

Public Works Carried Out

Hon. W. H. Cushing, Minister of public works, administers capably a department of which Alberta has reason to be proud. The task before it on its inception was one of real immensity. The minister and his aides, with a wide-awake liberal government behind them went to work with a will to provide the province with the necessary public works. The minister was a capable business man, and quite competent for the task before him.

In the many problems confronting the young government of Alberta on its formation, there was none more formidable than this of providing an adequate system of internal transportation of roads, ways and bridges. In the first place, Alberta alone is wider and broader than the big German Empire; it is twice as large as Great Britain and Ireland, and when autonomy was granted there was not any considerable opening up of the country except in the lower half of the province. Even here people had often to content themselves with the firm old trails of cart days.

With the influx of settlement in the past four years, pressing claims for main roads and side roads, for improved roads and bridges have simply poured in upon the department of public works, making it in its direct contact with the people one of the most important branches of the administration. Upon the efficiency and energy of its workings the comfort and success of the new settlers are largely dependent.

ROADS ON ALL SIDES

Within the last year and a half consequently the department of public works in Alberta has been set to face the problem of opening up the north country, the vast reaches lying along the Peace and Athabasca rivers with their many tributaries. Deputations of settlers asking for roads here or improvements on the old leading trails are not uncommon now at the government offices. The whole province is awake, and its demands in this respect would tax the most efficient of departments.

All this was foreseen from the start by the members of the government, men thoroughly aware of western conditions and possibilities. A bridge and road policy of liberal ideas, sympathetic with the settlers needs and by business-like administration, was made one of the most important planks of the Liberal platform in 1906.

The new roads cut out each year

—hundreds of miles of them—do not comprise all the work done in this connection by the department's trained road-crews. Every year there were numerous improvements to be made on old trails old roads were to be graded up—and from spring to autumn the road crews were busy, the foreman employing in each district entered whatever local labor was available or necessary.

The appropriations made each year by the government for public works have been very generous in proportion to the revenues of the province. Last year \$1,110,500 was voted for expenditure in this connection.

MANY BRIDGES BUILT

Only less necessary than road-making in a new country is the bridge-building and in this Alberta's Government has been no way remiss. Since they came into power a little over three years ago 745 standard bridges have been dealt with and 60 steel bridges have been built. The largest and finest bridges have been mainly built in the southern half of the province, as here the rivers are larger, less easily bridged and settlement was being retarded for lack of them.

In the erection of public buildings the Alberta Government has shown no less enterprise than in providing transportation facilities. Work was begun during the first year of their administration upon a \$150,000 Normal School at Calgary, since then completed and pronounced the most thoroughly equipped institution of its kind in Canada. Temporary government offices were built to avoid a large yearly outlay in rental, and work upon the new Parliament buildings, to cost \$1,250,000, is already well under way. A \$200,000 Court House at Edmonton has been begun, a similar building at Calgary has been planned, a smaller Court House at Cardston is now finished, while \$75,000 was voted for a Land Titles office for Calgary. Sites have been secured for a Jail and Court House at Lethbridge, a Court House at Wetaskiwin, and an asylum at Ponoka, and sums have been appropriated at first estimates on the construction of these buildings.

For the Asylum 800 acres of land have been secured, and the University grounds at Strathcona, over 200 acres in area, are already the property of the government, which will erect suitable buildings as the need arises, the University classes now being held in the Collegiate Institute of Strathcona

Leads In Telephone

Not long after the government came into power it was decided that the province should be freed from the Bell Telephone monopoly. Some thousands voted for the purpose were not frittered away in investigations but were expended in the most practical way in the actual construction of telephone lines. The policy worked so well, the government proving itself as business like and effective, a competitor that the Bell Company were content a year or so later to sell out to the Government at a very reasonable price.

Before the purchase of the Bell lines the government had built 544 miles and bought 53 other miles of line, and controlled 18 exchanges in all. Since then the government has continued its building operations—over 600 miles of rural lines being built last year alone. The system now comprises over 1,600 miles of line, and notwithstanding the heavy initial expense of constant construction the rates were reduced on the first of January 1909.

In time this telephone system will become a very valuable provincial asset.

ECONOMICAL ADMINISTRATION

Not the least admirable feature of the administration of the Rutherford Government is the record of the Treasury Department which comes directly under the control of the Premier himself. Over \$5,000,000 have been expended since 1905 by the Province, and in it all there has come from no side the charge of maladministration. The utmost thrift and economy has been practised, and while very large public works have been undertaken and agriculture helped liberally in many ways the province has been enabled by capable and upright administration to accomplish all it has without exceeding the provincial revenues.

Until the telephone debentures were sold—and sold remarkably high—on the London market a few weeks ago the province had incurred no financial responsibilities outside the ordinary revenue.

Education Is Fostered

Concurrent with the good work done in the handling of Alberta's finances there is the work of the Education Department of which also Premier Rutherford is the executive head.

If there is one interest of the province closer than another to the heart of Premier Rutherford it is education, on which he believes rests the basis of ultimate happiness and prosperity for the people. "The boys and girls of Alberta are our jewels," he has said in public addresses, "and in their education the future of the province lies." Look after the boys and girls today and the grow-ups of tomorrow will look after themselves—would seem to be the Premier's motto.

It is not then remarkable that in three years of his government the schools of Alberta should have doubled in number while the attendance has increased wonder-

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HON. C. W. CROSS
Attorney General

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Year	New schools organized
1905 (four months)	40
1906	144
1907	156
1908	168
Total	508

In September 1908, when the present government began its administration there were only 562 schools in Alberta. Today there are 1,070, or about double the number.

LIBERAL EDUCATIONAL GRANTS

No province in Canada, unless perhaps Saskatchewan grants such a proportionately large part of its revenue to education, and nowhere are better results attained. The very first session of the Legislature evidenced this, as \$200,000 was promptly granted to educational purposes, plans were given out for

was secured. With the new series was initiated the principle of free text books here, for these readers are supplied free to every school-child of the province.

It is worthy of note that apart from the taxes upon railway companies and big corporations the only tax levied by the Alberta Government is made in the interests of education—20 per cent. of the amount realized being put to the upkeep of a University, and the remaining 80 per cent. being devoted to the needs of common education. This tax is placed only upon lands lying outside organized school districts and falls most upon the speculator who is holding lands unoccupied and for future gain. The actual settler or homeseeker does not come under this tax for the first three years of settlement, and by that time he is likely to have organized a school district in his neighborhood, for the requirements exact only the presence of 12 children in the district and 4 ratepayers.

Enforcement Of Laws

Still another feature of Alberta's administration to which the population may point with pride is the excellent legal machinery of the province and the splendid enforcement of law and order. This department of work comes under the direction of Hon. C. W. Cross, Attorney-General of the Province, and it has been so well administered that not only are Albertans satisfied with it, but high commendation has come from disinterested onlookers outside.

In one important respect—of

its administration of the liquor law. The W. C. T. U. meeting at Edmonton last autumn the Presbyterian Assembly in session at Edmonton last May and the Church of England Synod

meeting in Calgary last August, all put themselves definitely on record as approving of the manner in which the existing liquor laws were enforced in Alberta, and commending the measures.

Legislation Of High Order

The extensive work of drafting all the legislation organizing the provincial administration, and the revision of the Territorial Ordinances fell upon the Attorney-General and his department.

But in addition to this work the Attorney-General has been responsible for the introduction of several statesmanlike measures notably among which are the Workmen's Compensation Act, which provides that workmen shall receive compensation from their employers for injuries sustained at work, and also the District Court Act, which latter entirely renovated the judicial machinery of the province.

Formerly there were only three judges in the province, holding sessions at four or five centres. Today, because of the District Court Act and similar legislation there are five Judges of the Supreme Court and as many of the District Court. Litigants may now attend any of about 45 centres where court is held and consequently litigation is much less expensive.

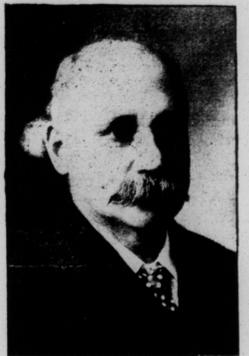
At the session of 1908 moreover legislation was passed abolishing the old and rather abused system of sheriffs' fees, the sheriffs being made Government officials on salary. This too greatly reduces the expenses of the public who are unlucky enough to have become entangled in the law.

BENEFICIAL LEGISLATION

Some of the more important acts of legislation of the Rutherford Government are:

- Railway Taxation Act.
- Land Titles Act.
- District Courts Act.
- Mechanics Lien Act, providing a simple method of securing the workman's wages to him more expeditiously than in any other province.

Corporation Taxation Act
Tax for Educational Funds imposed upon land outside of School Districts—i.e.—Lands held by speculators, by Hudson's Bay Company and some ranching land.



HON. W. T. FINLAY
Minister of Agriculture

Eight Hour Bank-to-Bank Law.
Workmen's Compensation Act.
Act for Protection of Children.
Industrial School Act, providing for erring or neglected children.

Telephone Legislation.
Advanced Liquor Legislation.
On the whole the excellence of the Legislative Acts of Alberta's Government makes a fitting accompaniment to the admirable administration.

No charge of graft or wrongdoing has ever been made against the Rutherford Government. The Rutherford administration has been an honest and progressive administration. Most people have a warm regard for honesty and progressiveness.

Extract From Premier Rutherford's Budget Speech

Re Maintenance of Provincial University, Provided Out of Tax Upon Hudson's Bay Company Lands

Critics of the educational tax imposed by the Alberta government in 1907, upon lands lying outside organized school districts will find matter for reflection in the first figures given out concerning the amount collected from this tax. They go to show that four-fifths of the total amount is expended on the common school system of the Province, while but one-fifth is appropriated to the needs of the University.

It is also worthy of note that since the tax came into effect in 1907, the University's share of this educational fund was more than met by the taxes paid by the Hudson's Bay Company alone on land assessable under this tax. From this it is apparent that this ancient and wealthy company has borne the full burden of maintaining the new University since its establishment. It is also apparent that the opponents of the tax in ranching districts, who inveigh against it as "the University tax," a tax imposed for unnecessary higher education, are utterly mistaken.

GENEROUS OUTLAY ON COMMON SCHOOLS

The amount of care and money expended upon Alberta's general school system has been several times very favorably commented upon by outsiders interested in

educational matters. They agree that for a young province an unusual high standard of efficiency is both aimed at and attained.

The statement of the Educational Trust Account gives fresh evidence of the government's generous outlay upon the common school. The figures obtained from the provincial treasurer show that the collection for 1907 and 1908, on this account—derived from tax upon land lying outside organized school districts—amount to \$109,276.23. Of this \$11,144.06 was expended in connection with the collection of this fund.

The net amount of this fund is consequently \$98,132.17, which has been disbursed in the following proportion:

Common schools	\$78,505.95
University	19,626.23
In detail the actual disbursement of the fund according to this division was:	
University (20 per cent)	\$19,626.23
Common schools (50 per cent)	49,066.89
New school districts	14,719.93
Schools grading over 5th	14,719.93
Total net	\$98,132.17

Of this \$98,132.17 the Hudson's Bay Company contributed \$24,143.08, or \$4,516.85 more than the government has paid out of this fund for the maintenance of the University.