

Premier Baxter Addresses Electors of York County

**Progressive Policies of the Government Defended
in a Vigorous Speech—The Truth About
Grand Falls—Tells Why the Prohibitory
Law Was Repealed. The Government's Re-
cord One of Splendid Achievement—Some
Facts About the Valley Railway Transfer.**

Hon. J. B. M. Baxter, K.C., Premier of New Brunswick attended the Government party convention in York a short time ago and declined a stirring speech which made a profound impression on the large audience. He said:—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

If it were not for the position which I occupy by your will, I would, I think, say that you have heard from the mouths of your representatives about as much as anyone could say with reference to the work of the government of New Brunswick.

From the mere point, however, that my friend the Minister of Lands and Mines has suggested I might briefly address the Assembly today, I shall try to worry you as little as possible

Some Achievements

Presenting case to Duncan Commission—no small job. (There is another case to come before the Dominion government yet. I wish I could show you the collection of papers I have in St. John—a big paper case absolutely filled with documents and with drafts. It is no small job) men are in earnest and doing their work, to look after the business of this province of New Brunswick is no small job.

Settled the Valley Railway claim. Surpluses in place of deficits. Amending of law etc. etc. Free school books.

Abolition of bootlegging. (Something the United States has not been able to do with its millions of people and billions of revenue.) Established the Provincial Police



HON. J. B. M. BAXTER, P. C., K. C.
Premier of New Brunswick.

this afternoon, because I know that as the time goes on the discomfort of standing is very great upon an audience.

I ran over a few days ago (and I am not going to take these things up one by one as I speak of them), I ran over a few things I thought I would set down, because I had been along with my colleagues very busy during the last four and a half years in doing the work of this province, that as each task got done it was put aside and I think each one of us forgot that it had been accomplished in thinking what was the next thing we had to tackle.

All Take Full Share

We used to hear some talk years ago of a "business-man's government." I think I characterized it on the platform before now as the "one business man's government" for I never could discover that they had more than one business man in the administration. Eight of us in the government and it is the administration, not of one man, but an administration in which eight (8) men take full share of the responsibility for everything that is done, and to which every one of the eight contributes every bit of work that is in him.

Four years and a half ago we formed a government, four years and a half (I can speak truthfully) of as strenuous work as I ever put in doing anything—four years and a half that has only been marked by absolute harmony among the gentlemen who compose the government. Now don't think for a moment that on every question that comes up—and there have been literally thousands of questions—don't suppose that at the start we all see everything just the same way. That is why we have eight different men. But every man has given his viewpoint, he has reasoned it out with his colleagues and there has been no disagreement among the members of this Cabinet, which presents a very great contrast to the record of some previous ones, when almost every session they held of their government was marked by almost a bear-fight! I think that perhaps it is in that harmony that lies the possibility of our accomplishments, the undoubted success which we have achieved, of which can be listed as follows:

force and gave the country people, the rural population, practical security in their homes.

I do not need to say anything about this.

More money to hospitals. \$50,000 to stamp out Tuberculosis, where they used to give, the previous government, in their generosity, \$30,000 a year for the care of tubercular patients, as against \$365,000 a year.

Doubled the money spent on Agriculture.

Grand Falls developed at no expense to the people.

Pulp and Paper Mill and sulphite mills built, with more to come.

Better terms on Hydro.

Established sinking funds.

Keeping the ordinary expenditures within revenue.

No additional taxation and some taxation reduced.

Established a Trade Commission in Ontario to stimulate sales from this province.

Appointed a Commission to put through an Act for Old Age Pensions.

Mothers' Allowances.

New Act for Child Protection,—effecting the unfortunate among our infantile population.

Minimum wage for women.

Stands as a Record

I would like my predecessors to go on any platform and point out a record of accomplishment like that in any previous five years, or any five years in the history of this province. But that is what we did. That is the record of this government, no matter what a certain hon. gentleman may say—that this is the most rotten and corrupt and dissolute government that ever disgraced the province of New Brunswick. It is a strange thing if that is so, how you in the county of York can get such a gentleman as the one you have just added to your ticket today. (Dr. M. L. Jewett) a man by the very ring of whose voice and the things he says, I judge not to be the stamp of man who would associate himself with anything that is corrupt, dishonorable or dissolute. If such were the record of this government—if such were our record—how would it attract the attention of such men as Mayor White of the city of Saint John—there are a number of such candid-

ates coming to us, and more than that there are the votes throughout this province of New Brunswick of thousands of Liberals who did not like the performance in the Opera House here in the city of Fredericton a few weeks ago.

A Striking Precedent

May I just for a second carry you back a century and a quarter in thought today then to Old France, when a doctor who had very intimately studied certain problems in connection with the taking of human life, decided that he could invent some better means of putting people to death than those that had hitherto been employed, the guillotine—and it was speedily in the Reign of Terror put into execution. Many people said that it was painless, the victims suffered nothing, it was a speedy form of death, much better than the ordinary long-drawn-out agony of a deathbed through illness. (Those, of course, were the people who had never tried it.) The Kings, the nobility, the heads of nobles and the heads of little seamstresses in the streets of Paris, whose only fault was that they had not subscribed to the revolutionary principles of their executioners, fell into the common basket. Then came the time when the guillotine was regulated to the background, except for the execution of real criminals who had committed a crime against the state or the people of the state. And we waited for a century and a quarter or a little more and the guillotine re-appears. Not this time in the streets of Paris, in Old France, but it was set up amidst the Liberals of the city of Ottawa by Peter the Postmaster. And if the heads of little seamstresses did not fall, at least the heads of postmistresses along with those of postmasters who did not vote in a way he liked, who dared to differ politically with Peter the Postmaster, down alike tumbled into the common basket. After protests by the Toronto Globe and the better thinking people at Ottawa, even Peter the Postmaster had to grease his machine and put it away in a closet and keep it for a future occasion.

Peter The Executioner

But a man of such irrepressible energy could not long be kept quiet, and next we find him travelling down to the city of Fredericton, setting up his machine on the stage of the Opera House, to declare that he did not come as Peter the Postmaster but as plain citizen Veniot. Citizen Veniot sets up his instrument on the platform of the Opera House. There is a little spring which he touches in the corner of the machine, and after you hear the crash of the knife, the eyes of the victim seem to roll, to move, gasp a little bit, and sometimes there are ejaculations, and my poor friend Dysart as his head went into the basket was heard to gasp, "I like Mr. Jones very well." Mr. Chairman, that is a way of getting harmony in a party! Cut off their heads and you will get all the harmony you want, especially if you have a little spring to touch and can get the victim to say he likes it.

Challenge to Veniot

So Mr. Veniot, or Citizen Veniot, not content with his political executions among his enemies, is now carrying on his operations among his friends! He is welcome to continue that as long as he likes, but incidentally he expands himself with reference to this party. Well I want to say this: I am prepared today and tomorrow, and next day, down to the counting of the ballots, to take up the challenge of the Honourable Pierre J. Veniot, Postmaster General, if he wants it, or Citizen Veniot, if he prefers it, and I will take the judgment of the people of the province of New Brunswick on the outcome. He can fight at a citizen, or as an executioner, if he wants to, I will meet him on his own ground—anywhere—and take the verdict of the people on the issue!

If this is a corrupt administration the people of New Brunswick should want none of it—if it has been a decent, capable and honest administration, it is the thing that the people of New Brunswick want—what they did not get from him or his associates, and the thing they are going to perpetuate by their votes.

Found Treasury Empty

Now there seems to be—I will just give you as quickly as I can without expatiating upon them—some of our accomplishments. There are many more, ladies and gentlemen, but time will not permit of their recital. We came into office and that box that they call "The Treasury" of New Brunswick—we looked into it. Charlie Richards put on his glasses, Antoine Leger produced a flash light my friend Reilly attached some cord to it so as to get some electricity, and they swished the thing around in the box—and they couldn't see a thing! Nothing in it! Then a few of us turned it upside down and put it upside down on the floor—we thought there might be a five-cent piece concealed somewhere that might roll out. Ladies and gentlemen, there was nothing there, nothing but a cloud of dust; So we had to go out looking for money and we went and we got it from the places money can be got, and then we were met with the reproach of these honorable gentlemen—"Citizen Veniot and his associates—that we have spent more than anyone ever spent before in the province of New Brunswick. Yes, and we can say we have spent wisely and effectively, which is more than our predecessors did."

A Difficult Problem

In the course of this, looking for money we had a very difficult problem, in fact a more difficult one than would ordinarily be thought—I need

not take you into the history of that, nor into the history of building of the Valley Railway, when this province pledged its resources to build that road. For what purpose? to try to overcome the error that had been made in the routing of the Trans-continental slashways across New Brunswick, excluding from railway facilities the upper portion of the St. John river and the lower portions as well. I am not going to add anything more—there is no need.

Every year from \$250,000 to \$297,000 a year we were losing. Our predecessors just put it into a bond issue and taxed the people. I started out with the idea that we were going to year by year to pay the debts of each year with the monies collected in that year and not put a mortgage on the province for something that had no substantiality. That principle was carried through, and has gone through and is successful today.

The Valley Railway

We wanted to get rid of the Valley Railway—that had been our objective for some time. The Duncan Commission recommended a special commission. It went to Ottawa. I saw the Hon. Charles A. Dunning, then Minister of Railways, now Minister of Finance. There was another provincial conference, and in the course of our conversation he said to me: "Baxter, I don't think we need a special commission. I think you and I can settle this thing." I said "all right, I am just your man to discuss and decide anything—if you will give me something tangible to go on." Now I don't believe in carrying these political differences between the parties in the Dominion into the provincial political atmosphere. My job, as I see it, no matter what Party is in power at Ottawa, is to steer my course so as to get the best I can for my province. I wasn't going to fight with him or put any difficulty in his way. If I had been playing politics I would have, perhaps said "No, the Duncan Commission recommended an ad hoc commission and I am going to have an ad hoc commission, and I am going to take nothing but that." If I had been a political boulder and a fool I would have done that. When I saw that there was a chance to do business with a man I was to do every possible that the interests of the province might not suffer. In the end—after a lengthy talk—he referred me to Sir Henry Thornton to turn the liability into an asset. A thing that you have to pay between a quarter of a million and three hundred thousand a year for is quite enough liability, when you pay that more than you get out of it; When you get real money for it it becomes a real asset. I had the offer, and you know I am about seven-eighths Scotch by descent and one-eighth by absorption, and it makes me pretty canny at times. And I wondered if I could not try a little more, or get a little more than Sir Henry Thornton was offering. What did I do?

Veniot Played Politics

Hon. Peter J. Veniot, Postmaster General of Canada, representative of New Brunswick in the Dominion Cabinet—the problem was one between the two governments—every dollar more that could be got was for the benefit of the province of New Brunswick. The Hon. Mr. Veniot was representing in the Cabinet. It was up to him whether he would work for his province, for the saving in money to his province, or whether he would play party politics and do nothing because he didn't like the administration in power at Fredericton. I sent him this wire on the 7th of June, 1929: "Thornton will recommend purchase railway for six million or assume indebtedness of that amount. Says not worth more after deducting subsidy paid. His previous suggestion was to pay five million or assume interest on that amount and spread balance of approximately \$2,100,000 over five years. Do you advise holding out for more than this or would I imperil negotiations by doing so?"

Should Have Assisted

Now, if hon. Peter J. Veniot was a loyal son of New Brunswick—if New Brunswick's interests were the biggest thing to him—it was his job to give me every bit of help, every bit of influence that he had. What is the answer? What is the answer to my telegram: I am taking this from what he laid on the table in the House of Commons himself—his return when the correspondence was asked for. Here is his reply:

Reply:

Ottawa, June 6, 1928.

"Telegram received President not authorized to close definite bargain, but to negotiate terms which would be acceptable to him and you. Such terms must be approved by Governor-in-Council. In this latter case I will have to consider with Council such proposal. Therefore I am not in a position to advise you how to act."

P. J. Veniot.

A Great Help

Great help, wasn't it? Is that the way he would have answered Mr. Dysart, Mr. Jones, Mr. Foster, Mr. Copp, Mr. Michaud, or any of the rest—you have their names—I don't think so. No, but that is the way he would answer Baxter. I had got to my last stand. I accepted the \$6,000,000. If it isn't enough—if it isn't enough, ladies and gentlemen, electors of New Brunswick, the responsibility is on Citizen Veniot—it is not on Citizen Baxter!

We took the money—took the load off the province that when both governments, that at Fredericton and that at Ottawa, let us in for. They had representatives in both cabinets—why didn't they get that done? The Dominion treasury was never so empty but that it could handle a mere bagatelle of six million dollars. Why didn't they do it? But I can tell you this, that when I was at Ottawa I ascertained that their correspondence never received an answer—they just wrote to know whether anything would be done about it, and it was never followed up, and

only after we had been stirring up some trouble that that letter was sent in a rush, to show that they were doing something.

A different Story

Well, that is what they did towards disposing of the Valley Railway! Let me tell you what we did and where this \$6,000,000 was expended. We were able to re-make a great many of the highways of New Brunswick that were never even half made in 1925 in the mad scramble to get enough men to on the roads to carry the Veniot government back to power. We got the money and we spent it.

There was much talk fore and aft about the paltry six million dollars the province had got for the Valley Railway—there was so much talk about the help this province had got through Mr. Peter J. Veniot in selling this railway, that I want to say that I gratefully acknowledge the assistance received from Premier MacKenize King and from the Hon. Charles Dunning—but I have yet to discover that I ever got any help at all from the Hon. Peter J. Veniot.

Now then let us have something else.

About Grand Falls

"They gave away Grand Falls." They have told it—they have sung it—they have chanted it—and they have howled it! You "gave away Grand Falls." And a lot of them who say it don't know whether it is the Grand Falls on the Nepisiguit or on the river Saint John. But they say it just the same "You gave away Grand Falls." Well, let us see. Your neighbor has a house—it is worth today \$1200—you go over to your neighbor and you say "Here, will you take \$1200 for that house?" He says "Yes." Now before he can bargain to sell the house, whose house was it Yours? or your neighbors? Pretty plain, isn't it!

Until you pay him the money, it is his house. All right. They say "I gave away Grand Falls." Why then, a few days, or a few weeks before this Government came into power, why was the Honorable P. J. Veniot signing an agreement to buy Grand Falls and some other lands from the International people for \$1,200,000? The fact that it is a thousand times GALLEY FOUR 6 as much doesn't affect the principle. I gave you the illustration with a house and the other fellow trying to buy it. Whose house is it? If Peter J. Veniot was going to mortgage this province for \$1,200,000 to buy Grand Falls, is it possible that he was much an utter idiot that he was going to buy his own property and pay \$1,200,000 for it? All right. If the other fellows owned it enough to be able to get \$1,200,000 for it, how could I give it away? How could I "give away Grand Falls" if it was their property?

And yet that is the stuff that they are trying to put all over this country as a reason why this government should not be returned to power—a silly falsehood! I have the documents—we have them in the De-

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