The Provincial Government Road Policy Dissected

Opposition Organizer Carter Wants to Know Where the "Progressive Improvement" is Which the Premier Talks About---Half a Million Dollars Collected by the Government by means Of an Increassd Road Tax--Where Has the Money Gone?---Moss Grown Promises Dealt With.

(St. John Telegraph.)

"Premier Clarke was surely not in a serious mood when he gave his road policy announcement to the Standard," said Organizer E. S. Carter yesterday.

"When he made the statements that 'from year to year since the present government has been in power there has been a progressive improvement in the condition of the provincial roads' and 'on the whole the improvement has been steady and in many instances of such a character as to provide practically permanent roads, he surely did not expect to deceive the people of New Brunswick.

"They know more about the roads than Premier Clarke, who has but little personal knowledge of how desperate is the condition of the highways.

"The policy of road making, he announces," continued Mr. Carter, "is but a continuation of the highway improvement policies the people have been listening to since this government went into power in 1908. A bill to amend the highway act was the first measure introduced into the new Legislature by Mr. Hazen. That bill became law, but it was never acted upon. Instead, the county councils were asked to express their opinions of it and the vigorous criticism of the $2 poll tax section and some other things made another amendment necessary the next year.

"The old law was in effect in 1908 and 1909, and in 1910, two years after these road reformers took office, they increased the taxes of 70,000 ratepayers from $1 a poll to $1.50, and all property owners were called upon to pay twenty cents on $100 valuation instead of 12½ cents, or an increase of 7½ cents, or 75 cents on every $1,000.

Some Interesting Figures.

"The valuation of New Brunswick is in round figures about $120,000,000 and taking away from that amount the valuation of towns and cities, we are quite safe in saying that $60,000,000 would be taxed to keep up the country highways. The increase in the poll tax under the Hazen act of 1909 would amount to fully $35,000, and the additional rate of 75 cents per $1,000 on $60,000,000 would mean an increase of $45,000 yearly, or both together $80,000 a year. The Hazen, Flemming and Clarke governments have been in power eight years and this additional revenue for roads has been collected from the people for at least six years. Just about $500,000 more in that six years than the old government had.

The Premier Ought to Explain.

"It is up to Premier Clarke to explain where that money has gone and where the roads of New Brunswick have been improvel $500,000 worth.

"The Premier says they are going to continue the roads during the summer. He might have added 'until the snow flies' or 'until there is a general election.' Then this remarkable statement is made with all possible gravity and the Standard honors it with a sub-heading, 'Government loses no time:'

"The work contemplated for this year will be undertaken at once under the supervision of the engineer, and it is hoped better results will be accomplished than were ever before reached by the expenditure of an equal amount of money. The roads which, on account of the exceptional rains, are now in a few places unsatisfactory, will be improved and it is anticipated that as far as possible under the present system of road making those using our highways will be able to travel with ease and satisfaction and over a system of roads which has never before been equalled in New Brunswick. The supervisors have been instructed to do their work in a thorough manner and under the most modern methods used in the construction of highways such as we have in this province. Those who will carry their minds back a few years, unmoved by political prejudices, will be willing to concede the improvement made in the highways and he would be a bold man indeed who would attempt to contend for one moment that this improvement has not been very great in almost every section of the province.

An Old Promise.

"That promise," continued Mr. Carter, "is fully ten years old. They campaigned upon it in 1906 and 1907. They legislated in 1908 and they have done nothing since. The roads of New Brunswick are in worse shape today than ever they were. The best evidences we have of this are the entrances to our principal cities.

"Take St. John, for example. Could there be a worse road than to Brookville? Last year under the patchwork road policy of the government the new road engineer, at enormous expense, built less than a mile of permanent highway on the Rothesay road. It is less than a year old and the signs of unevenness are plenty. The falling stone work at some points has not been repaired and not a spoonful of material has been placed upon this narrow and costly experiment.

To Continue Patchwork Policy.

"Premier Clarke now announces that this patchwork policy will be continued and the Attorney General supplements his statement by saying in the Standard that the first work undertaken will be in his part of St. John county between Musquash and Lepreaux, while his colleague, Mr. Carson, is going to look after the Upper Loch Lomond road.

"The electors will not fail to see the drift of all this. It means additional expenditure for political favorites; the waste of the provincial moneys, and no permanent work.

"You may have noticed," said Mr. Carter, "that Hon. P. G. Mahoney, the new Minister of Public Works, does not seem to have any share in these announcements. Is he minister in name only? He is responsible for the work in his department and yet his premier does not permit him to make any noise over his new job.

"It looks as if the opposition policy has forced the hands of the government once more. The favor with which the opposition road plans has been greeted by the public has alarmed the Premier. His colleagues have forced him at last to make a move, but he is to late. A promise loses its effect when it is ten years old.

"The Opposition slogan is 'Take the Highways Out of Politics.' Place their management in the hands of the people, make the supervisors account for every dollar. Let the people elect their own supervisor and their own auditor. Print the accounts in each parish so that every taxpayer can read them and study them in order by section patrols. Raise the necessary money to do this and set the automobile licenses apart to pay the interest.' That's our policy in brief metre."

GREAT POTENTIAL WEALTH OF CANADA

TIMBER, COAL, OIL, NATURAL GAS AND MINERALS BEYOND CALCULATION, HERITAGE OF CANADIANS

PROSPECTS of new wealth in boundless quantities, through the application of science to industry, were unfolded the other day by Arthur D. Little, of Boston, in an address at the Royal Alexandra, at Winnipeg, after a luncheon given in his honor by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Mr. Little represents the firm of Arthur D. Little, Inc., of Boston, an organization of chemists and engineers, whose specialty is industrial research.

At the invitation of Lord Shaughnessy, president of the Canadian Pacific, the firm established a branch in Montreal, and Mr. Little has undertaken to survey the resources of Canada. His address yesterday was partly the result of a tour through Canada, which he had made in company with George Bury, Vice-President of the C. P. R.

W. M. Ingram, president of the Manufacturers' Association, introduced the speaker.

Mr. Little explained that he was born in Boston, and therefore belonged to those who do not have to be born again. He was therefore surprised to find himself, after a brief acquaintance with Canada, undergoing an unexpected process of rebirth. He had found himself in a new and ampler world, in which one breathed a more stimulating atmosphere and learned to think in continental terms. It was a world in which present achievement, wonderful though it was, derived its chief significance from its promise of the future. He had seen the black soil of the prairies turning green with the young wheat, great stretches of forest, lakes like inland seas, mountains rich in minerals and of commanding beauty, noble rivers and cities so clean, orderly and metropolitan that the traveller's admiration was blended with envy. It had been his good fortune to come to Western Canada with George Bury, Vice-President and General Manager of the C. P. R. Mr. Bury's knowledge of conditions and potentialities throughout the country was so full that to travel with him was to receive a liberal education.

Natural resources, proceeded Mr. Little, did not of themselves create great industries. Such industries resulted from personal initiative. Opportunity implied responsibility, and it was upon the heirs of this rich inheritance that the responsibility for a wise initiative was placed. The first requisite for a wise initiative was a compelling desire to do something with the opportunities at hand, and the second was knowledge. Science was only knowledge at its best; it was not something occult, to be followed for its own sake, but was intensely practical. The war had taught English-speaking people that science was the basis of prosperity and power, and that without science there could be no liberty and no national existence.

Mr. Little defined industrial research as research having for its immediate and avowed purpose some practical end. No greater service could be performed than that of inculcating into the public mind a proper appreciation of what research could do. For forty years the spirit of research had pervaded the entire social structure of Germany, with the result that Germany although not possessed of great natural resources, had before the war been rapidly making a peaceful conquest of the world. In the United States the handwriting on the wall was being read, and already several large corporations found it profitable to maintain great research laboratories. At least a dozen corporations spent $100,000 or more on such laboratories, and one company employed 650 chemists.

There was also, declared Mr. Little, an insistent demand throughout the British Empire for the mobilization, co-ordination and extension of research facilities. Lord Shaughnessy had acted by calling the organization represented by the speaker, Arthur D. Little, Inc., of Boston, to Canada, for the survey of the natural resources of the Dominion and the promotion of industrial research. He and his associates felt that, in so doing, Lord Shaughnessy had honored them so signally that they would be dishonored if they failed to make the most of the opportunity placed in their hands. They were not in Canada in the exclusive interest of any corporation, but to serve all clients whose interests were in line with those of the Dominion. Their work had scarcely begun. Ultimately they hoped to have the known resources of the Dominion indexed, so that the main facts about them would be instantly available. They expected to assist in securing new facts, and were assured of the cordial co-operation of the Federal Government and the universities. They would strive to introduce industries along new and non-competitive lines and, if permitted to, improve the practice of many existing industries. Some progress could be reported already, although they had only been in Canada a few weeks.

Mr. Little then mentioned a few of the lines in which applied science could help in the production of Canadian wealth. Sometimes as much as 20,000,000 acres were sown to flax in Canada for the grain only. It was not practicable, in view of the labor situation, to grow flax for the fibre in order to make linen. But mountains of flax straw resulted from the growing of flax for the seed, because when grown for that purpose it was sown much more sparsely than when grown for fibre, and its habit of growth was changed. Hundreds of thousands of tons of the best paper stock in the world could be obtained from this straw. And in the United States the Government was circularizing housewives not to destroy old paper and rags, from which new paper could be made. It had not been an easy matter to separate the fibre required for paper from the broken straw. A great many people had tried it without success. His own company had carried out some experiments in its experimental paper mill at Boston, and had succeeded so well that the United States Government was taking the paper they produced. Samples of it were shown by the speaker. Such paper was worth 6 cents in any market, he said, and probably 8 cents. A mill established to manufacture it could afford to pay the farmers $3 a ton for flax straw delivered.

Another question they were investigating was the possibility of providing gasoline from natural gas. A new process for effecting this end had been developed in Oklahoma. It was of peculiar promise, and his company had taken out a license to use it in Canada. If some of the gasoline thus obtained contained too much sulphur, probably it could eventually be eliminated by an adaptation of the French process, which had proved so successful in taking sulphur out of oil. By this method, copper was put into the oil, and the sulphur attacked the copper, leaving the oil pure. There was much lignite in Canada. This was a good gas producer, and a new type of machine, a rotary, which worked well with lignite, had recently been made available.

Another possibility for Canada, said the speaker, was the production of dry milk. Several processes for doing this had been invented. Sterilized it kept good for a long time, and for certain purposes, including those of bakers and confectioners, was better than ordinary milk. It could be restored to the condition of ordinary milk by the addition of water. He was convinced that it would become a staple article on the kitchen shelf. Its great merit was that, in shipping, seven-eighths of the freight on ordinary milk was saved and dairies could profitably be established at points remote from markets. About $15,000 worth of dried milk entered London daily from Scandinavia, and quantities were going into New York. Properly handled, the dried milk industry could become in Canada more important than the cheese industry.

Another thing about milk, said Mr. Little, was the fact that thousands of gallons of skim milk were daily fed to hogs. Casein, worth 30 cents a pound, could be easily extracted from skim milk.

One of the most promising fields for industrial research was that afforded by the enormous quantity of straw, for which Canadians had no present use. Some things could be done with straw already; straw boards and corrugated board could be made. A straw lumber, suitable for cheap outhouses and partitions, could be made at a cost of not more than $5 or $6 a ton. He believed something might be done with it in the rotary gas producer. The distillation products of straw were worth looking into, also the possibility of converting it into fuel for use on the farm. Grain alcohol had been made from straw, although the commercial value of this process was not yet assured.

Few nations were so bounteously endowed with potential wealth as Canada. There was merchantable timber in such profusion that a single island on the Pacific coast boasted the greatest amount of such timber in proportion to its acreage in the world. There was coal in all varieties, from lignite to anthracite; oil and natural gas; the finest fisheries known; minerals beyond present calculation; vast areas of fertile soil. What could not be done with them, with the aid of industrial research?

Speaking of the lumber industry, Mr. Little said, the Canadian lumbering practice was not better than the best in the United States. In the States, two-thirds of a tree felled in the yellow pine belt was wasted as litter in the field or burned as mill waste. Three dollars a thousand was a good profit on lumber. For 15,000,000,000 feet board measure which found its way to market, 30 billion feet were wasted. This was not industry; it was crime.

A few months ago there had been 2,600,000 automobiles in the United States, and they were increasing at the rate of 4,000 a day. These machines represented 60,000,000 horse-power in gasoline engines. That was more than the potential horse-power of the United States water power. Auto manufacturers were bringing in an additional 100,000 horse-power a day. The unprecedented increase in the demand for gasoline thus caused was responsible for the high price of that commodity, and soon there would not be enough gasoline to go round. Alcohol was the only feasible substitute, and grain alcohol—not wood alcohol—could be produced from wood waste. A plant for doing this had been started in Louisiana.

The speaker concluded by indicating the industrial possibilities of electro-chemical and electra-metallurgical processes. As showing what they had already succeeded in doing, he said that ten years ago 22 per cent. of steel rails manufactured were rejected for faults. Whereas out of ten thousand tons of rails made in the electric furnace in three years there were no failures. Exceedingly interesting experiments were also being made in producing synthetic materials by the use of the ultra-violet rays. Great results were likely to come from this line of research.

Industrial research was applied to idealism. It expected rebuffs. It learned from every stumble, and turned a stumbling-block into a stepping-stone. It trusted the scientific imagination, knowing it to be simply logic in flight.