POOR DOCUMENT

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:tators Applaud Ion. Mr. Veniot as He Exposes Poor Tactics

(Continued from preceding page.)

ıd road tax on the byroads 00 in addition from the auto- nds. On secondary trunk m automobile fees there had nded $1,608,240, making a to- 35,442. The total expenditure runk roads in the same period $2,620,871 which made $314,- on secondary trunk roads, by- branch roads than had been ain trunk roads. What would ole friends the farmer repre- say to that, after condemning tment for neglect of the by-

ycett said that his contention that agriculture, being the ustry of the province, the great- of the road expenditure should e in agricultural districts.

Veniot said there was not a main oad which did not pass through g districts. Take the St. John- ncton highway. Where could there a better farming district than that ich included, Sussex, Anagance, Petit- liac and River Glade? His honorable end, in objection to expenditure on h a road, contended that he was par- lling a railway, that he was building roads too good, and was thus in- asing the deficit of the railway by awing traffic from it.

Mr. Fawcett said his contention was at too large a proportion of money s being spent on such roads. He ad- tted that many farmers lived on the in trunk roads, but there also were mers in the back districts who had ads on which no expenditure had been ade at all.

Hon. Mr. Veniot—"Take the Abougan road, is that a back road?"

Mr. Fawcett—"I don't know; I am t acquainted with road classification."

Hon. Mr. Veniot—"I am not surprised at the honorable member does not now. It is a back road connecting two portant farming districts and bring- g people to the very door of his

Mr. Fawcett—"The two districts are connected for the road is too bad."

Hon. Mr. Veniot—"Five years ago the norable member could not get over at road with an ox team, but in the st election campaign he was able to ive over it in an automobile to at- nd a meeting at which he attacked this overnment."

Bridges.

From 1912 to 1916 the old administra- ion in its last five years of office spent n ordinary bridges $827,014. The pres- ent government in a similar length of time spent $1,505,364 and an amount almost double. The fact was that the former administration neglected many bridges, and the present administration had been compelled to rebuild and re- pair. During the last year the total number of ordinary and permanent bridges built or repaired was 1,114. Was it any wonder that the department was forced to over-expend? That over-ex- penditure was necessary to meet the requirements of public service and not merely a demand for expenditure. When he observed a bridge in such a condition under the heavy motor traffic which es the rural districts, that a car lable to go through it, he could thing else but take action, which d place that structure in a condi- to bear traffic with safety. Should e neglect to repair a dilapidated bridge merely because that work had not been contained in the estimates which he had presented? Such matters must be at- tended to no matter if there was a sur- plus or a deficit. The government would not stop because of fear of honorable gentlemen opposite.

He would give the house a statement of the work done in the various coun- ties during the past four years on both ordinary and permanent bridges.

In Albert there were 15; Carleton, 75; Charlotte, 87; Gloucester, 59; Kent, 131; Kings, 138; Madawaska, 76; Northum- berland, 182; Queens, 87; Restigouche, 57; St. John, 24; Sunbury, 42; Victoria, 56; Westmorladn, 128; York, 86.

Mr. Young—"There is room for more."

Hon. Mr. Veniot said the honorable member from York was right. It was noticeable that Westmorland and Kings were bad counties for bridges there were so many intersections.

School Books.

He wished to deal with the matter of school books concerning which much had been said. If his farmer friends were dissatisfied with present conditions they should place the blame on his honorable friends opposite. In 1908 they had come into power on a school book platform, and had laid down the policy that school books should be sold at cost price. The present administration followed out that policy and hands were held up in horror. There was one difference, however, the old administration sold its school books through political vendors. In 1914 nine- ty-two vendors made no returns of the books they had handled. In 1915 $2,100 was owing the province from vendors of school books, and later it developed that it could not be collected. Friends of the administration to whom school books had been given went into bankruptcy, and the school books included in their stocks in trade were taken and sold to satisfy the creditors. The province stood the loss. The principle adopted by the present government was to sell school books at cost with no political vendor- ship. Any dealer could obtain the books upon application. Prices of books had increased enormously but the principle had not been abandoned. During the war cost of all labor and material enter- ing into printing and publishing went up remarkably, but the year 1920 was known the world over for the great jump in prices which took place in the pub- lishing business. The increase was sixty-five per cent. From 1917 to 1920 the province lost nineteen thousand dol- lars selling school books at cost. Free school books could not yet be given but he hoped the day would come when they could.

Mr. Martin—"Hear, hear."

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that today books were being sold by the province at less than the cost of publication, transporta- tion and distribution. He realized that the present situation was hard, particu- larly for the laboring man. There was relief in sight for prices were slowly dropping.

It being 6 o'clock, Hon. Mr. Speaker left the chair to resume at 8 o'clock.

Evening Session.

Hon. Mr. Veniot, continuing after re- cess, said that in 1917 the government had adopted a policy of constructing wooden bridges on capital account. The reason for that was the government hav- ing adopted a permanent road policy felt that there must be bridges to withstand a heavier traffic. The honorable leader of the farmer's party had complained of the expenditures on permanent bridges, saying that a less amount would have done. He (Veniot) took issue with him on that point. Since the policy of build- ing permanent bridges had been adopted by the late Hon. H. R. Emmerson no government had made provision for a sinking fund for that class of work. A change had been made by the present administration in 1918 when they adopted a policy for permanent roads under federal aid. They had decided that all bridges with more than a twenty foot span should be entitled to the bene- fit of the forty per cent. allowed by the federal government, and that percentage was being set aside as a sinking fund. He would like to know if there could be anything more businesslike than that. The sinking fund would accumulate each year and as time rolled on the debt in- curred on account of those bridges would be wiped out. His honorable friends op- posite when in power apparently lacked the courage to provide a sinking fund for their permanent work. The policy of the present government was to do away as far as possible with the ordinary wooden bridges, the life of which could not be more than fifteen years. It was certainly better to substitute permanent bridges than to be constantly spending money for the upkeep of wooden struc- tures.

Our Standard Accepted.

When the proposal for federal aid for roads was first submitted from Ottawa, there had been opposition to it because nearly every provincial government was politically opposed to the dominion ad- ministration. Because of that condi- tion the agreement was surrounded with many restrictions and to those restric- tions the New Brunswick government had taken exception. They had refused to accept the proposition under the standard laid down as it meant the con- struction of roads which would have cost from $20,000 to $25,000 a mile. As a result of their protest the standard was eventually lowered. The work was carried on under the control of the Ot- tawa authorities and had to be approved by them. When hon. members opposite therefore claimed that the road work was costing too much, he wanted them to understand that it was being done under the standard accepted by every province of Canada. Personally he wanted no credit, but wanited it known that it was due to the faithful engineers of his department that the standard laid down for the work in New Brunswick had been adopted as the standard for the whole dominion. In the fall of 1919 members of the federal control board visited the province, made an inspec- tion, and on returning to Ottawa an- nounced their acceptance of the work, and that the province was entitled to $225,000, although at the time the act had not been in force two months. It was certainly a compliment to the prov- ince of New Brunswick to have the do- minion government, composed of poli- tical opponents, accept the standard that had been adopted for New Brunswick. Shortly after that reports were sent to Ottawa by opponents of the local ad- ministration with the object of preven- ting the federal government from spend- ing any more money on the roads of the province. In 1920 engineers came down and made another tour of inspection, and on returning to Ottawa reported that the work in New Brunswick was of the highest class with none superior to it in all Canada. With such a tes- timonial as that he could well afford to smile as he listened to the criticisms of hon. members opposite.

Federal Aid.

Although he did not wish to discuss federal politics he was bound to say that the recent change at Ottawa had been a good thing for New Brunswick. If the government had not changed there would probably have been more com- plaints with the object of stopping the province from getting its share of fed- eral aid for the roads. There was one thing he wished to say and that was that he hoped the new government at Ottawa would be more prompt in pay- ing its share of road monies to the prov- ince than had been the previous admin- istration. The sum of $52,750 for work done in 1920 was still due the province, although the accounts had been audited by an official from Ottawa and the work accepted. He wished also to point out that the province had not yet received a cent for work done in 1921. At the present time the sum of $452,000 was due from Ottawa, which amount was being carried in the bank as an over- draft at 5½ per cent interest. Hon. mem- bers could well understand that the lack of organization at Ottawa had placed a severe burden upon the province. If the federal government was going to help the province with road work why did they not do it in the proper way? Al- ready the province had paid some $30,- 000 as interest on the overdraft incurred in connection with federal aid. The matter had been brought up at the Do- minion good roads convention and a committee had been appointed to pay for the work in future on monthly progress estimates. They were also hopeful of being able to persuade the federal government to extend the time for federal aid and to give some assist- ance for the upkeep of roads constructed under that policy. If that were done the province would be in a position to give more attention to the secondary roads and to the roads in the back dis- tricts. If that policy were adopted they hoped to be able to reach the most re- mote farming districts and to give all a fair deal in the matter of roads.

Hon. Mr. Veniot reviewed the history of the Valley railway, showing how as a result of "the old government's breach of faith the road began nowhere and ended nowhere, and depended entirely on local traffic." The old government sent a delegation to Ottawa, who had received from the federal government a promise of $3,000,000 for the construction of bridges which would have enabled the railway to enter St. John independent of the C. P. R. Those bridges were never built, and thanks to the business-like ar- rangements made by the old government the C. P. R. now had the road by the throat. The amount the province paid that company for running rights was al- most as great as the earnings. The peo- ple of northern New Brunswick had supported the enterprise with the ob- ject of helping the people of the St. John valley, but had been grossly deceived. The road the old government built was not the road they promised, and the pro- gramme having been departed from the hon. leader of the opposition was wrong in saying that the present government should share the responsibility. Had the old government carried out its promise things would have been different.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that the aban- donment of the river route was probably due to political expediency.

The hon. leader of the opposition had referred to the refunding of bonds, but had been in error in stating the amount. He could tell him that the amount re- funded was just $2,800,000 more than he said it was.

The debate was continued by Mr. Guptill and Mr. Scovil, of Charlotte, and Mr. Burlock, of Carleton, after which the resolution that the house resolve itself into committee of supply was adopted without division.

The house then went into committee with Mr. Hayes in the chair, and after adopting the former resolution and pass- ing one item, the committee rose and reported progress. Supply was made the order of the day for tomorrow at 3 o'clock.

CONCERT AND SOCIAL.

A basket social and concert that was thoroughly enjoyed by all present was held last evening in the Orange Lodge rooms by the Newfoundland Mutual Benefit Society, an organization that is composed of local residents who were born in Newfoundland. The evening's programme included solos by Jack Ross- ley, Miss Rita McMahon, Miss Wood, Charles Alcorn and Mr. Beeman, with Mrs. Johnston and Miss Tilley acting as accompanists. All were forced to give encores. Auctioneering of the prettily- decorated baskets created much amuse- ment. H. Milley acted as auctioneer. Refreshments were served at the close. Frederick Pike, president of the society, was in the chair. The society was or- ganized in 1915, and since then have held many enjoyable evenings.

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