

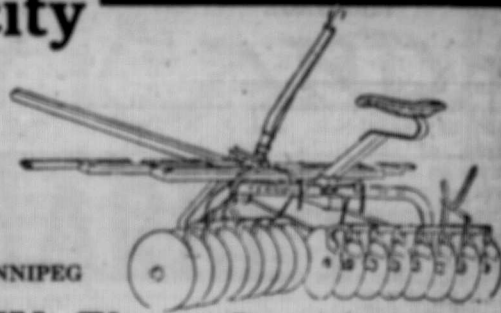
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News from Ottawa

Main Estimates of Year's Expenditures Total \$150,000,000

By The Guide Special Correspondent

Ottawa, Jan. 12.—Parliament resumed work on Wednesday and some slight progress has been made with the business before the House, including the voting of between four and five millions of the first estimates submitted by the new government.

A number of departmental reports were tabled during the week, including that of the interior department for the last fiscal year. It calls attention to the fact that during the year 44,479 free homestead entries were made in the West, an increase of three thousand over the previous year, which was a record. These entries represent a total population of 107,884 settlers and their families, who located upon Western farms. They show that one-third of the immigrants who arrived during the year took to farming on the prairies.

Much interest was naturally taken in the first main estimates tabled in the House on Wednesday by Hon. W. T. White, the minister of finance. Those who have been in the capital long enough to see other governments come and go could not forbear a smile when the total sum it was proposed to spend was revealed. It brought back to their memories what happened in 1896, and thereabouts, when the Liberals after many years of criticizing the Conservative government for its extravagance found when they came into power that they wanted just as much and a little more each succeeding year to conduct the affairs of the country. As it was in 1896 so it is in 1912, with the parties reversed. Much has been said of Liberal extravagance in recent years by the Conservative Opposition, but Mr. White's first estimates call for appropriations reaching the large total of \$149,789,677 which is nearly eleven millions more than Mr. Fielding's main estimates of last year which totalled \$138,863,200. Mr. Fielding later on brought down three large batches of supplementaries amounting to over seventeen millions, so that Mr. White has still some six millions margin to go on before Mr. Fielding's total of \$156,000,000 is reached.

Millions More in Supplementaries

The probabilities would seem to be that when the supplementaries are brought down the customary increase over the provision for the previous year will be recorded as the additional appropriations which governments find it necessary to provide towards the end of each session have a habit of running up into the millions very fast. This is likely to be the case at the present time when there are a number of matters to which the government is giving its attention and which if decided upon will involve considerable expenditure. These include the proposal to make an early start on the Georgian Bay canal, the construction of the new Welland canal and the additions to the vote for the militia department which have been indicated in speeches made by Hon. Sam Hughes, minister of militia, including the construction of several new drill halls in the various parts of the Dominion.

Nothing for Terminal Elevators Yet

Then, and this is of more importance to the farmers of the West, there is the probability that the supplementaries will include a sum for the purchase of the terminal elevators on the Great Lakes which are not yet provided for. This, to be of any practical immediate use must be a large vote. Some place it as high as ten millions. So that, all things considered,

the total estimates for the fiscal year which opens on April 1 next promise to beat the records of the past.

There is an apparent decrease of nearly one million dollars in the estimates for the department of agriculture, but it must be remembered that the census branch is administered by the minister of agriculture and the million dollars provided last year was to cover the cost of taking the count of the population. Agricultural estimates proper, when all are down, will probably considerably exceed those of the Hon. Sydney Fisher. The plan for agricultural assistance mentioned in the speech from the throne, and which has since been more or less definitely outlined will call for some considerable expenditure. The main estimates contain a vote of \$200,000 for additional branch experimental stations. This is an increase of \$100,000 as compared with the same vote last year. There is a new vote of \$100,000 towards the erection of a Dominion building for the display of products of Canadian farms and other natural products in connection with the Canadian National exposition at Toronto. There is a decrease of \$150,000 in the general vote for exhibitions which is due to the fact that there are not this year the usual number of expositions abroad at which the Dominion finds it necessary to be represented. The vote for the encouragement of the establishment of cold storage warehouses remains at \$200,000, the same figure as for the current year, but the vote to encourage the production and use of superior seeds for farm crops and for the enforcement of the Seed Control Act has been increased from \$60,000 to \$80,000. Under the heading "health of animals," there is an increase in the vote of \$25,000, while the administration of the Destructive Pests Act calls for \$10,000 more than it did for the current year.

\$2,000,000 for Agriculture—\$8,000,000 for Militia

The total vote for agriculture without the supplementaries still to come stands at \$1,945,500. It looks very small compared with the militia department vote which for the main estimates alone stands at a grand total of \$8,334,450, an increase of \$191,000 over the total militia estimates for the present year. While there are some moderate reductions in the militia votes they are heavily overbalanced by the increases. The annual drill calls

for an additional expenditure of \$405,000, not including \$25,000 to be spent on cadet corps. The vote for schools of instruction is increased from \$70,000 to \$100,000 while the permanent force which this year cost the country \$1,950,000 requires another \$50,000 bringing the total up to the round two millions, or slightly more than the entire agricultural vote. The increase in the militia vote is somewhat emphasized by the circumstance that the estimates show that \$173,850 voted last session for the current year was not spent.

Proposed Railway Amendments

On Wednesday Mr. J. G. Turiff in moving the second reading of his bill to amend the Railway Act said that it provided that special tariffs adopted by the different railway companies must be submitted to the railway board and have its assent and approval before they become law. He explained that at the present time a railway company must have the approval of the railway board to any general tariff, but it may put in force any special tariff by giving the board thirty days' notice. Formerly a company could put a tariff in force by giving ten days' notice. At the present time a great deal of the freight of the country is carried under special tariffs, Mr. Turiff explained, and they are often very much lower than the general tariff. At present a railway company may increase a special tariff to any point lower than a general tariff without consulting the board further than by giving thirty days' notice. It becomes law and the board does not take any action unless someone complains of an injustice. The result is that in many cases shippers put up with gross injustice in the matter of freight rates rather than take the onus of going into a fight with a railway company before the railway board. Mr. Turiff did not think it advisable to allow a railway to increase its special tariffs without a reference to the board. He had no objection to them being allowed to lower them of their own accord if they desired to do so.

Premier Borden said that since the Railway Act was passed in 1903 there have been a great many amendments—sometimes several during a session. He believed, therefore, that there was an urgent need for the revision of the Act, for the purpose of incorporating in it the amendments which have been passed, and also for the purpose of adding other amendments which the government has under consideration. Under the circumstances he considered it perhaps unwise to deal with the Act in a desultory way this session. At any rate the government would like to have a little time to consider the proposed amendment. He suggested

the adjournment of the debate. The premier was not able to give any promise that the Act would be revised this session.

Mr. Turiff in agreeing to delay said he desired it to be understood that he proposed to press the bill later on. He remarked that a great deal of interest is being taken, more especially in the West, in the question of freight rates and that these high rates had in many instances been created under this very system of raising them without consulting the railway board.

That the members of the railway board are in agreement with Mr. Turiff that Western freight rates are too high is demonstrated by the order which has been issued calling for a general inquiry into rates west of Port Arthur, but not including British Columbia. The coast province is excepted for the reason that rates in that province are already being looked into because of complaints made by the United Farmers of Alberta and the Vancouver Board of Trade. The first meeting of the board to consider the rates will be held in Ottawa on February 13, when the procedure to be followed will be decided upon. The inquiry is bound to be a long one, as the evidence to be submitted will be very heavy. The government has been asked to name counsel to conduct the inquiry.

INTERESTING ADDRESSES

As has been announced through the press, the agricultural conventions and short courses will be held at the Manitoba Agricultural college from February 12 to February 16. As well as addresses given by many members of the faculty of the college, such well known speakers as Dr. J. H. Worst, president of the N. D. Agricultural college; Dr. Charles E. Saunders, Dominion cerealist, Ottawa; and Mrs. Nellie McClung, Winnipeg, have consented to be present and deliver addresses. In all thirty-seven addresses will be delivered, each of which is such as to be of special interest to every person directly connected with farm life.

Such topics as "The Farmer's Side of the Enforcement of the Weed Act," "Manitoba's Position in Relation to Dry Farming," "The Origin, Development and Present-Day Characteristics of Marquis Wheat," "The Beautifying of Farm Homes" (illustrated), "Preventable Diseases," "The Other Side of the Farm Life," and "The Future of the Manitoba Boy and Girl," will be dealt with by speakers specially selected to deal with these important questions.

Single fare rates may be obtained from February 10th to the 13th by all who wish to attend farmers' week at the college.

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