

Our expenditure for hospitals and charities was the largest the Province has as yet incurred. Our grants last year amounted to \$194,615, as against \$190,221 in 1895, and \$182,612 in 1894. Up to the present time we have given grants in aid to fourteen counties for their county Houses of Refuge, or Industrial Homes, amounting in all to \$53,750. In leaving the question of our expenditures for the past year I wish especially to remind hon. members that although we have neglected no public service, although we have increased our grants in various directions and incurred special and exceptional expenditures from time to time, we have succeeded in steadily reducing our total annual expenditures year by year. I give the figures for the past six years:—

#### CUTTING DOWN THE FIGURES.

Our total expenditures in 1891 amounted to \$4,158,159; in 1892, \$4,063,257; in 1893, \$3,907,145; in 1894, \$3,842,505; in 1895, \$3,758,595; in 1896, \$3,703,379. This represents a reduced annual expenditure of \$455,000 in five years, or an average of nearly \$100,000 a year. In the face of these figures, hon. gentlemen opposite will be compelled to admit that we have earnestly sought to keep a vigilant watch over the expenditures of the Province, and that our efforts have been signally successful.

I may at this point be allowed to say a word or two concerning our late leader in this House, Sir Oliver Mowat, now Minister of Justice at Ottawa. Were I to attempt, sir, to summarize the history of the Province almost since Confederation, his name would be found written in characters large and bright on its almost every page. What a conspicuous space he must continue to fill in such a history for all time to come, and, what is better, it is as honorable as it is conspicuous. With what consummate tact he ever guided our deliberations in this chamber; how watchful he always was of the dignity of our proceedings. Earnest at all times and exhaustive and forceful in debate, he never indulged in recrimination, or for a moment even disregarded the amenities of public life. His untiring industry was a constant source of rebuke to much younger men. His affable manners disarmed his opponents and endeared to him his friends. On all occasions judicial in manner, exceptionally free from prejudice, ever tolerant of the opinions of others, he eagerly grasped at suggestions from all quarters, and to this one fact, I doubt not, we must in no small degree attribute his phenomenal success. But it was not of considerations such as these I intended to speak. I wish rather, very hurriedly of course, to point to the growth and development of the Province in all directions under his exceptionally long and sagacious leadership.

#### A QUARTER CENTURY RECORD.

In October, 1872, Sir Oliver assumed office. In that same year Mr. Gladstone was First Minister in England, and since that date England has had eight different Governments and as many Premiers. Lord Lisgar was our Governor-General in 1872, and we have had in the interval five Governors of Canada, viz., Lord Dufferin, the Marquis of Lorne, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Stanley and Earl Aberdeen. When Sir Oliver first assumed office Sir William Howland was our Lieutenant-Governor. During his long Premiership we have had in all six Lieutenant-Governors. From 1872 to 1896 the Province of Quebec has had eleven Premiers, Nova Scotia six, Prince Edward Island six, New Brunswick five, Manitoba five and British Columbia eleven. Sir Oliver was continuously Premier of Ontario during the successive Administrations of General Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison and Cleveland. Do not these facts of themselves illustrate most forcibly how fortunate this Province has been in retaining for so long a period a leader who possessed in such a remarkable degree all the qualifications of highest statesmanship? From 1872 to 1896 our Province has progressed safely and with great strides in all directions. During that period our population has increased by 600,000 souls. We have more than doubled our territory by adding to it over 118,000 square miles, an area larger than all Italy, larger than Austria, more than twice as large as New York State, larger than the Transvaal, more than

twice as large as Switzerland, and Denmark put together, and as large as Great Britain and Ireland.

#### DEFENCE OF OUR RIGHTS.

Nor must we forget what a struggle we had both in this Legislature and in the courts to secure and hold our own in this regard, and we all agree that our victory was mainly due to the astuteness, the legal skill and adroitness and the indomitable energy of Sir Oliver Mowat. And we are only now beginning to appreciate the immense value of the victory, inasmuch as the great wealth of the added territory is only now being partially disclosed. We were then contending, be it remembered not for useless barren wastes, such as the swamps of Venezuela, but for a vast possession, the mineral wealth of which alone bids fair to make it one of the richest and choicest in the world.

In 1871 we had in Ontario nineteen cities and towns having a population of over 5,000; now we have 24. In the interval the framework of a new and larger Ontario, our promising Northland, has been step by step constructed. In 1872 all the settlement north of Barrie was scattered and the population sparse. Orillia was then a straggling village of 231 people. It is now a town of considerable promise, with a population exceeding 5,000. You look in vain in the census of 1871 for either Bracebridge or Gravenhurst, while the country north of these localities was then a wilderness known only to the hunter and the lumberman. Neither Port Arthur nor Fort William had then a corporate existence. Between them they now have an enterprising and energetic population of about 6,000. We now regard Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Gore Bay, Manitowaning, North Bay, Little Current, Rat Portage, Thessalon, Huntsville, not to speak of several others, as centres of much promise. When Sir Oliver first took office they were all of them for the most part unheard of and unknown.

#### SINCE CONFEDERATION.

Prior to Confederation we had only 1,447 miles of railway in this Province. We have built since Confederation 5,095 miles. The total mileage constructed and in operation in the Province at the present date is 6,542 miles. The Province has given very substantial financial aid to 1,977 miles of road, amounting in the aggregate to \$6,449,864. Who can even pretend to estimate the varied results of this large expenditure, direct and indirect, as regards the prosperity of the Province and the timely development of its resources generally? In 1872 Ontario and Quebec together had only 2,716 postoffices. Ontario alone has now 3,138. Last year in Ontario alone there were forwarded through these offices 73,650,000 letters. The number for Ontario and Quebec together in 1872 was only 25,500,000. The deposits in our banks during this period have increased four times over, and the volume of fire and life insurance (I am now speaking of all Canada) has been multiplied approximately threefold and fivefold respectively. In 1872 we had 4,490 Public Schools, 5,222 Public School teachers, and 433,256 scholars attending them. In 1895 we had 5,660 Public Schools, 8,158 teachers, and 444,778 scholars, or an increase of 1,170 schools, 2,936 teachers and 11,522 scholars. The Provincial grant to Public Schools in 1872 was \$212,991, while in 1895 it was \$274,347, an increase of \$61,356. The municipal grants and assessments for their support in 1872 amounted to \$1,722,358, and in 1895 to \$3,117,545, an increase of nearly a million and a half of dollars. The amount raised through local sources over and above these grants and assessments for their maintenance was in the former year \$526,111, and in the latter year more than double that amount, viz., \$1,144,862. We had 25 more High Schools, 331 more High School teachers, and 16,694 more scholars attending them in 1895 than in 1872. The amount of Provincial aid to High Schools is now \$100,000 a year, or \$21,000 more than it was in 1872. This grant, unlike the amount of annual aid to Public Schools, is stationary, and is not to be increased from year to year. The amount raised locally for High Schools was in 1895 \$654,723, being more than four times the amount thus raised in 1872. We did not establish kindergarten schools until 1882. Now we have 90 kindergarten schools, and 9,400 scholars at-