

LEGISLATURE LIKELY TO GO INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TODAY

(Continued from page three)

take care of itself, and he thought the House would agree with him that his colleague from Restigouche yesterday had made a pretty good job of it. The hon. member from Madawaska (Violette) had made some reference to his (Diotte's) absence from the House and was reported to have said that perhaps he did not know the by-election in Restigouche was over and was still electioneering in that county. He would tell the House, however, that they knew in Restigouche when they were trimmed and were not like an hon. member he could mention who did not know whether he was elected or not until he consulted a supreme court judge. Matters in connection with that bye-election had been brought up and the actions of a certain Mr. Jean Francois Pouliot from Quebec mentioned. He could tell the House he was at the meeting referred to, and he had no hesitation in saying that Mr. Jean Francois Pouliot lied on that occasion. He heard what Hon. Mr. Stewart said to Mr. Pouliot and he heard the latter tell the audience the direct opposite. He (Diotte) had come to the conclusion that the man at Ottawa who had called Jean Francois Pouliot a jack-ass used good judgment in applying that name to him.

Colonization

In the matter of colonization, he thought some of his friends' opposition were to use a term, perhaps unparliamentary, "bug-house" on this subject, and he would ask them what their own party had done which amounted to nothing and less than nothing because when this government came in they found there were hundreds of men on land for which no grants had been issued, and this government had to go to work and begin colonization by remedying the carelessness and worse of the preceding government.

Inconsistency

As to opposition criticism about expenditures, that party was most inconsistent, for it was continuously asking first one department and then another to spend money and then coming to the House and telling the government it spent too much. They talked and talked without sincerity, apparently just to get their names and their pictures in the press. Ever since he had been coming to the legislature, they had been telling the same old story year after year without variation until this year he would compliment the leader of the opposition on making one change, he forgot to mention the pair of scissors bought for the Hon. Minister of Public Works.

MR. GILL

MR. GILL speaking to the amendment, said he wished to reply to some remarks made by the Minister of Public Works. He had made no intentional misrepresentation when he spoke before regarding the employment of men taken from relief to do road work, and he thought the Minister should bear in mind the needs of men on relief when he disbursed road monies. Lists of such men could be obtained from reliable persons as to the men that could best be employed, and when some of them wished to pay taxes through road work, the municipalities would be assisted. He did not feel that his request that the government should assist Northumberland with its bond issue was out of place because at the time there had been no announcement of government policy.

Regarding the Barnaby River Bridge, he had claimed that the government should have seen that the specifications were carried out by the contractor, and the Minister's answer by referring him to the practices of the Veniot government was no answer at all.

He felt that hard surface roads were not nearly so important as needed repairs to by-roads, which would enable farmers to get their products to market. In regard to the graveling of roads, he maintained that it was most important there should be binding material in the gravel. When this was properly attended to, experience showed that the roads stood up very much better than were merely loose gravel was applied.

He was very glad to hear the Premier's announcement as to the renewal of the Fraser Companies' operations on the Miramichi, and now that there were prospects of improved conditions he would again urge that the N. B. Electric Commission should construct a power line from Minto to the Miramichi.

No doubt hard-surface roads would eventually come, but he was opposed

to the large expenditure they would require at present.

MR. ANDERSON

MR. ANDERSON continuing the debate, said he was opposed to the government's project of hard surface roads until the province could afford the expense. The Provincial Secretary had stated that the project had been abandoned in 1930, and if the province could not afford it then because money was scarce, how could it afford the expense now? Whensixty-six per cent of the revenue was required to pay interest and sinking fund, the balance could not adequately keep up the public services. More borrowing at the present time would be a fatal mistake. The over-expenditure in 1933 had been over \$1,600,000, and yet the government was bringing down schemes for larger expenditure this year. The marketing board would bring large expenses, as would the wage board now before the House. He felt the province was getting over its depth, and unless this spending policy was changed the whole province would be in the financial condition of Northumberland county and have to go to Ottawa for aid. The province simply could not afford hard-surface roads at the cost of \$25,000, per mile or more, at which rate it would take from thirty to thirty-five millions of dollars to cover the trunk road mileage. One hon. member had claimed that hard-surface roads would reduce the cost of upkeep that the saving in maintenance would more than pay the interest and sinking fund charges. Last year ordinary road expenditure had been above \$500,000, and how far, he asked, would that amount go in providing interest and sinking fund for a loan of thirty millions. The construction of cement surface roads would be no good as a relief project, and he claimed that in spending road money this year the project should be to give as much manual labor as possible. In certain areas also, colonization should be supported, and a bonus given to new settlers for clearing land. By spending money in that way the government was not only relieving unemployment but it was preventing its recurrence by making men self-reliant and at the same time creating a valuable asset for the province. He thought the power line from Minto to the Miramichi could be constructed as a relief project.

MR. TWEEDIE

MR. Tweedie said that he was not personally opposed to hard-surface roads, and the fact that the cost of the same was to be reduced by federal assistance to unemployment throughout the province, made the matter well worthy of consideration. He understood that it was proposed to construct seventy miles, which might cost around two million dollars.

HON. MR. TILLEY—"You say that seventy miles would cost that much."

MR. TWEEDIE said he believed it would cost close to that sum. He presumed that hard-surface roads would be laid down on main trunk highways where the traffic was the heaviest. It was possible that in order to get rid of the dust nuisance, it might be necessary some day to build hard-surface roads, but under present conditions and the government facing a large deficit, he thought the matter should have very careful consideration before anything was done. In order to give the unemployed some benefit from the work, the money should be expended in sections of the province where unemployment was the greatest. If contracts for the work were let, it would not be possible for the contractors to move about from place to place, as the cost would be too great. He had been told that seventy miles would go for material, which per cent of the outlay for the work would leave only a small portion to be paid out in wages. It was his opinion that if the work was to be carried on for the relief of unemployment, at least ninety-nine per cent of the cost should be spent in wages, so that the money could be retained in the province.

Offers Suggestion

There was no doubt in his mind that the money to be devoted to hard-surface roads could be expended to better advantage in other ways. For instance, land settlement could be promoted and small loans might be made to farmers. Sooner or later, the people would have to go back to the land if there was to be prosperity in the province. An effort might also be made to render assistance to the fishermen. The bonus to take fishermen last year had been a good thing, and some similar plan might be devised to render assistance to the farmers. It was better to spend money to assist them in carrying on their work than it was to spend it for relief purposes. He thought that the government should adopt a programme that would provide assistance to people in different sections of the province. In any case it was desirable that money should be kept at home, and not expended on hard-surface roads.

MR. RICHARD

MR. RICHARD (Gloucester) said he had been surprised that the Hon. Minister of Public Works had taken his seat without first defining the policy of the government with respect to hard-surface roads. The Hon. Minister's department would have control of the expenditure and therefore he should have given the House some information as to the mileage and the type of roads it was proposed to adopt. The Hon. Premier had referred to the matter in his speech, but the Hon. Minister of Public Works had been silent on the matter. He (Richard) was not opposed to the construction in some parts of the province of hard-surface roads, but he thought the province should first be in a position to undertake a work of such magnitude. He understood that the work was to be undertaken not because of immediate necessity but in the interests of

the unemployed. He was not sure that the unemployment situation would be relieved by engaging in the construction of hard-surface roads at a cost of \$25,000, per mile. He noticed that the Hon. Premier was smiling, and apparently he did not know whether or not the figures he had quoted were too low or too high.

HON. MR. TILLEY—"Smiles are sometimes deceptive."

MR. RICHARD said that that might be true, but he had it on good authority that concrete roads would cost from \$24,000 to \$25,000, per mile. It should not be forgotten that a lot of preparatory work would be necessary no matter what type was adopted. He was informed that black-base roads could be constructed at a cost of from \$20,000 to \$25,000, per mile, and there was still another type that could be constructed at from \$7,000, or \$8,500, per mile but would not last as long as concrete or black-base roads, he was told that only forty per cent of the cost would reach the pockets of the people and the balance would go outside for material. It did not look to him like good business to increase the bonded debt of the province in order to help out other provinces that would supply the material. Every dollar of the appropriation should be expended for the relief of unemployment and for the benefit of our own people. If seventy miles of hard-surface roads were constructed it would mean only five or six miles to each county; that would provide employment for about one hundred men for eight or ten weeks out of a year. He would submit, therefore, that the cost would be altogether too great, considering the small benefit to be derived from it.

Economic View

From an economic standpoint he did not think the advantage to the province of hard-surface roads would be very great. True, the cost of maintenance would be reduced, but there would be additional fixed charges and sinking fund to provide for it. Then the province had ten thousand miles of secondary roads, and capital expenditures would still be necessary to look after them. The time might come when the total revenue of the province would be absorbed in maintaining the trunk and secondary trunk roads. Clouds of depression might lift and the sun of prosperity shine again, but it would not all come at once. The point had not yet been reached when decrease in revenue was at an end. Last year many cars remained off the road because of the tax. The changes in the liquor law of the United States might mean decreased revenue for the province. All would admit that hard-surface roads would be of benefit to the province, but had the time arrived when such a policy could be adopted? He agreed with his hon. friend from Northumberland (Tweedie) that the province should take advantage of the contribution from Ottawa towards unemployment, but the money should be expended for that purpose to the best advantage. He was sure that the farmers of the North Shore had not asked for hard-surface roads, but were satisfied to have good turnpike highways. He was doubtful about the residents of urban districts but thought they were fairly well satisfied with the main trunk roads. He had not seen any demand for hard surface roads in the newspapers of the province, and he felt that the government before embarking on such a program, should carefully study the question. The fishing industry of the province might be given greater assistance, and it might be done along the lines now adopted for the encouragement of agriculture. Perhaps the fishermen might be financed in a way to enable them to procure additional boats. Fishing boats cost anywhere from \$800, to \$1,500, and one of them would provide employment for four or five men. If help were given them the fishermen of Gloucester county might be enabled to double the present output. There were many ways that the money could be expended so that it would remain in the province and put the people on a self-sustaining basis. Although the legislation for hard-surface roads had been passed in 1930, he hoped the matter would come up again for further discussion.

HON. MR. TILLEY—"The Act of 1930 is still law."

MR. RICHARD said he hoped the Hon. Minister of Public Works would give the House further information with regard to the type of road to be built and that the Hon. Provincial Secretary would tell how the money was to be provided.

MR. SIDDALL moved the adjournment of the debate.

It being six o'clock the Speaker left the Chair, to resume eight o'clock. The House resumed at 8 o'clock.

MR. SIDDALL

MR. SIDDALL, in resuming the debate on the budget, said that he wished to associate himself with all the nice things that had been said about the government of today, and also wished to extend his congratulations to the Mover and Seconder of the Address. He would also congratulate the new Premier and in doing so wished to say that he believed the province was to be congratulated in having such a Premier. He also felt like congratulating the leader of the opposition on the fact that he had been placed more securely in the saddle than formerly.

A great deal had been said on both sides of the House about the financial standing of the province. The Provincial Secretary-Treasurer had given them a creditable statement of the finances of the province backed up by the Auditors. It was true that there was a difference between the figures given by the two sides of the House in reference to the financial condition of the province and he wondered why this was so. In endeavoring to get an independent source of information as to these conditions of the province he had found the view of a gentleman who in 1917 had been chosen leader of the Liberals in this province. He referred to the Hon. Senator W. E. Foster, ex-Premier of the Province. In May 1933, Senator Foster, in speaking

of the financial condition of Canada and particularly in reference to this province, was reported in an Ottawa despatch as follows:

Federal Supervision

"Dominion Supervision over the capital expenditures of provinces, who have received federal financial assistance, was urged in the Senate yesterday by Senator W. E. Foster, former Premier of New Brunswick. Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, government leader in the Upper House agreed with the suggestion and hoped the financial experiences of the provinces would have a chastening effect and leave them open to Dominion supervision. The federal treasury went to the assistance of some provinces to avert serious financial repercussions, said Senator Meighen."

"Many provinces replied Senator Foster had been extravagant and injudicious in expenditures and were themselves to blame for their plight. New Brunswick, he said, had instituted careful scrutiny of expenditures and was in sound financial shape."

Fair Criticism

Why not that, he asked, a fair criticism coming from the Hon. W. E. Foster and leader of the Liberal party in this Province. If any of the gentlemen opposite repudiated Senator Foster as their leader, then they were leaderless.

MR. RICHARD (Gloucester)—"When did we choose him?"

MR. SIDDALL—"You chose him in 1917 and yet you repudiate him now, then you are without a leader."

MR. SIDDALL said he was proud of his colleague, Hon. Mr. Leger, the Provincial Secretary-Treasurer, whose administration of the financial department had saved this Province hundreds of thousands of dollars during the years he had so ably filled the office. Surely, he said, opposition members could not expect the people to accept their opinion in regard to the financial condition of the Province as against the view expressed by Senator Foster and such an independent paper as the Telegraph-Journal. It surprised him to hear the wallings of the member for Gloucester, who pictured us as still being in the woods. All financial journals of note were declaring that we were on the up-grade and he preferred to accept independent views as to our condition rather accept the dark outlook painted by members of the Opposition.

London Conference

Referring to the Imperial Conference and the benefits that it had predicted would accrue from the trade pacts with Great Britain, he said, he did not think anyone would say that we had made every effort possible to increase our trade with other countries. Opposition members who took such a dark outlook on life individually were quite all right, but collectively in this House, they became almost a menace to the country. Did they think there was going to be an election and make that a reason for crying hard times, which seemed to be the only song they knew and they sang it to a very doleful tone.

He believed times were on their way back to more prosperous day in New Brunswick especially, and in another year he looked for this Province to be in her old normal place again.

Quoting from the Chatham Commercial, he found there a very mischievous article calculated to draw a line between the north and southern part of the Province. That paper had referred to what it termed the guarantee by the Province of the bonds of the Port Royal Pulp and Paper Company in Saint John. The article, he said, was absolutely false and that paper was only trying to make trouble. This attitude was taken by a paper in Northumberland despite the fact that the government had recently handed the municipality \$180,000 to help them out of their trouble. In other words this sheet was biting the hand that had helped Northumberland in the time of its distress. He (Siddall) had always had a high opinion of Northumberland, but after listening to the members from that constituency he wondered whether he had been wrong in the good opinion he had had of it.

MR. RICHARD (Gloucester)—"Too bad for Northumberland."

MR. SIDDALL—"If you would have stayed in your own county, you would have been in a good place."

A Big Windfall

Continuing, he said, he was told that the money left in Northumberland from the fishing industry along the Miramichi and by tourists in a year amounted to \$2,000,000. All this Session he had never heard anything from the members of that county of the great assets which it possessed. They should not, he said, belittle their county, as they could not hope to get anywhere in that way. He did not believe the people of the Miramichi wanted their representatives to come here and tell the country how bad the conditions were in Northumberland.

Hydro Extension

The members for Northumberland were blaming the Minister for hydro for not carrying electricity to Northumberland, and at the same time they were telling of the deplorable conditions that existed there. They told of the large number on the dole, and one gentleman went so far as to say the people would move out of Northumberland if they did not get some assistance and if hydro was not extended to the Miramichi. What, he asked, would be the use of putting hydro into the county if the people were going to leave it.

MR. ANDERSON—"Those who take the electricity in Northumberland pay for it."

MR. SIDDALL—"You are only concerned about the man who can pay for hydro. You apparently care nothing about the poor man, you are willing that he should remain in the dark."

MR. SIDDALL said in his own county he was glad to know that the chairman of the Hydro Commission had extended the service through poor as well as the wealthy districts and he was proud of the fact that no discrimination had been shown in refer-

ence to the extension of electric light and power service in Westmorland. All had been treated alike. He was opposed to the extension of hydro to Northumberland if it was only going to be for the benefit of the rich man.

Have Eased Off

He said he was proud of the fact that the people of this Province were not drinking as much hard liquor at the present time as in years past. There had been a noticeable decrease in the past two years in that respect. The depression might have had something to do with it, but he recalled when The Intoxicating Liquor Act was put into effect the premier of that day had said to him if the people only did their duty there would be a gradual decrease in drinking hard liquor in this Province. He was pleased to say that prediction was proving true and he hoped that the sale of hard liquor would continue to decrease, even if it did mean a loss of revenue to the Province.

Approves Policy

MR. SIDDALL said he was for permanent hard-surfaced roads. It had been stated by a member for Gloucester that hard surfaced roads would not be much good in the matter of the relief of unemployment. If he (Siddall) thought the hon. member was right he would be opposed to the hard surfacing of roads this year, but from information he had gathered he was convinced of quite the contrary. Opposition members claimed the government should give some information as to what these hard surfaced roads would cost per mile, but he questioned if the Minister of Public Works was in a position to give any where near the exact cost. In his (Siddall's) opinion, \$20,000 a mile would be a big price. Practically all the material going into the proposed hard surfaced roads, apart from the top, would be procured in the Province and from 80% to 85% of the cost of the roads would be spent here. So far as the cost of the cement was concerned, he figured that perhaps 60% would be for freight and the handling of that material meant employment for the railway men in this Province. Several of the counties, including Northumberland, Gloucester, Kent and Albert, had notified the government, through their representatives, that they did not want the hard surfaced roads.

MR. RICHARD (Gloucester)—"Do you say that 80% spent for hard surfaced roads in this Province would go to the laboring man?"

MR. SIDDALL—"I say that about 80% of the cost would be spent in this Province."

Continuing, he said that more than half of the cost of cement brought into the Province was paid in freight, although it was hauled by the railways at less than cost. It cost more to deliver cement in the Maritime Provinces than it did to manufacture it.

MR. PIRIE—"That's wrong."

MR. SIDDALL—"That's not wrong."

A Good Argument

MR. SIDDALL had undertaken to prove that about 80% of the money that would be spent on hard surfaced roads would go to the laboring man and that included, not only men who worked with the pick and shovel, but men who had teams employed on the work. The fact that we had spent more than a million and a quarter of dollars for the relief of unemployment in this Province, he considered was a good argument why we should proceed with permanent road buildings and give the people employment. The money spent on the hard surfacing of roads would go a long way to relieve unemployment and for that reason he was in favor with it. It was much better to give people work than to give them the dole.

In conclusion he would advise members of the House and particularly those from the County of Northumberland to take a more optimistic view of conditions and use their best endeavors to hasten the time when this grand old Province would once more be enjoying its former prosperity.

HON. MR. TILLEY adjourned the debate.

The House went into Committee, with Mr. Evans in the chair, to consider bills relating to the Town of Milltown and relating to the municipality of Northumberland. These bills were reported with minor amendments.

The House again went into Committee, with Mr. Brooks in the chair, to consider an Act regarding Motor Vehicles.

Motor Vehicle Act

HON. MR. HARRISON said this bill was to amend and consolidate the Motor Vehicle Act. Some of it was new, and the principle amendments were that a driver's license would include a chauffeur; the regulation regarding speed would read, "Speed must not be greater than reasonably proper, considering the road alignment, a traffic, or liable to endanger life or property." For commercial vehicles the speed limit would be thirty miles per hour light and twenty-five when loaded; the weight of loads would be dealt with by regulation. There were differences in penalties, regulations and in reference to insurance. One change was that a driver would not be held liable for damage to a guest in his car. The bill was taken up section by section.

The bill was agreed to as amended and reported.

The Committee rose.
Adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

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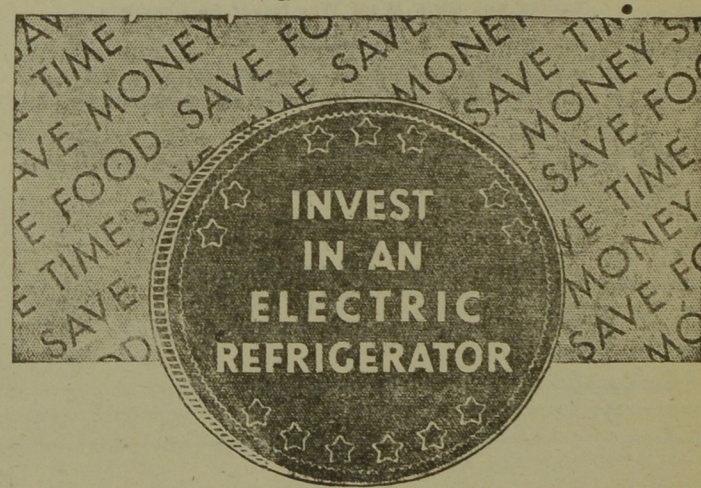
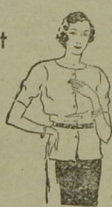
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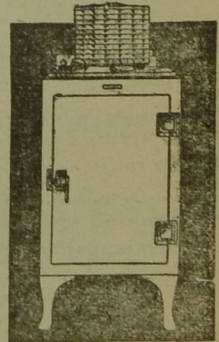


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