

Hon. Fred C. Squires Continues Debate On Speech From Throne

Complaints of Hard-Surface Road Costs, Old Age Pension Administration, and Other Government Measures

In speaking yesterday afternoon on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, Hon. Fred C. Squires leader of the Opposition in the Legislature referred to the Coronation held in England during the past year and to the loyalty of the people of the Empire none of whom are more loyal than are the people of New Brunswick.

Continuing, Mr. Squires said: Here are preserved those precious gifts of a free people, the liberty of the press, the liberty of speech and liberty of conscience. Here we are free from the blighting blasts of dictatorships, or the chilling winds of over-destructive Communism. Every man has a right to live, a right to work, and a right to engage in the pursuit of happiness.

He congratulated the mover and seconder of the address, and complained that the Speech from the Throne was barren, uninviting and unprogressive. Referring at some length to the Royal Commission, Mr. Squires wound up his reference by claiming that never in the history of our country was there such discordancy between the Provinces and the Government at Ottawa as at the present time. In fact, there is cleavage in some directions which is getting serious. The spirit of Liberalism has not been able to solve our problems, but all we have had, so far, has been procrastination and disunion.

The Finances

Another paragraph refers to substantial recovery in the finances of the Province. As regards the financial situation, the present government has, beyond reasonable doubt, established three records, one of which has been that they spent more money during the last year than any of our governments since Confederation during a like period, and this is the same group that censured severely the past administration for a comparatively small expenditure. The lavish manner in which they have dispensed public funds has been, to say the least, breath-taking. In the year 1933 and 1934, the last two years that the past government had complete control, there was expended, on current account, \$11,919,045.00. During the two years that this government has had complete control there has been spent, on current accounts, \$15,140,456.00. If they had only spent as much as the old administration did during the year 1934, instead of the paltry surplus of \$29,090.00, they would have had a surplus of \$1,535,514.00, or, if they had only spent as much as the old administration did during the year 1933, they would have had a surplus of \$2,292,588.00, which could have gone towards the diminishing of the increase in the public debt. Even if they had only spent as much as they themselves did in 1936, they would have had a surplus of \$627,621.00.

One of the reasons that the old government was retired from power, and which this government then tremendously insisted upon, was their expenditure of the public revenues. They demanded retrenchment with every breath. They were the fiery apostles of economy in high places, but when they assumed power, in the words of the quotation from Shakespeare, used by the Premier in his speech of last year, he complained about the number of officials employed in the government service. Continuing he said:

The Premier's voice came over the air the other night, proclaiming that we had "gone over the top." He referred to the alleged surplus, but here are some facts and some figures which I think will command the attention of the people of this Province, even if our Government is impervious to them. The Government has taken in, altogether, during the past year, \$7,869,483.00, and has paid out \$16,966,370.00. No amount of sidestepping, manoeuvring or camouflaging can cover this disconcerting and alarming fact, and no province the size of ours, can stand this tremendous strain.

The Dominion Finance Minister, Hon. Mr. Dunning, claims that the true deficit of any government is the increase in the net debt. That is, our real deficit, considering both current and capital account, is \$9,125,978.00. I don't see what advantage it is to the Government to claim that they have gone ahead \$29,090.00, when they have really gone behind over \$9,000,000.00. The Premier may call this "going over the top," but I call it sounding the rock bottom of financial despair. However, a province of this size, running behind at this rate, can only be assured of financial ruin.

But even in current account they had no surplus. They sunk \$34,502.00 in capital account. This was the amount it took to carry out the Province's undertaking under the Youth Training Agreement. There was no

reason on earth for this amount not being charged to current account, except to escape a real deficit and produce a fictitious surplus, puny though it is.

The following items being added to our debt now are:

Expenditure on Municipal	
Unemployment Relief ..	\$153,827.00
Hake & Pollock Bonus ..	8,852.00
Aid to Needy Fishermen ..	21,780.00
Youth Training Agreement	24,503.00

\$218,962.00

This should be charged to current expenditure, and the real situation is a deficit of \$189,872.00, and it does not lie in the mouths of the members of the Government who applauded the argument on that day to gainsay my contention.

But this is not the whole story of the real deficit. 1937 was the year when the Sinking Fund levels had to be restored, in order to preserve our financial stability and credit. Taking the figures as of at the end of the year 1936, there was a falling off of \$315,693.00 in the sinking funds supporting permanent road bonds supported by the auto fund. There was also a falling off of \$142,675.50 in the sinking funds of the general bond issue. This, in itself, amounts to \$458,368.50.

The situation is sharply summed up at the end of their statement in the following dispassionate but ominous words: "But it is disappointing to note that the funded debt has been increased so sharply in the face of record revenue collections, and in addition to record ordinary expenditures. Not until a balanced budget together with a substantial reduction in the public debt has been achieved can New Brunswick feel that it is on the way to financial security."

Hard-Surface Roads

The Speech from the Throne has taken into consideration the development of the hard-surfaced roads program. One of the main reasons for inaugurating this program, and in such an extensive manner, was to solve the unemployment situation. The present Government have occupied two stands as regards this question, one which they took before the election, and one which they have maintained since that event.

An amendment to the Budget was moved by the new Premier himself, seconded by the now Provincial Secretary-Treasurer, in the session of this House one year prior to the election, which concluded in the following words: "And that it is inappropriate to embark in the present year in a new program of permanent road construction under which money spent, instead of going into the pockets of our own people, will largely go out of the Province for machinery, materials and supplies." So, according to their considered amendment and stand just prior to the election, this whole party, on the floors of the House, denounced permanent roads as a means of supplying employment. Now it is their chief reason why permanent roads are being built, that employment may be supplied, though then they proclaimed that the money largely went out of the Province for machinery, materials and supplies. Well, what are the people of this Province going to believe, anyway? Diametrically opposite stands were taken by the same party as regards exactly the same situation.

Another reason given for this extensive program was that money was cheap, but that is not true. For the major part of their last loan, which was largely for this type of road construction, the best interest that they could obtain was 4.93%, while similar Ontario bonds were sold at 2.87%. There may have been cheap money, but the Government's financial status was such that they could not obtain it, even though other provinces could. So another reason for the instituting of their road program falls to the ground. If we are going to believe the Government, or put any stock in what they said when they were getting ready to assume power, then the minimum of employment was given for a tremendous expenditure of money that mainly went out of the Province, and we had better not believe them when they say that they obtained cheap money.

In the statement issued by the Premier just previous to the last large loan, he says, among other things, "that the cost of financing \$16 million of trunk highways would be approximately \$18,300,000.00." This would be an average of \$22,426.00 a mile. In his budget address in the year 1935, right before the election, he had this to say: "Then the hard surfaced road policy, which would entail a cost by contract of \$16,000.00 per mile, with the expenditure to get the road bed in shape of \$3,500.00 per mile, to-

gether with engineering cost, would make the actual cost up to \$20,000.00 per mile." As the Dominion Government was paying \$5,500.00 per mile of this, according to the Premier's own estimate, the cost to the Province was \$14,500.00, while this Government is paying \$22,426.00 a mile.

Seed Potatoes

The Speech from the Throne refers again to our market for seed potatoes in South America. It is very much to be regretted that the relief given to our farmers from the securing of this market during the past year has not been as advantageous as was expected. In the County of Carleton, during at least the latter part of the season, the farmer was paid \$1.00 per barrel for his seed potatoes, while I understand that in Victoria County 90c. per barrel was the price during a considerable portion of the time. It is well known that the cost and care of seed potatoes is considerably greater than that of table stock. So a great many, at least, of the farmers of our country have not profited by this venture as the government would lead us to expect. The price for this class of stock is not sufficient for the farmers of this Province.

We were told last year that the price of table stock would be certainly increased by the removal of good stock from the country, and the Government was proceeding to take up on itself the credit for this increase. In fact, they took credit for the price of table stock last year, but this year the price of table stock is around 40c. per barrel, and it looks now as if many cases that a great amount of this stock will be lost entirely to our farmers.

Forest Industries

Reference has been made to the forest industries of the past year, and its absorption of many unemployed. A peculiar situation arises here, however, that the Speech from the Throne and the Minister of Lands and Mines appear to be at variance as regards this situation. In a statement made the other day, the Minister defended the present decreased lumber cut by claiming that enough was being cut consistent with conservation, so apparently the Speech is in favour of a large cut, and the Minister for a restricted one. However, inconsistency and contradiction seem to be the moving spirit of the administration, so why not have it here as well as elsewhere.

The Speech refers to last year's increased forest operations, while the present situation decisively speaks of decreased forest operations. The Speech speaks of the absorption of unemployed, while the present situation speaks of lumbermen being thrown out of employment. Of course it would not be exhorting or entertaining to have explained how this Government's short-sighted policy had contributed to this winter's unemployment, and its accompanying hardships of our people.

Old Age Pensions

Mr. Squires was not satisfied with Old Age Pensions and claimed that the people were up in arms against the government in regards to the manner in which these are being administered.

Mr. Squires complained of the de-

lay in regard to the selection of a National Park in this province.

Mr. Squires painted a gloomy picture of economic conditions on the North Shore of the province especially in Chatham and Newcastle.

Continuing, he said it was reported in the public press just about a year ago of a conference attended by the Premier and the Minister of Lands and Mines with representatives of the New Brunswick International Paper Company, Limited. At the conclusion of the discussions the Premier is reported to have stated that satisfactory progress was being made and sympathetic consideration given by the International in relation to a pulp mill on the Miramichi. He also is reported to have stated that "negotiations with Fraser Companies, Limited, in regard to the proposed new Miramichi pulp mill still are proceeding."

Last year industrial bonds were sold far better than they are selling now, the price of pulp was far better than at present, all the necessary encouraging conditions were present for the building of the mills. Those who had vigorously attacked the past government for not building pulp mills in that area, when all conditions were adverse to constructing the same, are either in the seats of power or supporting and advising those who are, and yet the Government has let this opportune time slip by without seeing to it that the mills were constructed. The need is still great in that area, and yet nothing has been done.

Here again is the story of the absolute inability of the present administration to settle these problems with every advantage possible at their elbow. The very ones who insisted that this should be done by a Government with every disadvantage surrounding every move that they could possibly make in that direction, also saw to it that the Government was hurried from power and that they, themselves, should ascend the seats of power and demonstrate what incompetence and inability could fall to do for the people.

Education

Speaking on Education, Mr. Squires said, "We are told that steady progress has been made in the improvement of our educational system. They have co-operated with the Federal Government, which has instituted a Youth Training Program. They are training leaders for Adult Education. That is all they have to say, but this is not at all satisfying to the people of this Province."

In the first Speech from the Throne of this House, they proclaimed in no uncertain terms that they were going to modernize the educational system. Then they proceeded to initiate a special department to carry on this work. There were certain problems which demanded immediate attention and immediate relief should have been given.

Our present system is not developing originality and independence in the mind development of the child. Our system is simply furnishing the rooms of the mind as storehouses of knowledge. Our courses are overcrowded, our children are overworked, we are, in many cases, producing

at least nervous wrecks, and the whole system of school examinations should be approached by a firm hand and dealt with firmly, adequately and quickly. There was call for an emergency operation, and a dilatory feeling-out program has taken its place, and the people are being educated to like what they are going to get. If ever there was call for vigorous and speed this is the call, and yet all the Speech from the Throne has to tell us is that steady progress has been made in the improvement of education.

We hear a lot about Agricultural Education in rural schools. Can we not know some definite step that is being taken by our Education Department? There should be some definite program announced in this House so that it could be definitely and intelligently discussed by the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled.

As the prosperity of our Province depends in no small way on the business of the Port of Saint John, there are two important things to carefully look into, and concerning which energetic action should be taken.

Port of St. John

Since the present Dominion Administration has taken over the reins of power, practically nothing has been done towards providing and extending facilities for the handling of port commerce. If they have been unwise enough to wait for an active demand, and need for action, the present overcrowded condition should in itself speak forcefully and eloquently. There is, right now, a crying need for docking and loading facilities and adequate accommodation for passenger and freight traffic. Saint John is, I believe, on the eve of a great port expansion, and apparently nothing is being done about it. The Dominion Government should have moved long before this—our Department of Federal Affairs should have seen to it that no such situation could have arisen at such a critical time.

If Saint John is not placed in a position to handle such situations as these, they will be handled somewhere else. Already, Halifax is beginning to grow apprehensive as regards this revival of traffic, and is calling on the Canadian National Railways to do something about it. Are we going to sleep until something is done? In the past, one of our diversions has been to placidly allow the domination of Halifax over Saint John. I am not blaming Halifax for getting what she can, but I am blaming our people and their representatives for remaining serenely supine and joyfully paying taxes into the Dominion Exchequer to help finance a transportation system, in order that it might take traffic from our Port City, business from our citizens, and employment from our working men.

The Province of New Brunswick, the Legislature, and the Government of the Province should take a solid and undivided stand in the matter. Our Department of Federal Affairs should assume the leadership in both attack and defence, and this House should know from this Department, which was created for this special type of work, what is being done to meet this two-fold dangerous situation.

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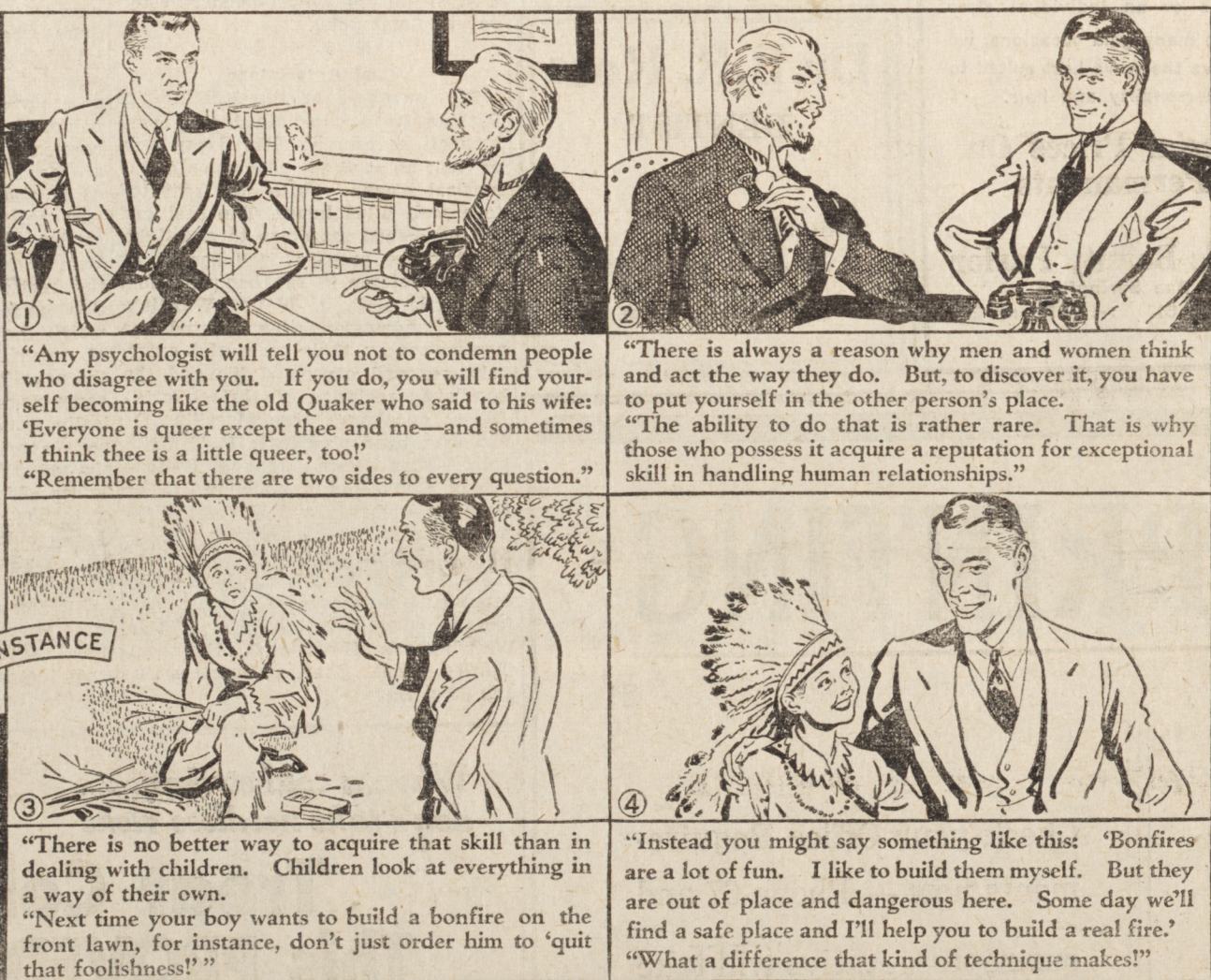
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"There is always a reason why men and women think and act the way they do. But, to discover it, you have to put yourself in the other person's place. 'The ability to do that is rather rare. That is why those who possess it acquire a reputation for exceptional skill in handling human relationships.'"

"There is no better way to acquire that skill than in dealing with children. Children look at everything in a way of their own. 'Next time your boy wants to build a bonfire on the front lawn, for instance, don't just order him to 'quit that foolishness!'"

"Instead you might say something like this: 'Bonfires are a lot of fun. I like to build them myself. But they are out of place and dangerous here. Some day we'll find a safe place and I'll help you to build a real fire.' 'What a difference that kind of technique makes!'"

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