

Debate on the Address in The Legislative Assembly

Speeches by Dr. Price, Mr. Witzell, Hon. J. A. Murray, Mr. Dugal and Mr. Slipp-- The Opposition Leader Welcomes Cols. Guthrie and Black Home From the war a Little Matter Which the Government Speakers Had Overlooked.

There was a large attendance at the opening of the Legislature yesterday and the proceedings were followed with considerable interest. The absence of Fredericton's society ladies elicited some comment and it was hinted in some quarters that a "boom, scare" was responsible for their absence.

Messrs. Stewart and Robichaud, the Gloucester members condemned by Royal Commissioner Chandler, were right on hand and were naturally objects of much attention.

The address in reply to the speech from the throne was moved by Dr. Price and seconded by Mr. Witzell. They read their speeches to the House and received a good hearing. Other speakers were Mr. L. A. Dugal, Acting Premier Murray and Mr. A. R. Slipp.

Mr. H. B. Rainsford, the veteran clerk of the House, was at his post after a lengthy illness and everybody was glad to see him. Clerk Assistant Dibble, who is in delicate health and recently met with a sad bereavement in the death of his wife, was also at his desk.

A REMARKABLE OMISSION.

After the mover and seconder had spoken, it was left for Mr. Dugal to strike the popular note of the afternoon and amend an important omission in the speech from the throne and the speeches of Dr. Price and Mr. Witzell by extending his congratulations to the hero members of the House, Colonels Guthrie and Black, who have been at the front fighting for king and empire and returned with wounds and honors. Mr. Dugal spoke of the signal services of these gentlemen and the members applauded him to the echo. His regrets at the illness of Premier Clarke and J. L. Stewart, M.P.P., were suitably expressed and he congratulated his fellow Acadian, Hon. Mr. Melanson, upon his election as Speaker and in the name of the French-speaking people thanked the House for its action. Mr. Dugal also regretted his lack of sufficient command of the English language to speak upon the address.

Acting Premier Murray made no announcement of any value. He did not give any information concerning Valley Railway plans beyond that announced in the speech.

There were many who expected the speech of the acting premier to wind up the debate, but Mr. Slipp, who for some years has ebbed and flowed in government favor, took the floor and after expressing the thought that it was a pity there was not more frank discussion of affairs by private members, proceeded to follow Mr. Dugal and congratulate Colonels Guthrie and Black upon their services to their country.

"After making reference to himself as a 'back bench', Mr. Slipp praised the government for many things but criticized the present school circumstance, saying there were too many subjects and they were too intricate. He spoke, he said, from personal experience. There was also too great a tendency to a university education. In addition to this, Mr. Slipp spoke of the technical training in Nova Scotia and Quebec.

Hon. Mr. Murray said that the circumstances under which Premier Clarke was absent from his accustomed place in the House would be deeply regretted by all the members. For some time he had been in most indifferent health and was advised by his medical attendant to take a rest, from which he was not yet able to be back. Members would be glad, however, to learn that his health was greatly improved and that he hoped he would be able to be back before the session closed.

Last session hon. members would remember that the then Speaker, Mr. Dickson, was unable to be present on account of ill health, and while all regretted his absence they nevertheless hoped for his early recovery and his speedy return to his duties, and he was sure it was with feelings of great sorrow that they all learned of his untimely death a few weeks ago. The

late Mr. Dickson was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word. His was a character that those who knew him soon learned to respect and admire, and he brought many excellent qualities to the duties of his office.

Melanson for Speaker.

In choosing a successor to Mr. Dickson, he was going to offer the name of a gentleman well known to them as a man of the highest standing and of a long and honorable career in the business life of the province. He had already served one session as Speaker of the House and acquitted himself as such to the complete satisfaction of the members, and he (Murray) felt sure that his selection would meet with the entire approval. He moved, seconded by Mr. Dugal, that Oliver M. Melanson, Esquire, to take the chair of the House as Speaker.

The motion was then put and carried unanimously.

Mr. Melanson was then escorted to the chair by the mover and seconder and briefly thanked the House for the honor conferred upon him.

The Lieutenant-Governor then entered the Chamber and opened the session with the Speech from the Throne.

Hon. Mr. Murray introduced a bill to amend the Fire Insurance Policies Act.

Dr. Price, M.P.P., of Moncton, moved the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. He got off a lot of clatter and banter concerning the Government, and claimed that it had accomplished wonders for the province. He made no reference to his recent trip to Ottawa in search of evidence by means of which he hoped to decapitate the Deputy Minister of Public Works appointed by this same Government.

Mr. Weitzel.

Mr. Weitzel, in seconding the address in reply, said that the previous speaker (Dr. Price) had left but little to say, as he had dealt with all the subjects eloquently and thoroughly. However, he subscribed his sentiment of regret that illness prevented the Premier from being present, and he trusted that he would soon be able to return. It was with a similar feeling of regret that they missed the late Speaker, whose death came as a great loss to the House. Reference had been made to the war which had darkened many of New Brunswick's homes, but mingled with the sorrow there was a feeling of pride that those who had lost their lives had lost them in such a noble cause. Representing as he did a county in which the population was French Acadian, that population had responded magnificently to the calls made upon them and had showed their eagerness to join in the fight for freedom and higher civilization.

With regard to agricultural educational work, the short course in agriculture, together with the Agricultural Schools established in this province, is giving to the farmer the facilities for acquiring the scientific knowledge necessary, and he might say that the large attendance at the short course held at Bathurst in December has shown that the farmers of Gloucester county, in common with those of the other counties of the province, appreciate the efforts that the Government of this province is making to promote their welfare.

In view of the wide difference of opinion as to the best method of controlling the liquor traffic, he felt that the action of the Government in submitting the whole question to a vote of the people was the wisest method of solution and in concluding his remarks he felt that the future of this province after the close of the war was such as to cause the utmost gratification, for a whole host of people would leave the battle torn fields of Europe to seek a home on this side of the ocean, and New Brunswick, as the eastern gateway of Canada, would assuredly welcome and hold a very large proportion of those home seekers.

The Opposition Leader.

Mr. Dugal said he wished to say he was in full accord with the regrets expressed on the death of the late Mr. Dickson. The nomination of a French Acadian Speaker was in keeping with the entente cordiale brought about by

the events which had stirred the British Empire and on behalf of his French compatriots he wished to express the satisfaction which he was sure would be felt by all of them.

He wished to express his regrets at the absence of the Premier and the hon. member for Northumberland, Mr. Stewart, through illness, and trusted they would soon be well enough to take their seats in the House. On behalf of the Opposition he wished to extend his sincere congratulations to Lieut. Col. Guthrie and Lieut. Col. Black, members of this House, for the signal services rendered by them at the front, and in conclusion he expressed his regret that owing to his lack of command of the English language, he was prevented from commenting upon the address as he would otherwise wish.

The Acting Premier.

Hon. Mr. Murray said he wished to add his testimony to that of the last speaker as to the admirable manner in which the mover and seconder of the address had acquitted themselves. He had been a member of the House since 1908 and he could safely say it had never been his lot to hear more carefully thought out and well-worded addresses than those they had just heard. They were indeed an indication of the high character of the oratory to be heard in the Legislature.

Referring again to the illness of the Premier, he said it had been apparent for some time to all those who had been in constant touch with him that he must either take a rest or break down. His high sense of duty, however, and his conscientious scruples, would not permit him to give in until he was obliged to, and while it was satisfactory to learn that he was doing well and his health was being gradually restored, he was not yet fit to return to take up active work in the House. Everyone, he was sure, would express the hope of the Premier's speedy return to health.

Hon. Mr. Murray, continuing, said it was hardly necessary to refer at any length to the war. He desired to add his tribute to the worth of the services of those members who had been fortunate enough to return home from the front, and while these returned members would naturally appeal to them as Mr. Witzell had said, they should not forget that New Brunswick boys had gone forth in very large numbers and there was a feeling of considerable pride at their noble conduct. When the war broke out eighteen months ago and martial strains arose from all the far-flung Dominions of the Empire, "aid for England, aid for England," was the refrain. The call had gone forth in Canada for 500,000 men, and they would be found just as readily in the future as they had been in the past, ready to fight till the cause of right, justice and truth should triumph.

Referring to the destruction of the Parliament buildings at Ottawa, he said he happened to be there when the fire took place, and as he watched the flames it was interesting to listen to the remarks made by the people standing by. Some women were crying and remarking that they had known the building since childhood, and it seemed like losing an old friend. Others looked upon it as a great spectacle put on for their enjoyment, but beneath all there was a feeling of sorrow and regret. However, the buildings would rise again and after the war Canada would take a bigger place than ever in the Empire, not only that, but her representatives would also be found sitting at Westminster, taking part in the counsels of the Empire.

The activities of the Department of Agriculture have largely increased during the past several years, until today nearly every branch of agriculture is receiving a large measure of attention. From the years 1902 to 1907 inclusive, there was spent upon agriculture by the Provincial Government the sum of \$220,516.11. From the years 1910 to 1915 inclusive, there was spent the sum of \$329,167.46, an increased expenditure in the last named six years over the previous six years of \$108,651.35.

In addition to these amounts there was spent from the Dominion subsidy from 1912 to 1915 inclusive, \$1,273,546, making a total increased expenditure of \$281,386.81.

The Crown Lands.

In 1913 legislation had been introduced which provided for the classification of the Crown Lands of the province, and last year an amendment to that Act made provision for the money necessary for carrying on that work. It had been stated that three hundred million superficial feet was the amount of the annual growth of timber on crown lands, and last year there had been collected stumps on two hundred and ninety million feet, the biggest collection in the history of the province.

The objects of the classification of the Crown Lands he might briefly set forth to the House. The forestry survey was being undertaken to ascertain the amount and quality of the timber on the Crown Lands; the determining of the rate of growth of different species growing under the different forest conditions, so that the annual increment may be ascertained; and the classification of the lands of the province into agricultural and timber lands, depending on whether the soil is best suited for the production of farm or forest crops. The survey when com-

pleted will show the areas of merchantable timber, of young growth spruce, swamp, barrens; the amount of timber of each species, and the approximate annual rate of growth for each area or type. The areas of good agricultural land, land of doubtful agricultural value and land suitable for the production of timber only. A forester has already been appointed to take charge of the survey, and the work of organization is going on. As soon as competent men with the necessary technical and field experience can be secured to take charge of the parties in the field, the actual field work will begin and be continued all through the year with the exception of a short time during the spring and fall, when field work is impossible.

The speaker went on to say that there had been published in the press opposing the Government, rumors to the effect that an election was in the air. All he wished to say in this regard was that if an election did come, now or a year from now, this Government would not be afraid to appeal to the people on its record of administration as compared with the failure of achievement of its predecessor.

The Prohibition Bill.

During the present session a bill would be introduced respecting the liquor traffic in the province. The matter of Prohibition was now a live question, not only in this country, but throughout the whole world, and the Government had taken what he believed to be a wise and prudent step in having prepared for submission to the House a bill enabling the electors of the province to adopt a measure providing for the prohibition of traffic in intoxicating liquors. This question was above party politics, and every honorable member of the House should feel themselves in a position to approach it with thoroughly independent views. He himself believed that the great majority of the people of New Brunswick were in favor of prohibition. A bill had been framed with the object of absolutely prohibiting the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and if the people favored it it would become effective on a date to be named.

The Valley Railway.

Respecting the St. John Valley Railway, negotiations had been carried on with the Federal Government, and these negotiations had been of a most harmonious character, so that an arrangement which would be highly satisfactory to the province was now being completed. A bill would be brought down providing for the early completion of the railway and affording not only direct connection with the east and west side terminals of the harbor of St. John, but as well an independent route from that city to the New England States, and a new channel for the export of the forest products of the northern and central portions of the province.

Night Sessions.

There were a number of measures of importance to come before the House for consideration and he hoped that these would be given the careful attention which public matters had received in the House in the past. The Government proposed to have the House sit four afternoons and four evenings each week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. This would make it possible for hon. member to return to their homes each week end, and he believed that the business of the session could all be completed and prorogation reached early in April.

The Executive Council would hold daily sessions from 11 until 12 o'clock each morning, and any matters for consideration by the Government that were presented before 11 o'clock in the morning would receive attention that day. Delegations would also be heard at that time and at that time only.

The Acting Premier was followed by Mr. Slipp, of Queens, and Mr. Carter, of Victoria, moved the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. Mr. Morrissey submitted the sixty-first annual report of the Department of Public Works.

Hon. Mr. Murray submitted the annual report of the Crown Land Department.

Hon. Dr. Landry submitted the reports on schools, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Tracadie, St. Basil Hospital, and the report of the Chancellor of the University of New Brunswick.

The House adjourned at 5.15 o'clock.

HARVEY STATION.

Harvey Station, March 9—The marriage is announced of Miss Marjorie Dr. Thomas J. Wathall of San Antonio, formerly of this place, to tonio, Texas. The wedding took place in the Episcopal church at San Antonio on Saturday last. Miss Taylor is a native of Harvey, and has a number of relatives residing here. She formerly taught school in this province and is a graduate of the Halifax Ladies' College. She went to Philadelphia some years ago and studied nursing in the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, from which institution she graduated taking a special course. She has been connected with hospital work in the United States and for some time was chief superintendent of a large hospital at Galveston, Texas. She has resided at San Antonio for over four years and will continue to reside there, where her husband is a practicing physician.

A widow's veil may not be a veil of tears.

There are weak old women, also week-old babies.

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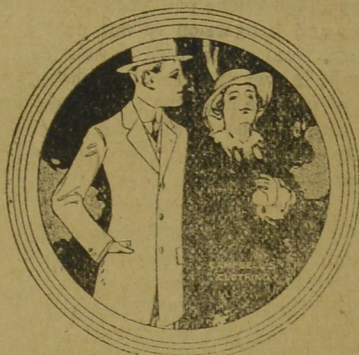
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