed. It was by Mr. Marter, for an order similar to the one which he secured a year ago, of a return of the names of all persons, firms or companies indebted to the Province on account of timber dues, ground rent or bonuses for timber limits, together with full particulars of the indebtedness in each case.

Hon. Mr. Hardy readily assented to the motion, which was carried.

At 3.40 p.m. the Government order of "House again in Committee of Supply" was reached. Greeted by a burst of applause, Hon. Mr. Harcourt rose to make that motion. His opening sentences referred to the familiar nature of the financial statement, which for so many years has been satisfactory to the Province. He went on to refer to the way in which the Government had united economy and a wise expenditure, and pointed out how thoroughly the Province has followed the principle of paying its way. He continued:—

### LAST YEAR'S RECEIPTS.

I will, first of all, sir, make some reference to the receipts of 1895.

We received from Crown lands last year \$947,947. Our estimate was \$825,000. We received therefore nearly \$123,000 more than we expected. And yet it is the first year, in nine years in which this receipt has been less than a million dollars. From 1883 to 1886 inclusive it was less than a million, but from 1885 until last year it has quite exceeded a million. The condition of the lumber trade of course largely accounts for the fluctuations in these receipts. We had a sale of limits in October, 1892, and hon. gentlemen well remember how unprecedentedly successful it was, and during that year and the following year we received by way of bonus very large sums. We received as bonus in 1892 \$1,317,798; in 1893, \$986,372; in 1894, \$69,415, and in 1895, \$76,579.

The timber dues alone for the same years have brought us in 1892, \$797,680; in 1893, \$707,746; in 1894, \$844,216, and in 1895, \$715,106.

The receipts by way of ground rents have been, as we would expect, steady and have increased somewhat year by year. We received in this way in 1892 \$59,112; in 1893, \$62,886; in 1894, \$66,865, and in 1895, \$61,493.

During this same period mining leases have given us by way of rent our interest receipt is, it will be seen, less than that of some former years. The interest receipt from the Dominion on account of the capital sum it holds in trust for us is less than that of last year by the sum of \$47,746.

In other words, we did not receive last July the half-yearly payment of interest hitherto regularly received on some of the funds the Dominion holds in trust for us. This amount is withheld for the time being only, pending the settlement of the arbitration which is now proceeding.

I will take occasion later on at some length to refer to this arbitration, to the subject matter of it as well as to the results thus far ascertained.

The interest receipt from our own investments, from deposits in banks and from drainage debentures is also less than that of last year. We had smaller average balances in the banks, and we obtained a lower rate of interest than we did in 1894. Our schedule of receipts, viewed generally, shows here and there considerable change during the last few years. It discloses in some of its main features both flexibility and variability.

### THE SUCCESSION DUTIES.

For example, we received in 1891, only four years ago, not a dollar from succession duties. Last year we received the large sum of \$298,825. Our first receipt from that source was in 1892. Thus far under this head our receipts have been as follows:—In 1892, \$758; in 1893, \$45,507; in 1894, \$150,754, and in 1895, \$298,825. Our estimate for 1895 was \$175,000. Altogether we have, up to the close of last year, received in this way the considerable sum of \$503,319, all of which, I remind the House, we