

New Members Heard in The Debate on the Address

The Legislature Held First Evening Sitting of the Session—Hon. Mr. Stewart Made forcible Reply to Leader Dysart—Other Speakers Were Mr. Gill, Mr. Agar, Mr. Doucet and Mr. Groom.

Hon. D. A. Stewart, Minister of Public Works concluded his speech on the address in the Legislature yesterday afternoon and was followed by Mr. Gill of Northumberland, Mr. Agar of Saint John, Mr. Doucet of Gloucester, and Mr. Groom of Charlotte. Mr. Anderson of Northumberland moved the adjournment of the debate and is speaking this afternoon.

The House had its first evening sitting last evening and listened to maiden speeches by Mr. Gill of Northumberland and Mr. Groom of Saint Stephen. Both are young men and their speeches impressed the House very favorably.

Hon. Mr. Stewart replied very effectively to the criticism of Leader Dysart and completely knocked out his claim that 520 votes in the late election would have given the Opposition 27 seats. The Minister was able to show that a change of 194 votes would have lost the opposition the counties of Albert and Victoria and would have left him with 13 seats.

The opposition have already made a good start with notices of enquiry, and it looks as if the crop would likely be a fairly heavy one.

Assembly Chamber
18th February, 1931

The House met at 3 p. m.

The following bills were read a second time, to amend the Rates and Taxes Act; to amend the County Courts Act;

MR. AGAR submitted the report of the Contingencies Committee, recommending that \$75 be given to each member for contingencies; \$50 to the Clerk of the House, and \$25 to the Assistant Clerk; that the usual stationery, furnishings for pages and messengers, be procured; that \$20 be given to the Official Reporter for postage, and the Clerk be supplied with a stenographer at \$3 per day.

Petitions Presented

MR. SMITH (St. John presented a petition for a bill respecting assessment in the Parish of Simonds.

MR. GROOM presented a petition for a bill to amend the act incorporating the Town of Milltown.

HON. MR. LEGER submitted the report of the New Brunswick Library Commission, and the annual report of the schools of New Brunswick.

MR. ANDERSON presented a petition for a bill to authorize the Town of Newcastle to issue debentures.

MR. COCKBURN presented a petition for a bill to give supplementary powers to the St. Andrews Electric Light and Power Company.

MR. VIOLETTE presented a petition for a bill to enable School District No. 5, of St. Leonard, to issue debentures.

MR. SMITH (St. John) presented petitions for the following bills,—to amend the act relating to the City and County of Saint John; to fix and determine the assessment valuation of the Ontario Fertilizer Company and International Fertilizers, Limited; to amend the act relating to the General Public Hospital, of Saint John; to enable the City and County of Saint John to issue certain debentures; and to amend an act relating to fire protection in Lancaster.

MR. MICHAUD presented a petition for a bill to authorize the Town of Edmundston to refund certain debentures; also a bill to enable the Town

of Edmundston to issue debentures to defray the cost of paving streets.

Notices of Enquiry

MR. DYSART gave notices of enquiry regarding dismissals in the Department of Health and regarding matters mentioned in the Speech from the throne in 1930.

MR. TWEEDIE gave notices of enquiry regarding expenditures on the Morrissey Bridge, and on the Bathurst road.

MR. MICHAUD gave notices of enquiry regarding hardware cut on the International Paper Company's limits; the amount of money expended on permanent and ordinary roads; as to the disposition of fines imposed by the Police Magistrate of Edmundston; as to the clearing of the right of way for transmission lines between Grand Lake and Barker's Point.

Hon. Mr. Stewart

HON. MR. STEWART, resuming his remarks in the debate on the address, said the Leader of the Opposition had referred to the defeat of the Minister of Agriculture in Albert County, and that he had been able to secure a seat in the House through the tolerance and good-will of the Liberal party in Westmorland. He would ask what really had happened in regard to this matter in Westmorland. After the resignation of Dr. Oulton, who had been elected as one of the representatives of Westmorland, it was announced that Hon. Lewis Smith was likely to be selected by the government party in Westmorland to fill the vacancy. The Provincial Executive of the Opposition party convened, discussed the situation, and decided to put up an opposition candidate. A resolution to this effect was forwarded to the County organization, and the Liberal executive in Westmorland refused or neglected to be governed by that resolution. It was not, he thought, hard to understand why the resolution was ignored. The Liberal candidates who had stood for the opposition in the provincial general election had been emphatically advised that the Baxter government would be defeated, and the Jones candidates in Westmorland elected. Notwithstanding that emphatic advice, the Liberal candidates in Westmorland were defeated. Therefore, it was easy to understand why the Liberal executive decided not to oppose the Minister of Agriculture. It was not so much their generosity as their caution which led to the acclamation of the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DYSART said he would have to be very generous to overlook his (Stewart's) departure from the truth.

Not Unduly Taxed

HON. MR. STEWART said his hon. friend knew what he (Stewart) had stated was true, and therefore his generosity would not be unduly taxed. Before proceeding with his remarks he wished to refer to the remarks made by his hon. friend from Madawaska regarding the appointment of Federal election officials in Restigouche. He (Michaud) had asserted that the official under discussion (Hebert) was not appointed by the King Government, but by the Civil Service Commission. He (Stewart) had looked the matter up and found that while the Chief Electoral Officer, appointed by the King Government, appointed enumerators and other officials connected with the election, the Secretary of State, from a slate said to be prepared by the Hon. P. J. Veniot, appointed Mr. Hebert.

MR. MICHAUD said that there officials were appointed by the Civil Service Commission.

HON. MR. STEWART said if the hon. gentleman thought that, then perhaps he thought they bought their appointments, the same as certain other appointees were proven to have done.

Election Returns

In regard to election returns, his hon. friend, (Dysart) had stated that a change of 440 votes would have given the opposition a certain further support, and that a change of 520 votes would have given the opposition 27 seats out of 48. He (Stewart) would give his version, and would say that a change of 194 votes would have given the government four more supporters, two from the County of Victoria and two from the County of Albert, so his friend could easily see how nearly the opposition lost the two supporters from Albert referred to by him yesterday as representatives who would do credit to any party. He (Dysart) had also neglected to say that two of the Jones candidates in the City of Saint John did not secure sufficient votes to save their deposits, and he further neglected to say that the then leader of the opposition, Wendell P. Jones, was defeated in the County of Carleton by about seventeen hundred votes. If his hon. friend and his associates could take any comfort out of that picture he (Stewart) was very willing that they should look at it as often as they thought fit.

Big Popular Majority

The Baxter government had secured in the province a popular majority of over twenty-one thousand, notwithstanding that the opposition candidates in Madawaska, Gloucester and Kent received very large majorities.

The leader of the opposition had stated yesterday that all road construction, and improvements in the County of Kent had been abandoned entirely, immediately after the provincial election of June, 1930. He further stated that there was a great deal of activity in road construction previous to that election, that many sections of roads had been staked off with laths, presumably preparatory to road construction, and he rather sarcastically stated that the lath business was poor last year so the government was helping out lath dealers by using laths for staking. His (Stewart's) answer to the hon. gentleman's statement was that it was not in accordance with the facts.

MR. DYSART: "The information came from your road engineer."

HON. MR. BAXTER: "There seems to be very close contact between some engineers and opposition members."

A Statement Denied

HON. MR. STEWART said the fact was that the records showed that no less a sum than \$143,842 had been spent in Kent County during the months of July, August, September and October. The leader of the opposition had also referred to the armies of men employed in road construction all over the province and claimed that the deficit was due to that fact. He (Stewart) would not deny that there were large numbers of men employed in bridge and road construction. It was true before the election, it was true after the election, and more particularly true in the latter part of the season when the Government considered it a duty to relieve unemployment as far as possible. Other provinces were taking that action and the people of New Brunswick had a perfect right to expect that their government would assist towards minimizing the number of jobless men. His hon. friend had tried to make it appear that this expenditure was because an election was on. He would draw his attention to what happened in the year 1925. That was an election year, and the government which his hon. friend supported created a deficit of \$756,000 or over. The following session the then leader of the opposition, Hon. P. J. Veniot, denied emphatically that the large deficit was the result of road construction. He (Stewart) would like to point out the difference between the year 1925 and the year 1930. In the previous year lumbering operations were active, mills were running throughout the entire season, lumber brought a good price, and there was practically no unemployment. Yet the deficit was in excess of three-quarters of a million dollars. In 1930 lumber conditions were the reverse. There was much unemployment, which it was the duty of the government to relieve, and yet the deficit was only \$635,000.

Unfair Comparison

The comparison made by the leader of the opposition as between the expenditure of \$8,500,000 last year and \$1,800,000 in 1925 was not quite fair, because in 1925 the figures did not include the expenditure on bridges, amounting that year to \$917,395, whereas the amount given for last year included everything spent by the Public Works Department. Considering the relative revenue of the province in the different years, the total expenditure was not disproportionate. His hon. friend (Dysart) argued that the expenditure was wasteful, not required, and only indulged in to ensure the return of the Baxter candidates. Everything he had said in that regard could be more aptly applied to the expenditures under the Veniot government in 1925, but the difference was that the Veniot government's expenditures did not elect enough candidates to sustain the old government while in 1930 the expenditure did return a sufficient number to continue the Baxter government

in office, which proved to his (Stewart's) mind that the general public approved of the expenditures made in 1930 and endorsed in a general way the policies of the Baxter government. In 1925 the general public apparently did not approve of the expenditures or policies of the Veniot government, and the result was well known to his opposition friends.

The First Deficit

During the regime of the Veniot government there was a total deficit on current account exceeding four million dollars, while the past year was the first to show a deficit of any consequence under the Baxter government, and if the several surpluses of the Baxter regime are deducted from the deficit of last year, the total deficit for the six-year period would be less than half a million dollars compared with a deficit of over four million dollars during the eight year period of the Foster-Veniot regime.

He would not now deal in detail with the work of his department, but would reserve that for the budget debate. He would just say, in passing that when autoists paid large sums into the revenue for their licenses and gas tax, there was a responsibility upon the department to furnish these people with the best roads possible.

Social Legislation

Reference had also been made to statements alleged to have been made by Premier Baxter and candidates supporting his regarding Old Age Pensions, Mothers' Allowances, Child Welfare, etc. Personally, he could recall very little having been said on these subjects, but he could admit that the Jones candidates were very lavish in their promises to the electorate generally, and not only promises but threats were made for on the day preceding the election in Restigouche truck drivers, road supervisors, operators of gravel-crushing plants were told that their places would be filled by others on the day after election. In fact, had the opposition been successful, their promises in Restigouche would have been a great embarrassment as he knew of three men who had been promised the single office of sheriff.

MR. DIOTTE: "There were ten."

No Discrimination

He was glad to know, however, that there was an absence of criticism as to there having been any discrimination between Liberals and Conservatives so far as road work was concerned. On Declaration Day, in the Town of Dalhousie, his political opponent had admitted that during the whole campaign even their most ardent supporters refused to state that there was discrimination between Liberals and Conservatives so far as ordinary work on roads or bridges was concerned. Of course, the responsible positions were given to friends of the government, otherwise it would have had to be acknowledged that no Conservatives could be found fit for them.

In conclusion he would simply say that while the present government had been able to collect more revenue, they had devoted it to the public services, more than previously had been given to the Provincial Hospital, more to ferry service, roads and bridges had been improved and maintained on a liberal scale, agriculture had received larger appropriations, and the government had certainly received the approval of the electorate in no uncertain term.

A Maiden Speech

MR. GILL said as this was his first speech in the House he would ask the indulgence of hon. members while he was taking his first step. The Hon. Minister who had preceded him was a hard man to follow but as he was privileged to represent the electors of Northumberland County he had a few remarks to make as to the subject of His Honor's speech. First he wished to offer his congratulations to the Move! and Seconder, for while he could not agree with their views he could appreciate their efforts and the admirable manner in which they had acquitted themselves. He desired to associate himself with previous speakers in reference to the passing of Mr. Lordon the late member of Gloucester.

Followed Able Men

He felt in representing Northumberland he was following a number of notable men. (Looking across the Chamber he could see the portraits of Lieut. Governor Snowball and Lieut. Governor Tweedie, two of the County's distinguished sons now looking down upon members of the Government and it was an inspiration to those who followed them. He felt that, though in opposition, he might be able to do his bit towards the good government of the country. He had been much impressed with the fine public buildings in Fredericton, and felt that they were a reason for pride in the province. He joined with others in an expression of appreciation for the magnificent gift which Lord Beaverbrook had made to the University, and he entirely agreed with the mover of the address that college residence had a beneficial effect on college life. He had been impressed with the opening ceremonies of the House, realizing that the traditions surrounding them had come down from early times, when the privileges of parliaments were not so well recognized as now.

Late Governor General

Reference was made in the Speech to the departure of Lord and Lady Willingdon to occupy the Vice-Regal Throne of India a like measure of interest and understanding of the people would be appreciated in a similar manner. The present was a time of grave import to India and the Empire, and it was a satisfaction to know that such an able and experienced officer was being sent to represent the Throne in that great country. The British form of government had not always worked well in every country, for history showed that its introduction on the Island of Sicily resulted in very grave disturbances. That failure illustrated the fact that all countries could not be governed alike and he trusted that a solution of the Indian question might soon be reached.

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