

Budget Debate Progresses In Provincial Legislature

Flood Conditions Cause Delays in Proceedings of the House at Fredericton—Short Session on Friday.

FLOOD conditions in Fredericton and other parts of New Brunswick hampered the work of the legislators last week. The flood was in evidence in the cellar of the Parliament Buildings and one short session of the Legislature saw members in their overcoats. However, much progress was made in the debate on the budget and other business of the House was advanced.

Hon. C. T. Richard, provincial secretary-treasurer, delivered his first budget address in the Legislature on Tuesday. He announced that there would be a substantial cut in automobile fees and his budget anticipated a deficit of \$383,476 for the year ending October 31, next.

Four private members took part in the debate on Wednesday. A. C. Smith, Saint John County, asked the Government to find out why ice breakers have been employed to open navigation for the ports of Quebec and Montreal in an endeavor to divert traffic from the port of Saint John. He pointed out that for years the people of New Brunswick had been paying their share of the upkeep of ice-breakers, which have been employed in the St. Lawrence. This year the ice-breakers were at work at least ten days earlier than customary. He suggested that if the ice-breakers were used for preventing floods, New Brunswick should get money from the federal treasury for a similar purpose in this Province.

Foster G. Calder, Charlotte County, expressed his pleasure that a careful survey of the agricultural situation in New Brunswick was to be undertaken, but he pointed out that another important primary producer, the fisherman, was equally deserving and he trusted that something would be done to improve their condition.

Speaking further on the case of the fisherman, Mr. Calder said:

"It is not that no markets exist, but rather that for some reason they have been crowded out by competitors who have been more keen in the arts of salesmanship. Our fishermen need to be instructed in the modern requirements of world markets for their products, as well as in the different, newer processes for curing. In the former they are looking to the Government of this Province, while federal officials are ready to do the latter.

"In addition to that, the attention of large buyers, both Canadian and foreign, should be supplied with the information as to what we in this Province have to offer, and such other information as is needed to capture at least a part of the trade. In other words, contact should be made between the fishermen and their markets. This, followed by a systematic plan of advertising, should go a long way toward producing better results.

"But how can this be done? When the Government a few years ago decided to sell New Brunswick to the tourists, they organized an information bureau, and set to the work. Though it has cost this Province many thousands of dollars, who would say that it has not justified its existence? A similar organization here, to gather information in connection with the fisheries of the Province, and to send it out to the different markets, to gather information from the markets and send it to the fishing centres, would materially help to bridge the gap between the producers here and the purchasers elsewhere.

"Compared with the increased demand for New Brunswick fish, the cost of such an organization would be insignificant. I trust that the new Government, pledged to assist the primary producers

of this Province, will give this matter their careful attention."

H. A. Porter, Saint John City, said that the Province would keep within the estimates submitted by the Provincial secretary-treasurer. He did not expect the Provincial Hospital would have a \$50,000 loss on operations and he pointed out that if refunding of some of the provincial debt at a lower rate of interest were carried out, a saving would be made there.

Mr. Porter commended the activities of the New Brunswick Museum in providing exhibits for schools and submitted that the Department of Education should make a special grant to the museum so the cost of the exhibits would not be a charge upon the revenue of the museum.

He pointed out also that up to now the cost of the provincial archivist had been borne by the Federal Government, but that within the last two weeks the archivist had been notified by the Federal Government that her position had been done away with. He urged the Provincial Government to try to see that the archivist be kept on until such time as the work might be carried on by the Province if it was not to be carried on by the Dominion. A feeling of economy should not allow the work to lapse, he declared.

Turning to education, Mr. Porter said he had no intention of casting aspersions on the chief superintendent of education or on the great army of teachers. Pointing out the many difficulties, he wondered if it was a fair proposition to ask boys of adolescent age to be taught by female teachers. He endorsed the chief superintendent's recommendation that only an interim certificate be given on completion of the normal course and that two or three years of teaching experience be required afterwards.

He wondered if the education system was at fault when there were unemployed in the cities and abandoned farms in the country. He thought in rural schools there should be something to induce children to realize that rural life had something to offer which was not available in urban life.

He stressed the value of vocational education in rural schools and also registered a plea for the study of translations of the great Hebrew literature not including anything that might be considered as contentious religion.

C. G. W. Perry, Carleton County, scored the administration for not presenting a balanced budget for this year. He could not see how the liquor revenue would increase as estimated unless steps were taken to sell liquor more freely. He felt it was not an opportune time to launch the projected highway from the Tobique to the Miramichi.

In answer to criticisms made by the Premier on pre-election road expenditures in Carleton County, Mr. Perry ventured to say there were thousands and thousands of dollars spent by the Provincial Government on roads in Carleton County during the two weeks before the federal election on October 14, expenditures, he said which were not shown in the auditors' report for the year ending October 31. He was determined to find out how much was actually expended.

Those taking part in the debate on Thursday were: R. J. Gill, Northumberland; H. Ralph Gunter, York; Robert McAllister, Saint John County; and R. Fraser Keay, Charlotte.

Mr. Gill expressed the hope that as provincial bonds became due they would be redeemed at lower rates of interest. He said he believed this Province was being discriminated against in regard to gasoline prices. He

thought the Government should look into this matter.

He referred to education and cited the extension work of St. Francis Xavier University as an example for New Brunswick colleges.

Credit unions had proved themselves of great benefit, continued Mrs. Gill, touching on a reference in the Throne Speech which indicated that a study of credit unions would be undertaken. He urged upon the Government the immediate consideration of this question.

There were "hundreds if not thousands of vacant farms" in Northumberland County, Mr. Gill declared, expressing pleasure that steps would be taken to bring vacant farms back to a state of production.

The new highway from the Tobique to the Miramichi was being undertaken for the purpose of tapping a hardwood area otherwise inaccessible, stated the Northumberland County member. In that county hard times had been experienced for 15 years or more, and its saw mill industry had been lost. Promises to build pulp mills were not fulfilled. The new road would help the poor man and not the rich man, he submitted.

Mr. Gunter said it had been necessary to re-adjust the scale of wages for woodsmen because of the drop in lumber prices. He thought the new regulations gave all workers a better chance of employment. He was pleased to know that the Government was going to appoint a fare-wage officer, who will investigate labor conditions in all trades and industries in order to correct abuses.

He said he was in favor of any expenditure which is for the benefit of the working man and of a type which will leave within the Province as close to 100 per cent, as possible of the money spent on Public works. He hoped something would be done to bring industry back to Northumberland County.

Mr. McAllister thought that the House should have been told of the plans of the Government for raising funds by new taxation. He thought that direct taxation might not be the worst form of tax. He was glad he Government proposed to make abandoned farms productive again and he pointed out that in Saint John County there were many vacant farms.

Mr. Keay said that the Government must assist producers and the problem of marketing needed much attention. He said there were many cases of discrimination in regard to freight rates and some equitable system should be adopted for the whole of the Dominion.

He pointed out that "clam shells, widely used as poultry foods having a production value of 75 cents per bag, are assessed a rate of 19 cents per hundred-weight from Pocologan to Saint John, whereas a bag of sugar



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having a commercial value of \$5 pays a rate from Saint John to Pocologan of 15 cents per hundredweight.

"In the matter of canned fish, serious discrimination is shown in the new schedule of rates as supplied by the Canadian National Steamships for ocean carriage from Halifax to Australia.

"Meat and canned vegetables are carried at a rate of \$12 per ton, whereas canned fish, which holds such a vital interest to Maritime fishermen and especially to the fishermen of my county, is assessed a rate of \$15 per ton.

"These are matters of discrimination which should receive very serious consideration, and I am hopeful that such abuses may

be eliminated when the department now proposed (federal and municipal affairs) has had an opportunity of giving them study and attention.

"When we are able to increase our markets at prices showing the producers profitable returns, we will then be solving many of the problems today retarding and depressing our industries.

"The matter of taking care of surplus crops and products in various ways to the benefit of the people of New Brunswick should receive earnest and active attention. I have in mind the introduction and promotion of new industries to be located in various strategic points in the counties.

"The matter of establishing small canneries to take care of some of the surplus products of our farmers is another matter which is very worthy of immediate attention as this province annually spends very large sums of money importing canned and preserved products of the farm from Quebec and Ontario, which could and should be produced here in New Brunswick and keep the employment and money here for the benefit of our factories and farms.

"As another specific instance, I have it on undoubted authority that over 200 carloads of onions are shipped into New Brunswick from southern Ontario and several hundred carloads of ordinary Saturday night beans find their way annually from this source to the Province of New Brunswick.

"In many places today there are now available buildings suitable for converting into a canning or preserving plant suitable to cater to the needs and requirements of the vicinity in which it is located. I do not refer to large plants with a crippling overhead, but to plants of small or medium capacity capable of taking care of the immediate district and handling the crops and products of such districts.

"In promoting this type of industry some study should be made of the different crops or products suitable for production in these districts with careful consideration to soil, climatic conditions and proximity to the proposed site for the canning or packing plant.

"In the promotion of the production, canning, preserving and marketing of farm products many districts have now active agricultural societies or organizations which would be helpful in furnishing detailed information regarding the various crops or products that are suitable and capable of being produced in their respective areas."

He pointed to the need of something being done for the fishing industry, which has great possibilities, if properly encouraged.

The Legislature had only a short meeting on Friday because of the flood conditions. Only routine matters were considered and adjournment was made until Tuesday.

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