

LEGISLATURE MADE GOOD PROGRESS YESTERDAY IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Continued from Page 3.)
not want a repetition of this story that he was favoring the north. In 1922 on bridges and roads the southern counties had received \$506,000 more than the north. Facts and figures showed that he had done justice to the various parts of the province.

MR. STEWART said the hon. Minister of Public Works seemed quite peeved. Last year he had made a charge that certain road officials had spent money improperly. The minister had promised to investigate. There had been one man who had received sixty percent of the money entrusted to him to expend. He was not on the road work now. At Plattsburgh James Cooling had received \$1,800 out of \$3,500 given him to expend. The hon. Minister distributed the money all right but he did not put it in the proper hands.

HON. MR. VENIOT—"I suppose you could recommend some proper ones."

MR. STEWART—"Well, I couldn't do any worse than you have."

MR. STEWART, continuing, said the supervisor to whom he had referred had been employed under the old government and had been dismissed in 1917 it had been said that his dismissal had been for political purposes. The incoming government had reinstated him and after employing him a while had to dismiss him again. He noticed that the report of the department mentioned permanent roads in Balmoral, and he knew there was not a foot of permanent road in the parish.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that the hon. member was mistaken. There was no permanent road in Balmoral. The report did not show it.

MR. STEWART, continuing, said that at Five Finger Brook road work to the extent of \$2,000 had been abandoned and relocated. He had made some enquiries in the department about that but the people there evidently did not understand what he was asking for.

Some Plain Talk.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he could tell him. The road had been located under the old government within two feet of a fifty foot gulch. A change had been made and the road located in a better place. He knew every foot of the roads in Restigouche county and he could tell the hon. member that he had gone over roads made by the old government in that county on horseback and on foot for there was no other way of getting over them. In the matter of examining and passing judgment upon road work he would take second place to no man. He would stand by the supervisor at St. Quentin, who was an honest man and doing good work. Under the old government there was a road from Campbellton to Tobique Settlement which had been little more than a track, and today an auto could be driven over it. There was also good work done in the vicinity of Glen Livit. However, he knew that work had not been done in Balmoral, but he hoped to do something there later. He would take issue with his hon. friend when he said that the by roads were even worse than in 1916. As far as the work of Supervisor Cooling was concerned, he would say that he had been over his work and he would not accept the statement of the hon. member in preference to his own eyesight and judgment. Mr. Cooling was not as young as he once was, but still could do excellent work. He had earned every dollar paid to him and had worked under difficulties. Scarcity of labor had been one. The statements made by the hon. member were, ridiculous.

MR. STEWART said that when the hon. Minister made the statement that the abandoned piece of road had been built by the old government he did not know what he was talking about. He judged from his attitude that he was satisfied if a Commissioner or supervisor took half the money entrusted to him.

HON. MR. VENIOT—"If he earns the money why not?"

MR. STEWART said that it was a poor way to do business. However, if the hon. Minister was not ready to take advice or information he would not give it.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he would not take that kind.

MR. DIOTTE said that he had not got up to fight, but he could inform the hon. Minister that he was perfectly well acquainted with the roads of Restigouche. He had spent six months in Kedgwick and was well acquainted with the roads referred to in the discussion. As far as Five Finger Brook was concerned, it was correct that work had been abandoned there, and the new road had been located further down the hill.

HON. MR. VENIOT asked if it were not correct that some excellent road work had been done in Restigouche county?

MR. DIOTTE said that some had been done he would acknowledge, but there also were a great many poor roads there.

Highway Matters

MR. FAWCETT on the committee resuming after recess, said that he wished to impress upon the committee the necessity of giving more attention to the byroads. He claimed that the division of the money under the present system was not equitable, and that there should be a change. While the trunk roads had been improved it was absolutely necessary that something should be done for the people in the back settlement in the way of providing better roads. He

would like to hear a declaration from the Hon. Premier on the subject.

MR. SMITH (Carleton) said that while the Hon. Premier knew a lot about the roads the individual members were as familiar with conditions in their own counties as he was. He (Smith) was in favor of raising the road tax and thought it should be gradually increased to \$1. While the government had expended a large sum in Carleton he thought that most of it had been put into bridges.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that of a total of \$700,000 about \$400,000 had been spent upon the roads.

MR. HUNTER said that there was quite a large delinquent road tax which should be collected before there was another increase.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that a better showing was made last year by \$30,000 than in 1921.

MR. HUNTER said that he was glad to hear it as there was no reason why one man should pay and another escape.

HON. MR. VENIOT gave a list of the amounts owing by the different counties and said that of a total tax of \$271,609 the sum of \$70,733 had been paid in cash, \$137,240 in statute labor, and the delinquents totalled \$63,494. He would say that in addition to the \$90,000 in the estimates for ordinary roads there was \$35,000 to the credit of the municipalities.

MR. BURLOCK said that he had been endeavoring to inform himself in regard to road matters, and had procured considerable information from the hon. minister and his staff. He could say that in ten years transportation in his county had greatly increased and had been very hard on the roads. He was safe in saying that the roads had been wonderfully improved and he was willing to give the hon. minister credit for what he had accomplished. However, some of the branch roads in his county were not in good condition and while there were many things which made road work difficult, he thought considerable could be done to bring about an improvement. He thought that in building roads the minister should regard the interests of the farmers as of greater importance than tourist traffic.

HON. MR. VENIOT said the trunk roads all ran through farming districts and were of great service to the farmer in marketing produce.

MR. BURLOCK said that in Carleton county the trunk roads paralleled the railways. He hoped the time would come when the branch roads would be built up.

A Restigouche Case

HON. MR. VENIOT said that during the afternoon an hon. member for Restigouche (Stewart) had made the statement that one Alex. Matley had been dismissed from the office of road supervisor by the old government and re-appointed by the present administration. He had also said that the man was lacking in ability and was dishonest. He (Veniott) had looked up the records and found that Matley held office during the years 1914, 1915 and 1916 and the present government had retained his services until 1920.

MR. STEWART said he thought the hon. minister was in error, as another man looked after the work in 1916.

HON. MR. VENIOT—"You said you dismissed him for dishonesty and we kept him in office."

MR. STEWART said that the man had misappropriated forty per cent of the road money entrusted to his care. He based his statement on records taken from the department.

HON. MR. VENIOT said he was absolutely sure he was right in his statement.

All are Benefited

MR. BENTLEY said that the trunk roads were a benefit to the farmers as well as to all other classes. They were paid for by a bond issue which rested on the population as a whole, and the proportion to sparsely settled districts was not large. He thought it would be cheaper to move some of those living in back settlements out to a trunk road than it would be to build a road into the localities where they now lived.

MR. FAWCETT wanted to know how he would move the people out on the trunk roads.

MR. BENTLEY said he would like to know from the hon. member if in case he came into power he would abandon the work now being done and give all his attention to the back settlements. He ventured to say that the hon. member would make no change.

MR. SMITH (Carleton) said that most of the farmers in his county had to use the branch roads in hauling produce to market.

MR. BURLOCK wanted to know how the hon. member for St. John county (Bentley) would move the farmers out on to the trunk roads? He might be able to move the farmers, but getting their farms there would be a different proposition. Some of the roads in Carleton county were very hilly and it made road construction rather difficult.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that many of the roads in Carleton county were built on side hills and it was very hard to keep them up.

MR. BURLOCK admitted that such was the cause.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that there was not enough money in the Dominion to keep them in a good state of repair.

MR. BURLOCK thought they could be kept up if some of the money was diverted from trunk roads.

MR. FAWCETT complained that the principle of making good roads in back settlement had not been followed by the government.

MR. SMITH (Albert) said that the branch roads in Albert were not in good condition and that county had not been justly dealt with by the administration. In one district the road was so bad that the mail driver could

not get over it, and the post office inspector had called the hon. minister's attention to the fact. In one district a friend of the government had stated that if the supervisor had put the road money in his own pocket the result, so far as the roads were concerned would have been just the same.

HON. MR. VENIOT—How about Mr. Dobson?

MR. SMITH (Albert) said that Mr. Dobson was an excellent man and was getting good results. It was regrettable, however, that the hon. premier had made a defeated candidate a special supervisor over him.

MR. McKENNA said he frequently had occasion to visit Albert county and considered that it had roads the equal of any in the province. He hoped the hon. minister would see to it that Kings was given roads equally as good.

MR. PICKETT said the roads in his county might be wonderful in summer, but in the winter months they were altogether different. He thought there should be an Act passed fixing the width of bob-sleds at four feet, four inches. In his opinion winter road work should be done by parish assessment.

Mr. Morrissey's Views

MR. MORRISSEY said he had previously made the statement that Northumberland was the only honest county, and at the suggestion of the hon. Premier he had made an exception of Gloucester. The statements he had heard during the course of discussion had convinced him that what he had said was true. He had had considerable experience in politics and had never heard of an opposition quitting so suddenly as his hon. friends opposite had in connection with the budget debate. He had heard much about the poverty among the farmers of Carleton county, yet last year they had bought eighty automobiles and had paid \$17,800 to the motor vehicle tax fund. He wished to say a word about the county of Charlotte. His hon. friend (Taylor) some years ago wrote to the then minister of public works, telling him that a certain bridge was impassable and was endangering human life. The minister soon afterwards visited the county where he met the hon. member, who accompanied him on a visit to the bridge. Although the structure was supposed to be impassable the hon. member had to apologize to the minister for passing over the bridge without knowing it, yet a short time before he had written the minister to the effect that the bridge was impassable. That indicated that too much credence should not be given to the hon. member's statements.

MR. PECK said that with a party of friends he had driven over the roads last summer, going as far as Houlton via Fredericton and Woodstock. On the return trip they were caught by a pouring rainstorm, and had considerable difficulty in getting home. The government had expended five million dollars on the roads without making any provision for their maintenance. The hon. minister had promised to spend thirty thousand dollars on Hillsboro-Moncton road. If he did that he could assure him that the people of Albert would put him on the back and at the first opportunity vote to turn him out.

MR. SMITH (Albert) on the item of \$150,000 for road patrol said he noticed that it had been increased from last year. He would ask the hon. minister to outline his policy.

The Patrol System

HON. MR. VENIOT said that last year on the ground of economy he had made a big reduction in the appropriation for road patrol. The amount was only \$65,000 whereas it should have been \$120,000.

Had the larger amount been appropriated, the loss occasioned by freshets would not have been nearly so great. That experience had influenced him to establish a patrol system for the trunk roads and extend it as rapidly as possible to the secondary roads. He proposed to establish districts the shortest to be eight miles and the longest twelve. Each would be in charge of a patrol captain and an assistant. The captain would be provided with a team of horses, which would be kept constantly on the road. He hoped to be able to procure a suitable man and team for each district for \$125 a month. The work would start early in May and continue until the end of October. The patrol captain would be a provincial constable and would enforce the traffic laws, and they hoped to be thus able to prevent many accidents which were caused by speeding. In his experience he had found that all the fools were not in the asylums, as some were quite frequently found at the steering wheels of automobiles. Those people would have to be given a dose of medicine.

MR. PECK—What kind of medicine will you give them?

HON. MR. VENIOT said he would go down to Hillsboro and look into some of the stills in that vicinity. The patrol would be under the superintendence of the district engineer. In connection with the work he would ask every hon. member to keep sharp watch and report to the department any inattention to duty. It was the intention to appoint the best men and so far as patrol work was concerned it would be free from politics. If a man did not measure up to the requirements, he was going to fire him no matter what members supporting the government might think. He did not wish hon. members to make any reports to him based on rumors, but wanted them to be based on their own personal knowledge. Statute labor on main trunk roads would not be allowed, nor would it be done on roads leading back from the main trunk roads. It had taken the State of Maine four years to establish a patrol system, and he hoped to profit by the experience of that state. The patrol captain would clean out the ditches and after a rainstorm would use a log drag and fill in the ruts. When not engaged in that work they could be hauling gravel. If the plan worked out properly he hoped to have the roads in as good condition in the fall as they were in the spring. If there were times when there was no

work to be done on the trunk roads the crews would be shifted to secondary roads located within a reasonable distance, but would not interfere with the work of regular supervisors.

MR. SMITH (Albert) asked what the approximate number of patrolmen would be and where they would be procured.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that as far as possible the selection would be from men now used as supervisors on the main trunk roads. They had experience already. The system was being worked out. One feature would be the keeping of a diary in which all movements during the day would be entered. These diaries would have to be turned in each Monday. There would be between 80 and 100 and the estimated cost would be \$150,000 per year.

MR. MARTIN asked if double or single teams would be required.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that double teams would be required for \$125 a month. For some roads heavy single horses would be sufficient. If they supervisor did not have a team he would have to purchase one or leave the service.

MR. WETMORE said that Kings county in its supervisors possessed men who were experts. The roads were in first-class condition. He previously had brought up the road to St. John, which needed re-surfacing in order to make it safe for horses in rough weather. He admitted that it was an excellent motor road. In regard to John river, he wished to say that he had received complaints that the steamers were not put in operation as soon as possible after the opening of navigation. With regard to the general condition of roads in his county he could say that there was no comparison with the present condition and that of five or six years ago, and the Government deserved credit.

MR. BURLOCK said he had heard the announcement of the hon. minister that statute labor would be diverted from trunk to branch roads with interest, but he feared that the change would increase delinquency in regard to road tax.

HON. MR. VENIOT said that there was no chance for statute labor on trunk roads.

MR. BURLOCK said the principle was excellent. He believed there should be a change in the system of collecting the road tax. Either the province or the municipalities should undertake to see that the delinquent list was not as large as it is.

MR. SMITH (Albert) said that all were in favor of a patrol system and he understood that the \$150,000 required to pay for it would come from the tax on motor vehicles. He had received several protests about the increase in that tax.

HON. MR. VENIOT—So have I.

MR. SMITH said that he did not know of a better source from which to get the money.

Public Health Items.

MR. FLEWELLING speaking to the item of Printing for the Department of Health said that the amount seemed excessive. Was the increase of \$2,000 for the purpose of making the act more popular?

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that the work of the Department largely dealt with printed matter. Two or three years ago a supply had been obtained but it had been exhausted and already this year there had been a considerable expenditure. The annual report had cost \$600 more because of increased cost of materials, a larger volume and additional statistical tables.

MR. RICHARDS asked if the regulations of the Department were available in pamphlet form.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said they were but as the Department was new its work would have to get near completion before they could be placed in a book. There were fifteen or sixteen sets of regulations.

MR. FLEWELLING advocated the placing of copies of the regulations of each department in the hands of each hon. member.

MR. PINDER asked if the expenses of the Department had not increased steadily.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that they had. As he had stated before it was possible to have as much public health as a community would pay for. The Department was quite complete at present and further increase need not be expected.

MR. RICHARDS asked if there was any definite reason for the increase of \$3,000 in contingent.

Work of Clinics.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that the increase was to take care of unforeseen expenses. Several small epidemics during the past year were instances. Care of tubercular patients was another. It was the intention this year to inaugurate the organization of an anti-tuberculosis association throughout the province. Clinics were possible. The expense would come out of this.

MR. ESTABROOKS asked what had been the cost to the province of at various places throughout the province.

HON. MR. ROBERTS said that the Canadian Social Hygiene Council was active in the Dominion and had secured Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst on a yearly basis as lecturer. He is vice-president of the Council and had applied for a series of lectures in New Brunswick, and after some delay had been notified that lecturers would be sent. Dr. Gordon Bates of Toronto and Dr. Heagerty had accompanied Mrs. Pankhurst. The lectures had been gratuitous to the province, except where slight deficits had been made up out of the Federal grant of \$7000. The hon. member for Kings (Dickson) had referred to a matter of importance during the session. That was the vitality and morality of mothers at parturition. He would consider the matter and try to assist in districts where it was difficult to obtain medical attendance.

(Continued on page 5.)

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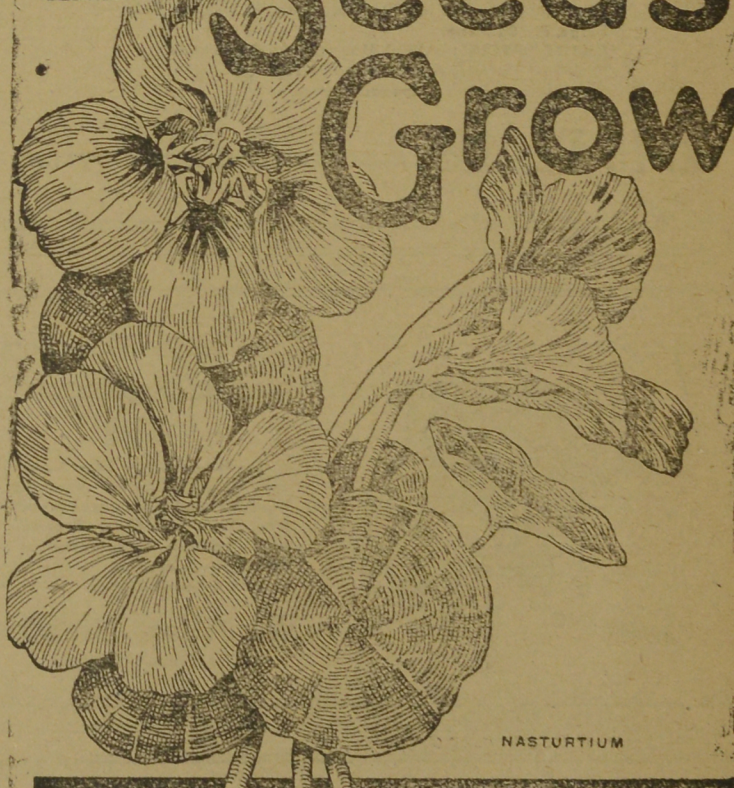
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