

## BUDGET DEBATE.

The budget debate was resumed by Mr. Craig, the member for East Wellington. He joined in the congratulations that have been showered upon Mr. Hardy upon his recent elevation to the first place in the Government of the Province. He not only made the assertion but furnished the proof that the financial administration of the Province has been pure, progressive and economical. It was true that the expenditure was \$1,243,000 more last year than it was in 1873, but that fact did not involve a charge of extravagance or misappropriation. The appropriation last year over that of 1873 was increased by \$351,151 for education, \$115,000 for agriculture, \$154,000 for hospitals and charities, \$373,000 for asylums, \$337,000 for administration of justice. But this, Mr. Craig pointed out, was not all. Nearly \$20,000,000 has been returned to the people of the Province by the Government, thereby greatly reducing their taxes. The estimates for 1897, he showed, called for an increase of \$15,000 in the appropriation for education. On capital account \$229,000 is to be expended. The present interest-bearing assets of the Province amount to the enormous sum of \$4,782,000. After providing for the railway aid certificates and for the annuities there will still be a surplus of \$1,814,000. These plain facts Mr. Craig submitted in support of the declaration with which he started out. The administration of the Education Department he warmly commended, and he availed himself of the opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Minister in charge of it. It would be impossible, Mr. Craig said, to find a man for the position who would take more interest in his work than the present Minister had done, or who would do more than he had done to improve the schools and perfect the system of education. These words met with the approving applause of the Ministerialists. Discussing the license system, Mr. Craig said that it was popular throughout the Province. Replying to the charge of the Opposition that the Government retained too large a proportion of the fees, Mr. Craig declared that the influential sentiments of the Province favored such a change in the law as would deprive the municipalities of all the revenue from licenses and give it to the Government. Mr. Craig discussed the charge that Ontario Government officials were unduly given to participation in politics. He deplored undue partisanship on the part of public officials, and showed to what an extent the employees of the late Government at Ottawa had transgressed in this respect.

### WEST TORONTO'S MEMBER.

Mr. Crawford, the representative of West Toronto, was the next to get the Speaker's eye. He began by re-echoing the desire of Mr. Craig that officials of all Governments should go quietly to the polls like good citizens and cast their ballots, and not take an active part in political controversy. It was, he said, an evidence of Mr. Harcourt's tact and ability that he was able to make such a good case out of the material he had in hand. Although the statement was nicely sugar-coated, it seemed upon close examination to have a poisonous sting underneath. There were, Mr. Crawford said, two facts that could be established. The first was that the present Administration was powerless to stem the tide of expenditure, and the second was that the chief concern of the present Administration was to lay their hand on something or somebody that they could tax in order to raise a revenue corresponding with the expenditure. Then Mr. Crawford delved into the figures. He said that in the statement for 1895 there was an admitted deficit of \$170,000. In the statement for 1896 there was an admitted deficit of \$212,000. The Treasurer, without a blush on his handsome face, had foreshadowed a still greater deficit of something like \$300,000. There were leakages in the expenditure, and these were largely accounted for by the new creations, offices made and offices filled. The Government were replenishing the pockets of their friends and cheering their hearts by giving them good, fat offices. Mr. Crawford asserted that the tendency of the public expenditures had not been in the direction of developing the resources of the Province and of encouraging investment, but rather of perpetuating the Government's lease of power. The Op-

position, he said, would be prepared to support any measure that would have a tendency to develop Ontario's rich resources. Mr. Crawford insisted that there must be a reduction in the cost of government.

### THE LIBERAL WHIP.

Dr. McKay of Oxford had the close attention of the House while he made an able speech in justification of the financial administration of the Government. He, too, felicitated the new Premier upon his well-deserved promotion. He effectively replied to the Opposition criticism that the expenses of the Government have been steadily growing by quoting from the public accounts figures which were conclusive. They were as follows:—

Year.	Expenditure.	Decrease.
1890 .....	\$4,183,381	.....
1891 .....	4,158,459	\$ 24,922
1892 .....	4,068,257	90,202
1893 .....	3,907,145	161,068
1894 .....	3,839,313	67,807
1896 .....	3,703,379	55,214

Dr. McKay compared the cost of some of the more important public services in Ontario with the expenditure for similar services in Quebec, much to the advantage of the Government led by Mr. Hardy. Dr. McKay ably defended the administration of the license system. Vague charges, he said, had long been made, but no specific instance of wrongdoing had ever stood the test of an investigation. A gentleman who had made charges in connection with the administration of the license system in Oxford County had written to him, saying that he was sorry he had made the charges, and that his information was incorrect. The 280 license commissioners in the Province, the doctor said, were entirely independent of the Government, as the Government did not pay them salaries.

He defended the expenditure on the various departments of government, and particularly that upon the Education Department. He expressed disapproval of the suggestion that has been made that the Agricultural College at Guelph should be transferred from the control of the Minister of Agriculture to that of the Minister of Education. The affairs of the Province in every particular, he declared, had been conducted upon business principles during the last 24 years. The fact that the Government had spent something like 70 millions of the people's money and that no one could point to a single dollar and say that it had been misappropriated was sufficient justification for saying that the affairs of the Province had been well conducted. Dr. McKay, becoming prophetic, foresaw the day, not far distant, when Ontario would have a population not of two millions but of three or four million souls. He concluded by eulogizing the Liberal leaders past and present.

### MR. ST. JOHN.

Mr. St. John, in resuming the debate after recess, complained that Mr. Craig had misrepresented the attitude of the Opposition in regard to the High Schools of the Province. He defied Mr. Craig to say that the Opposition ever opposed the maintenance of the efficiency of the High Schools. He declared that the civil servants throughout were active in the interests of the Liberal party. He denied that there had been a decrease in the ordinary expenditure of the Government. Taking as the ordinary expenditure civil government, legislation, administration of justice, education, maintenance of public institutions, immigration, agriculture, hospitals, and charities, repairs and maintenance and miscellaneous expenditure, he said that there had been a steady increase during the past seven years, giving the following figures:—1889, \$2,418,038; 1890, \$2,597,622; 1891, \$2,674,189; 1892, \$2,779,452; 1893, \$2,797,486; 1894, \$2,891,423; 1895, \$2,934,298; 1896, \$2,891,423—an increase of over half a million in seven years. He referred to what he called the fulsome flattery which had been showered upon Sir Oliver Mowat since the opening of the House. Sir Oliver Mowat's political ability must be recognized on the one hand for knowing how to hold power for a quarter of a century, and, on the other hand, for knowing when to go out. He was as honest as he was cute. He came into power with a surplus of cash in the bank of \$4,000,000, a mantle of prosperity handed down from John Sandfield Macdonald. When he went out not only was that all gone, but over \$20,000,000 received from the Crown lands was all gone. He left when there were deficits to meet and direct