

SATURDAY, MARCH 10,

## A BITTER ATTACK.

Col. Matheson Denounces Sheriff Brown's Conduct.

## A PROTEST FROM MR. ROSS

**Mr. Whitney's Proposed Amendments to the Election Act—Judges to Direct Prosecution of Alleged Corruptionists.**

Mr. Matheson continued his onslaught on the Ontario Government in the Legislature yesterday afternoon, and painted a depressing picture of the condition of the Provincial finances. According to the speaker things were running all behind, and the exchequer was being depleted in a most alarming manner—this despite the reassuring report of the financial experts, which was in every member's hands. Mr. Matheson attacked Sheriff Brown of West Elgin, on the ground of having permitted strangers to come into the riding and act as deputy returning officers, and insisted that the Government should have promptly dismissed him. This strong statement elicited a protest from Premier Ross against the vilification of a public officer whose conduct had been under review by the Judges at the election trial, but who had not been reported by them for any offence. Hon. J. R. Stratton will be the next speaker for the Government when the debate is resumed on Tuesday.

Mr. Whitney introduced his bill to amend the election act, which contains a large number of proposed changes.

### Mr. Matheson's Criticisms.

Mr. Matheson, in resuming his speech on the budget, said that unless some effort were made to keep down the expenditures they would grow too large. In the last ten years the ordinary expenditures of the Province had

increased by \$700,000 a year. He considered such a large increase unjustifiable. The expenditure last year was \$3,710,000, the receipts \$4,096,000, apparently showing a large surplus. He claimed that \$447,000 of these receipts were properly chargeable to capital account, including receipts from drainage debentures, sale of asylum lands, sale of the agricultural property at the corner of Queen and Yonge streets, bonus from timber sales and collections from common school lands. Comparing the expenses of 1899 with those of 1898, Mr. Matheson said that in 1898 there were several special items of expenditure, such as \$43,000 in consolidation of statutes and \$80,000 in elections, or \$124,000 of unusual expenditures, which was not the case in 1899. Then he believed that from \$20,000 to \$30,000 had been spent in 1899 which the Government withheld from the accounts of last year. He protested against the sale of the Yonge street property, which was one of the most valuable sites in the city. Reference had been made to the growth of chartered com-

panies. He thought more care should be taken in granting powers to these companies, and protested against loan companies being allowed to go around the country asking women and children to take stock in their companies, where they got no return, and frequently did not get any principal back. He admitted the Government's contention that some money had been spent on capital account last year, to the extent of the Normal School at London, but, on the other hand, there was the sale of timber. Therefore there was no item but ought to be paid out of the revenue of the Province.

### The Province's Debts.

It was admitted, Mr. Matheson went on, that the Province owed two million dollars to the Dominion for school lands. The bonus from timber sales ought to have been used to pay this debt. No attempt was being made to pay the debts of the Province to the Dominion. We could not add half a million, year after year, to our income from timber bonuses. Were these permanent receipts or not? The proposed Oxford Reformatory he declared as unnecessary, and was simply to satisfy the Reform electors of that county.

### Money for Canada's Soldiers.

The item for the Patriotic Fund was one he cordially agreed with. He only regretted that the Government had not seen their way to make a larger one. When the two great railways of the Dominion had each given \$15,000, it seemed to him that \$10,000 from the Province and \$4,000 for the salaries of Canadian soldiers who were in the Province's employ was not large enough.

Referring to the Financial Commission's report, Mr. Matheson said the commission never claimed there was a surplus. When they gave a list of the assets and the liabilities they did not subtract them. Had they done that they would have given their pledge that the items in the assets were available to pay the liabilities. Those trust funds held by the Dominion were held in trust for the schools and for keeping up asylums.