

Leader Dysart Moved an Amendment to Address

The Opposition Leader Spoke Two Hours Yesterday in the House—Hydro Development, the Liquor Law and the Provincial Police Among His Themes—Hon. Mr. Tilley Has the Floor Today.

The debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne was resumed in the Legislature yesterday afternoon by Opposition Leader Dysart, who at the close of a two hours speech created some surprise by moving an amendment, which of course is simply a want of confidence motion and will be treated as such. The amendment finds fault with the government in connection with a recent bond issue negotiated in England which the opposition leader in his wisdom thinks should have been put up at public competition. He claims that the government lost \$50,000 by the transaction whereas as a matter of fact it did not lose fifty cents, as the bond market was in the doldrums at the time and the government really obtained a better price than other provinces which sold their bonds at public competition. Leader Dysart spent some time discussing hydro development, which as a matter of fact has been a dead letter ever since the last election. He also discussed prohibition and the Liquor Control Law and indulged in some criticism of the provincial police, voicing the sentiments of bootleggers in regard to the latter. He had nothing new to offer in his speech and it was barren of proposals of a constructive nature.

Hon. L. P. D. Tilley has the floor for this afternoon and will be followed by Mr. Richard for the opposition. It is expected that the debate will be concluded on Thursday with an address by Premier Baxter. The continuance of the debate on the address means that it will be some day next week before the budget is brought down.

The Official Report.
Assembly Chamber,
February 26th, 1929.
The House met at three p. m.
The following bills were read a second time:

Acts respecting renewable leases, respecting commissioners for taking affidavits, respecting the Supreme Court, respecting the Corporations' Tax Act, and respecting the appointment of magistrates in the parish of Salisbury.

The First Enquiry

MR. DYSART gave notices of enquiry regarding money spent on roads in the parish of Northfield, as to the awarding of bridge contracts in the county of Kent, with special reference to the Graham Bridge and the Kouchibouguac Bridge, as to the amount of rent paid for the building occupied by the New Brunswick Liquor Control Board at Minto during 1928, and the amount of business carried on by the Board at that place.

HON. MR. BAXTER introduced a bill relating to the Board of Public Utilities. This Act was to provide that when one of the Commissioners was absent the Board might still function.

Also a bill respecting Court Stenographers, designed to increase the per diem allowance of stenographers for expenses from \$2.50 to \$4.00.

Also a bill respecting the sale of securities, to more clearly designate the powers of the Board controlling such sales.

HON. MR. LEGER presented a petition from the Societe Historique de Letteratiere's Academie for a bill an Act to incorporate such body.

MR. RICHARD (Gloucester) presented a petition from the municipal council of Gloucester for a bill an Act to authorize the municipality of Gloucester to make temporary loans.

MR. DYSART, resuming the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne said:

The Opposition Leader

In rising to continue the debate on the Address, I desire to extend my congratulations to the mover and second, for the splendid manner in which each acquitted himself. Since the mover of the Address proceeded to proclaim some of the policies of the administration, it would not be surprising that we in the Opposition cannot concur in all that has been said. Certain of his comments, touching the achievements of the government, merit some polishing off, at least, and in a sense the same treatment may be in order with respect to certain statements in the Address of the second.

With respect to the Speech of His Honor, it may be said that it bears the usual characteristics of such a document in that extravagant words are made use of to emphasize the supposed achievements of the administration, with little or no forecast of any legislative program apart from the fact that a Commission is to be appointed to investigate and report upon the question of Old Age Pensions, a blank and barren effort indeed.

The King's Illness

The Opposition fully concurs in the sentiments so beautifully expressed in the Speech, and by the Mover and Second of the Address, relative to the convalescence of his most gracious Majesty, as also the reference to the deceased member of this House, Mr. Gordon C. Grant.

Perhaps it might be best to comment on the several statements of the Speech in order of their appearing, though the subjects be not placed in the order of merit.

Toronto Conference

With respect to the paragraph dealing with the Toronto conference, and the Maritime Provinces Association, in the City of Toronto, I would make the observation that though this will do no immediate harm, yet I cannot just see that it will be productive of much good. It is largely stage play. After all is said and done a Trade Commissioner in city of Toronto can be of benefit to us only in so far as a market for our natural products may be had. From a manufacturing point of view we can hope to get nowhere in that market, and it seems idle to anticipate much that the Trade Commissioner can accomplish in the agricultural sphere. Our exportable surplus would largely be reduced to the matter of fish. But assuming that such Commissioner is a necessary further charge on our resources, just why should the City of Toronto alone be picked out in lieu of the other many large centres more easily accessible—Montreal, for instance. As is well known the city of Toronto is the centre of one of the largest manufacturing districts in Canada, and the surrounding country from an agricultural point of view is the home of the most intensive farming activities in Canada. For that reason, with our rail haul handicap, we surely cannot hope to enter seriously into competition with that centre. I therefore think the contemplated funds to be expended in this connection might, with profit, be used elsewhere.

The Valley Railway

With respect to the transfer of the Valley Railway, the wording of that paragraph would rather indicate that the result about to be achieved is directly attributable to efforts of the present administration. But I am grateful to the mover of the Address for curing that defect and pointing out in no uncertain language that the credit for this achievement rightly belongs to the Federal administration and the Postmaster General. All will rejoice in the road being taken over, inasmuch as it will release for uses more worthy, a quarter of a million dollars per year. It is to be hoped that the treasury being the richer by one quarter of a million dollars, the saving thus effected may be devoted to substantial addition to sinking fund account for retirement of the public debt.

Western Lands

Dealing with the reference to the Provincial claim to participation in any readjustment with the several provinces of Canada, I observe that the province abandons any claim to a proprietary right in the natural resources of the Dominion by which the Western provinces are to be enriched, but base the claim solely on the "parity of treatment of all the provinces." It seems to me (and this, notwithstanding the attitude of the western provinces to disregard our claim to proprietary rights) that we ought not to have abandoned that claim. To me it seems vital in as much as this province contributed to the purchase of the lands in question. The idea as to "the parity of treatment" savors too much of our seeking contributions without the basic claim of justice. However it may be, this was a wise course and it is to be hoped that we may receive just and fair treatment.

Old Age Pensions

With respect to the Old Age Pension in the appointment of a Commission to investigate is hardly what the citizens of this province expected in view of the buoyancy in our finances. Apparently the government was not sincere a few years ago when it stated that the burden incident to this progressive legislation were too great for the province to bear. It is an election gesture pure and simple, the government thereby seeking to hold in abeyance the demands of Labor and other organizations who have been pressing that this province follow in the path of other provinces of Canada with respect thereto.

A further paragraph in the Speech deals with the policy of the government, the direct result of which is the present construction of pulp and paper mills at Athol and Dalhousie in the county of Restigouche. The Speech, however, does not just disclose the true Crown Land policy of the government, but seeks to satisfy our curiosity by pointing out certain contemplated results. Unless in the shaping of that policy due care was taken to preserve our great forest wealth, not for the present only but for future generations as well, the visible signs of industrial development now on the North Shore horizon might not be such a blessing after all.

Grand Falls Power

Just what is that policy, Mr. Speaker? Is it the policy that enabled the present owners to insist upon the gift of Grand Falls as a condition precedent to the Athol-Dalhousie development? If so, time will soon show that it were far better for the province had that policy not been born. It is a policy so designed as to conform to modern forestry practices or re-forestation and forest conservation? It is a policy designed to preserve our forests in a healthy

growing condition for posterity, or will it permit present limit holders to exploit these lands for personal gain and release them to us at the end of the fifty-year period as worthless, barren tracts? Does this policy make provision for the encouragement and development of our great hardwood areas, interspersed as they are throughout pulp and paper holdings, or is it a policy so designed to permit pulp and paper licensees to assume the "dog in the manger" attitude towards intended capital, by demanding prohibitive hard wood stumpage tolls as has been done in the comparatively recent past? Or does the policy contemplate or make provision for the issuing of hardwood licenses over the pulp and paper areas without requiring hardwood licensees to pay toll to present holders of hardwood tracts?

Healthy Competition

Is the policy so designed as to promote a healthy competition in industry this may insure fair and just remuneration to those engaged in the industry? Or is it not a policy that in the natural order of things must gravitate in the direction of, and become, one gigantic unwieldy monopoly controlling alike the pulp and paper industry, our Crown Lands and water powers? Does not this policy tend to the crowding out of the old established sawmill industry of the province—an industry that has been the mainstay of many small towns, villages and hamlets throughout this province. Does not this policy contemplate the centralizing of capital, thereby disrupting the heretofore established order of our lumber industry; for decentralization of industry is the recognized goal to general prosperity. Is the policy so designed to not only permit, but encourage, the licensee to sublet, so to speak his areas to small operators upon their paying into the Treasury regular departmental stumpage rates, and to the licensee what is tantamount to a bonus of five dollars or more per thousand? Does not the policy indirectly encourage the depletion of granted farm wood lots? Is not the policy the same policy under which this government acted in 1927 when it passed legislation permitting the renewal of 1933 leases and the extension of some to fifty-year term, thereby enabling the fortunate holders thereof to market these rights at phenomenal prices without the province in any way participating. These, sir, are but some of the aspects of the policy upon which this government might give us some information. With respect to the oft-repeated promise of pulp and paper mill development on the Miramichi, and as forecast in the Speech, it may be pointed out that this is the identical promise made by the Premier at the Chatham Exhibition of 1927. But the residents of the Miramichi district, vitally interested in the lumber situation, and the economic welfare of their community, like our Prohibition friends somehow do not accept at par the statement of our friend, the Premier.

Was Not a Surprise

The brief reference in the Speech to the contemplated re-organization of the Public Works Department comes as no surprise to the ratepayers of New Brunswick. It is all too true that the organization completely broke down last year under the strain of road maintenance and improvement. When the present Minister took charge in 1925 he found as efficient an organization as could be found anywhere in Canada. Politics was a first consideration in the reorganization of this Department, and the many hundreds of trained road supervisors, trained at the country's expense, and all highly efficient, were dismissed en bloc or resignation asked for. Many trained road engineers were laid off for like reasons, and serious thinking people recognized that demoralization must follow such a course. Then followed in 1927 the Minister's reorganization program, the results of which aroused the public-spirited Press of this province, and the citizens of the country to the fact that a firm definite stand must be taken to check the Ministers mad onward rush. I do not propose at the present time to discuss at length the many shortcomings of this Department, but by way of comment on the reference in the speech to proposed re-organization it might be said that any serious attempt in this direction, with a view to its being placed on a sound basis, must recognize at least two things, both of which it would seem from the brief reference and from the Ministers press comment of some weeks ago to be entirely overlooked. First, that a high standard of efficient and honest expenditure of public money, on the roads and bridges of this province, cannot be hoped for so long as the present Minister is permitted to play politics. Secondly, that the cure for the chaotic condition and the lamentable lack of any proper organization of the Department (as evidenced by last season's operations) is not to be found in the direction of further division of authority; rather a oneness of authority under a strong executive head, a veritable Mussolini if need be, and free from the blighting influence of political interference alone will produce the sought-for results.

Hydro Development

In these days of industrial expansion and keen competition, the matter of cheap power becomes a most important factor, and consequently we think of Hydro to supply that commodity. And here is where Musquash comes into the picture.

In all fairness it can be said that Musquash has exceeded the expectation of its promoters and last year

generated twenty per cent more than anticipated maximum of power. Just what has the Musquash System done for its patrons? Let me cite three instances to show the tremendous saving effected by it. In the City of Saint John it has reduced the cost for lighting and domestic purposes from 13.5c to 3.78c. In Sussex, from 15.3c to 8.6c. In the City of Moncton, from 10.45c to 8.1c. In three and a half years of operation the Power Commission of Saint John reports a saving to the citizens of Saint John of upwards of one million dollars. That is to say, has people now served by Hydro been charged pre-hydro rates on present day consumption they would have paid out for the very same service one million dollars more. Furthermore, while dates have been cut, all carrying charges have been met and a substantial surplus is being built up.

Commissions Report

As is well pointed out by the Commission in its annual report:

"One of the outstanding advantages of public ownership operation is the establishment of a sinking fund which over a given period of years wipes out the capital cost covered by the sale of bonds. \$54,135.68 had already been set aside for bond retirement at the end of 1927 which sum is again reinvested and is expected to completely retire bond issue on maturity when the entire plant will become a gift to the citizens of St. John opening the way to further substantial rate reduction."

I commend that record of achievement to our Private Ownership friends.

A Modest Beginning

Indeed this gigantic project had a modest beginning. It was the Toronto Board of Trade that gave birth to the idea in 1900. Legislation in 1903 enabled several cities to appoint the Ontario Hydro Commission, and three years later the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario, as we now have it, was created and functions to this day. With an initial load of 1000 H. P. it has grown until today it sells upwards of 1,000,000 H. P. to 550 municipalities in that great manufacturing province. This great achievement could not be accomplished without great financial outlay. The Hydro Commission has today a total investment in its several systems of upwards of \$200,000,000, backed by the Province and the 550 municipalities have invested upwards of \$80,000,000—or a total capital expenditure exceeding \$280,000,000; and yet, neither the Government, the Commission nor the municipalities has looked upon this huge investment as a financial disaster, but, on the contrary, as the

(Continued on Page Three.)

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