

THE PREMIER CLOSES THE DEBATE

Address Passed in the Legislature Without Division—Short Evening Sitting Was Held—Premier Richards, in a Great Speech, Replied Effectively to the Criticisms of the Opposition Leader—The Old Government Had a Series of Deficits at a Period When Times Were Good and Revenue Buoyant—Government's Position re Vocational Education Made Plain.

Premier Richards closed the debate on the address in the Legislature last evening and it passed without division. A committee composed of the mover and seconder and Hon. Mr. Harrison was appointed to present it to His Honor the Administrator of the government. Hon. Mr. Leger gave notice of motion that he would on Tuesday next move the House into Committee of the whole to consider the granting of supply to His Majesty.

PREMIER'S GREAT SPEECH

Premier Richards resumed the debate on the Address at 3.30 o'clock and not having completed his remarks at six o'clock, the House took recess, resuming at eight o'clock and speaking for another half hour. Undoubtedly his speech was the greatest of his career and elicited enthusiastic applause from his supporters. He replied effectively to the criticism of Leader Dystart and carried the war into Africa by an exposition of the extravagance and incapacity that characterized the late administration. He dealt at length with the subject of vocational education and declared that the government having reached a decision in the matter was prepared to accept full responsibility for it.

The Premier was warmly congratulated at the conclusion of his speech by members on both sides.

OFFICIAL REPORT

Assembly Chamber,
March 2nd, 1932.

The House met at 3 p.m.
A bill to provide for funding Bills due in May 1932 was read a second time.

MR. MELVILLE submitted the report of the Agricultural Committee.

MR. AGAR submitted the report of the Contingencies Committee recommending certain payments.

MR. DYSART gave notice of enquiry regarding expenditure on Roads and bridges in St. John County; regarding Provincial obligations maturing during the present year; regarding the Police Magistrate in the Town of Shediac.

MR. ANDERSON gave notice of enquiry as to the cost per horsepower to generate electricity at the electric plant at Minto.

MR. DOUCET gave notice of enquiry as to amounts expended on roads and bridges in the County of Gloucester.

HON. MR. LEGER presented a petition for a bill to amend the County valuation of Westmorland.

MR. ANDERSON presented a petition for a bill to amend the Act authorizing the County of Northumberland to make temporary loans.

MR. COCKBURN presented a petition for a bill to regulate the assessment of poll tax in the Town of St. Andrews; also for a bill to authorize the sale of certain lands.

MR. MICHAUD presented a petition for a bill to authorize the Town of Edmundston to issue debentures.

HON. MR. LEGER presented the report of the Board of Public Utilities; also the report of the New Brunswick Fire Prevention Board.

MR. COFFY presented a petition for a bill to authorize the County of Gloucester to issue debentures.

MR. EVANS asked leave of absence for Mr. Moore on account of serious illness in his family.

PREMIER RICHARDS

Makes Effective Reply To Leader Dystart And Ably Defends the Administration.

HON. MR. RICHARDS in rising to resume the debate on the Address said:—

Mr. Speaker:—Since we last met in this Legislature several events of probably a little more than ordinary importance have occurred, to which it is proper that some reference may be made, and to some of them in fact reference has been made in His Honour's speech. In the first place it is timely, as the Speech has done, to make reference to a visit which was made to this province during recess by His Excellency, the Earl of Bessborough, the new Governor General of the Dominion. The Earl of Bessborough before assuming this important office had a record of service in business and public life and overseas during the great war, which fitted him very excellently for the position to which he has been appointed. It is also perhaps rather a happy circumstance to us in this province that the Countess of Bessborough is a daughter of the fair land of France, from whose shores in the early days came those hardy people to land in this province, and whose descendants today form such a large proportion of the citizenship of the province of New Brunswick, and who have contributed so greatly to its progress and its advancement. The Governor General received a very cordial welcome from the people of this province and we look forward to the time when he may visit us again, and this time with the Countess of Bessborough.

Lieut. Governor's Absence

It is rather an unusual circumstance

also that at this time, for the first time since Confederation in the absence of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province—on many occasions previous administrators have taken the place of the Lieutenant Governor, but this is the first occasion when we have had a meeting of the Legislature in his absence. I am sure every member of the House will join with us in expressing our very kindest feelings of regret for His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, in the vacation which he is now taking overseas, and our expressions of good-will that he will come back again to us with renewed strength and vigor. Ordinarily we ought not to speak, perhaps about the Lieutenant Governor within these walls, but it is not improper on occasions like this to do so.

Tribute To Administrator

We are very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, and very happy in the fact that in his absence we have a gentleman to take his place, one of the eminence and the standing of the present administrator, Sir Douglas Hazen, a gentleman who has been distinguished in the public life of this province and of the Dominion for a great many years, over some forty years since he first essayed to enter public life, and he has during that long period occupied many positions of prominence—of importance—and of confidence to the people not only of his native province of New Brunswick, but to the Dominion as well. As a member of this Legislature, as a minister, as premier of the province, he will long be remembered as one of our most distinguished sons. And later as a minister at Ottawa—at present Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in this province—his appointment as administrator, as my honorable friend, the leader of the Opposition so well said, is a fitting (not a conclusion but a rounding out and a continuation, rather) of the splendid career, which he has had in the public life of the province of New Brunswick.

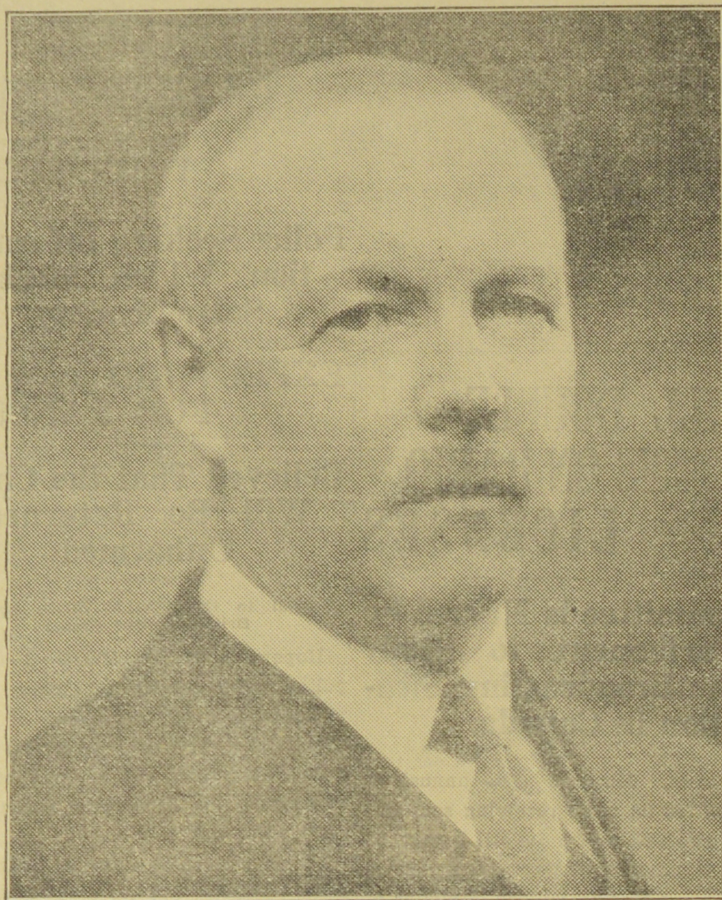
Ministerial Changes

Shortly after prorogation last year the then Premier, the Hon. Mr. Baxter, consequent upon his appointment to the Supreme Court bench of this province, retired from the premiership of the government, the premiership of the province, and I am quite sure that every member of this House, irrespective of his political affiliation, will join with me when I pay tribute to the sterling qualities and the splendid public service which the Hon. Mr. Justice Baxter has also rendered to the people of the province of New Brunswick and to the people of the Dominion of Canada. And we will also all join in wishing him a long period of service upon the Supreme Court bench of this province, a position which we all recognize he is so admirably qualified to fill. I think I may, perhaps, and I think I should, Mr. Speaker, just add this further word, speaking for myself perhaps more particularly, that in no period of my whole life did I appreciate to a greater degree the value of association and comradeship than during that period of some five or six years when I was associated with the Hon. Mr. Justice Baxter as one of his ministers in his government of this province. And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, when I say that I am also expressing the feeling of every member of this government who had the privilege of that association. Upon Mr. Baxter's retirement my friends and party supporters in the Legislature did me the honor, Mr. Speaker, of asking me to take his place as the leader of the government and as the premier of the province. I have on other occasions expressed publicly my consciousness of the honor which was done me at that time, and I think I shall again express here on the floors of the Legislature the appreciation which I have for their act, and the confidence which they have reposed in me. I want to take this opportunity, too, Mr. Speaker, to express to my hon. friend opposite me my very sincere appreciation for the kindly words which he uttered yesterday. I know that they are meant—and that he is expressing exactly his own real feeling—and therefore they are the more appreciated. It is one of the amenities of public life, and one of the fortunate features of public life, that our personal relations can be maintained in the character and the way they are, despite our political differences and whatever may be our differences politically. I hope those relations which have existed in the past between my hon. friend opposite and myself, no matter how long he may have been during these years, I know something, I think, of the responsibilities of office, five or six years as a minister gives one a fairly good idea of the responsibilities of public life, and one cannot be engaged in public affairs, at this time particularly, without a realization that it is not a time when matters rest lightly upon the shoulders of any leader of any government, or upon the ministers of any government.

Has Loyal Support

I want to express, too, on this occasion, my appreciation of the loyalty

HON. C. D. RICHARDS



Who Ably Defended the Record of the Government in the Legislature Yesterday

which I have received from the minister of Lands and Mines, who had the members of the party. I was very fortunate indeed in the formation of the administration that I was able to continue with those who had been tried and who had served excellently and well during the regime of my predecessor, the hon. Mr. Baxter. In taking in my good friend, the Minister of Lands and Mines, who had had experience before as president of the council, I have obtained one who has helped me and given excellent service in that department. And I was also fortunate in being able to obtain the services, as president of the council, of the hon. member from the city of Saint John, who brings to the council the value of a long experience in business and legal affairs, which is of value to the government in all its various deliberations.

The By Elections

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is one subject to which no particular reference is made in the speech from the Throne, but it is one which my very hon. friend opposite me made very little reference—and I wish to say I was amazed at the adroitness—think that was a term that was used a good deal during the last session and I think a very apt one to supply on this particular occasion—the adroitness with which my hon. friend failed of reference to two events which occurred since we last met here, the by-elections, one in the county of Saint John and the other in the county of Gloucester. Some little passing reference, it is true, was made, but my hon. friend was very particular to make very little reference to them or any discussion as to the result, nor called attention as a matter of fact to what occurred at all, although he had the temerity—the rather more than strange temerity—to speak of the "blizzard" which occurred in 1931. If my hon. friend can find any consolation in that "blizzard" of 1930, of June 19th, I think it was, then my hon. friend is entitled to any measure of consolation which he may take from it.

MR. DYSART:—And you are proud of it, I suppose.

Cause For Pride

HON. MR. RICHARDS:—I shall refer in a moment to one particular feature which may have given him some considerable satisfaction, some personal satisfaction. I am not going to dilate upon it, but I do say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this Legislature, that coming as a new government in May of last year, scarcely a little more than a month after we had the by-election in the county of Saint John, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of the former leader, the hon. Mr. Baxter, and despite the conditions which everybody knew of at that time, conditions that were prevailing, a certain amount of depression which has continued over the past year or two years—the dissatisfaction that existed almost on every hand—and the fact that in times like these, with their dissatisfactions and all the various uncertainties and disturbances that existed—all of which are charged against the government, whatever government may be in office at that particular time—despite the fact that the opposition in that constituency entered as their candidate one of the outstanding citizens of the city of St. John, a former mayor of that city—despite all these facts we were able to carry that constituency with a majority of over 1,800, nearly or almost as much as the majority which is credited to our former distinguished leader, the hon. Mr. Baxter. I say, Mr. Speaker, I think we have a right on this occasion to take a certain measure of pride and satisfaction in the result of that by-election. And no wonder my hon. friend just passes it by and forgets, it would seem, that

such an incident occurred. But my hon. friend was down there in the county of Saint John during that election (as was his right), and he charged me and the government with having taken an unfair advantage. "Why, he says, why did the leader of the government not call both by-elections on at the same time, in the county of Saint John and the county of Gloucester?" "Why does he seek to take such an unfair advantage?"

One At A Time

I assured my hon. friend at that time that he would have full and ample opportunity so far as the county of Gloucester was concerned before the next session of the Legislature, that he would have the opportunity, and that opportunity was accorded him sometime later, in the month of October, polling day being on the 26th day of that month. There was no particular reason why they should be both called on for the one day, situated as they were in different portions of the province. Well, we went into the county of Gloucester—we came right into the very doorway we may say of the former leader of the Liberal Party in this House, the dictator and the leader of my hon. friend opposite—the gentleman who has directed the destiny almost of the county of Gloucester for the past twenty years or more—and without spending too much time with respect to that election, may I remind you, sir, that an adverse majority of over 2,000 was turned into a favorable majority of 94, and despite the recount it continued so, in fact it became 95 upon the recount. Thus I say again, Mr. Speaker, I think we have some reason to feel a further measure of pride and gratification. I say, sir, that we should feel gratified that the position and the record of this administration which had carried on from May until October, had been accorded the confidence of the constituency of Gloucester in that by-election. I think my hon. friend after all derived a certain amount of gratification from the result, if he were to speak frankly and plainly his own real feelings in the matter. My hon. friend had been the subject of one displacement in the year 1930.

MR. DYSART:—I suppose you can speak with considerable experience in that regard, too.

No Regrets

HON. MR. RICHARDS:—In the year 1930, as I said he had been the subject of one displacement. My hon. friend is becoming facetious. I know what political life means, and I know too, to what my hon. friend refers, but I am not going to be deviated from my purpose by these remarks. So far as I am concerned personally I have no regrets.

MR. DYSART:—Then why should you think I have?

HON. MR. RICHARDS:—If my hon. friend wants to ask some real question I will give him the opportunity, and when he is through I will proceed.

MR. DYSART:—Go ahead.

A Fine Scheme

HON. MR. RICHARDS:—In 1930 the former leader, and as I have before said, almost the dictator of the policies of the hon. gentlemen opposite, deposed my hon. friend from the leadership of the party putting in the erstwhile leader, the hon. Mr. Jones. Well, I think my hon. friend perhaps did derive some little measure of personal gratification from the result of that election of 1930, when that erstwhile leader was wiped away with the rest of my hon. friend's cohorts in the province of New Brunswick. He again survives another scheme, according to rumor—rumor may not be entirely correct, but when we hear it mentioned a great deal, not only in the county of Gloucester, but in the other sections of the province—well that the ex-Premier and ex-Postmaster General had a very fine scheme all laid for the supplanting of my hon. friend once more (that is the hon.

leader of the Opposition) if only he could be successful in the election of the then Opposition candidate in the county of Gloucester. It was generally understood—it was a very fine scheme—so I think my hon. friend really derived a considerable measure of satisfaction from that by-election, and its result, when he found once again the schemes of those people who perhaps knew a little more about the political situation in this province than he did himself, found their fine schemes were foiled, and my hon. friend is still holding the leadership of the Opposition in this House and province. So that I say truthfully that I think some measure of satisfaction is due to my hon. friend.

Welcomes New Members

Now, I want to take this occasion

to extend to those two new gentlemen who have become members of this Legislature a cordial welcome from this House. I am quite sure that they will become valuable members and worthy representatives of their various constituencies. May I take this opportunity also, before passing to some of the other subjects, to express my appreciation of the very fine addresses which were given by the mover and the seconder of the Address the other day. The mover is not a new member of the House in the sense that this is his first session, and we knew of course that he could speak excellently, and he made a very fine address on that occasion, and I am sure we were also all delighted with the very fine address

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