

# EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF RESULTS UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH LAW

Hon. Dr. Roberts, in Stirring Speech, Disposes of  
Criticism From Opposition  
Members

Widespread Benefits Explained and Plea Made for  
Co-operation in Work of Improving Public  
Health Conditions—Forty Thousand School  
Children Under Medical Inspection—Other  
Safeguards Giving Most Encouraging Re-  
sults—The Fight Against Tuberculosis and  
Cancer—New Conditions Compared With Old.

Fredericton, March 28.—In a speech lasting four hours Hon. Dr. Roberts, minister of health, in the legislature today in an able manner disposed of recent criticisms directed at the health act and its administration and explained to the people of this province in a clear and enlightening review the great good done by the department of health, and the necessity for carrying on this humane work of combating disease.

In opening his address Hon. Dr. Roberts sounded a note of optimism in regard to conditions in New Brunswick compared with world conditions generally. Speaking of the department of health, the minister declared that this department would in time occupy the first place in the state and the opposition would place it there when it realized what the department was for.

An exhaustive review of the present act was given by the speaker, and he explained the pains taken in formulating it, the gathering of much data, the study of the vast amount of good that public health service had done throughout the world, and cited specific instances in regard to certain diseases where much improvement had been made and the death rate greatly reduced. The minister told of the deplorable conditions that were disclosed by the survey made by John Hall before the present act came into effect, and in contrast pointed out the vast improvement since the act became operative.

During the course of his address Hon. Dr. Roberts said that if possible next year he would ask the government to finance the medical inspection of schools. This would relieve the cost on the municipalities and place the work under direct control of the government. It was the intention to divide the province into sections and have full time inspectors on the job. The work of the sanitary inspectors was reviewed and the necessity for them shown. The minister said, however, that this year it would be optional with the municipalities whether they had these inspectors. The grave menace of venereal diseases was thoroughly dealt with by the minister and the danger of not looking after this phase of public health shown.

Hon. Dr. Roberts said that an amendment would be brought in to give representation of the municipal council on the board of health four out of the five members, thus giving the council greater authority. Another amendment to be brought in would provide for the inspection of hotels throughout the province.

In conclusion, he made a strong plea for co-operation from both sides of the house in carrying out the humane work of public health improvement.

Adjournment of the debate was moved by F. W. Smith, of Carleton.

The house went into committee at 10 o'clock to consider certain bills. It rose at 10:20 and reported progress following which adjournment was made.

R. T. Hayes, of St. John, was in the speaker's chair today, although his unavoidable absence of Hon. Mr. Dymally whose wife is ill in Moncton.

ment grant, which for the past school year would amount to approximately \$12,000. The provisions of the proposed act would apply to all persons holding valid licenses, and who at the time of its passage are employed as inspectors, normal school instructors, local superin-

HON. DR. ROBERTS.

tendents of public schools, secretaries of school boards, or others doing work directly connected with the public schools service and not already drawing pensions. For the present year the number of pensioners would be forty-two, and it was estimated that by 1923 the number would be fifty-five. With the teachers contributing \$12,000 in 1922 it was estimated that the government contribution would be \$6,000 against \$11,000 which was the cost in 1921. It was not believed that the amount paid out by the government would be equal to that of last year until the year 1927, but by the year 1933 it is estimated to reach \$33,000. It would therefore be seen that it would take quite a number of years before the amount contributed by the government at the present time would be exceeded.

Hon. Mr. Veniot moved the suspension of the rule to permit the introduction of a bill to enable the Roman Catholic Bishop of Chatham to sell certain lands.

Mr. Scully moved the suspension of the rule to permit of the introduction of a bill to amend the St. John City assessment act.

Mr. Martin moved the suspension of the rule to permit of the introduction of a bill relating to the assessment of motor vehicles in the town of Chatham.

Hon. Mr. Roberts moved the suspension of a rule to permit of the introduction of a bill to amend the Roman Catholic Bishop of Chatham to borrow \$50,000 and mortgage certain lands in Campbellton.

Hon. Dr. Roberts.

Hon. Dr. Roberts on the order of the day being called resumed the debate on the budget.

In rising, Dr. Roberts congratulated the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, Premier Foster for his able presentation of the budget. He compared the comfortable conditions in the province with the disturbed conditions of many other countries, and said we had reason to be profoundly thankful. He spoke of the Peace Conference at Washington and said the great lesson which it taught should have a lasting and uplifting influence. He paid a high tribute to Hon. Mr. Magee for his efforts in the line of technical education and pointed out that it was "a lamentable fact" that the vast majority of children fall by the wayside before they pass from the eighth to the ninth grade. He praised the work of the Department of Lands and Mines, pointing out the great menace from forest fires, budworm and hurricanes, the remedy for which was prevention. Considering the weather conditions last year, he felt everybody was convinced that the expenditures to check the ravages of fire were necessary and in the public interest.

Dr. Roberts deplored the shooting "accidents" in the woods, saying, "There is no reason under high heaven why you or I traveling through the forest should be shot down like dumb brutes through the want of technical education. All that would be required would be to make an example of one or two of these people and I feel you would find the number of these so-called accidents lessened rapidly." He congratulated the attorney general on his good work, and spoke enthusiastically of the Public Works Department, referring to the value of good roads. "I think," said Dr. Roberts, "there is no member of this government who believes there should be retrenchment in these times more than the minister of public works, but where is he going to retrench? When he advised us that there were between 10,000 and 11,000 bridges in this province and that last year it was necessary to take care of 1,100 of them in the interests of the safety of human life, we certainly could not ask him to retrench there. If he leaves roads partly complete for a period of one or two years, this will be false economy, but he will no doubt tell you when he speaks again, that false or not,

we are going to be forced to let up. The members of the house can do much to relieve the expenditures for one year at least upon roads. And that is to cut down their demands in their districts and let the people feel for a little the actual state of affairs that exist. The minister also praised the results accomplished by the Department of Agriculture.

## Public Health.

Regarding the department of public health, he then went on to speak of the transition from the old regulations to the new, and declared that, had it not been that a separate portfolio had been declared and a minister of health appointed, the legislation that this province has today never would have existed. He showed clearly that the public health act is neither an octopus or incubus, nor representative of any of the epithets that it has pleased the critics of it during the few years of its existence to hurl at it with the hope that some one of the misdeeds would administer the deadly blow.

## Some of the Benefits.

Dr. Roberts continued: "The following is a list of a few of the accomplishments of public health administration in several parts of the outside world:

- (1) The virtual abolition of bubonic plague in western civilization.
- (2) The almost complete abolition of Asiatic cholera in Europe and America.
- (3) The widespread abolition of yellow fever in many seaports of Mexico and Central and South America.
- (4) The abolition of malaria in the same regions and most particularly in the Panama canal zone and in most of the southern states of the union.
- (5) The abolition or very great reduction of the hookworm throughout the southern states of the union.
- (6) The gradual suppression of sleeping sickness throughout great tracts of the African continent.
- (7) The vast reduction of small-pox by vaccination.
- (8) The conquest of hydrophobia by serum inoculation.
- (9) The eighty per cent reduction of deaths from diphtheria by antitoxin.
- (10) The sixty per cent reduction or more of deaths from typhoid by anti-typhoid vaccine and the prevention of this disease and of diphtheria by inoculation.
- (11) The reduction of deaths of infants less than one year old by from over one-half to two-thirds.
- (12) The extension of the expectation of life about fifteen years during the last half century.
- (13) The reduction of the normal death rate from over twenty per thousand four or five years ago to less than ten.

"As to a few things that have been accomplished by the public health act in this province during the three years in which its services have been organized and set in motion," said Dr. Roberts, "the first was the making of a health survey to ascertain conditions as they existed in 1917 in this province, made by a gentleman especially qualified and highly recommended by Professor Herman M. Biggs, of New York city, the latter gentleman has suggested this as a wise procedure before undertaking to organize. The following are a few of the conditions that obtained under the old dispensation as found by Mr. Hall:

1. Communicable diseases running riot, as far as placarding, quarantining, fumigation and school.
2. No campaign of education in the schools.
3. Deaths apparently needless from exposure that should not have attained.
4. No attention given to water supplies.
5. Four great epidemics of small-pox, thousands of cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars of expense, no campaign of education because no named advice or supervision.
6. School buildings in rural districts neglected and in a state of decay, that are absolutely degrading to the health, morals and lives of the students who are to be our future citizens.
7. No medical school inspection, but which since having been adopted proved that at least 65 per cent of our children were physically or mentally defective.
8. No efficient collection, collating and publishing of vital statistics.
9. "Communicable diseases, as far as prevention measure were concerned were running riot, little attempt being made to quarantine or segregate cases in the interests of prevention. No campaign of education along these lines was ever attempted. No doubt dozens died from these diseases yearly that today might have been enjoying life and adding to the economic wealth and value of this province. This report pointed out that little or no attention at all had been given to the character of the source of many of our water supplies; that many of the water supplies to cities and towns, to say nothing of villages and hamlets, were surrounded by physical conditions that no doubt in the past might cause pollution of the water and result in the introduction of typhoid and other infectious diseases, which, in turn, might easily develop into epidemics, causing large numbers of cases of illness and, unfortunately, an undue percentage of deaths, to say nothing of needless expenditure.

"Again, there was pointed out the four great epidemics of small-pox that had taken place, resulting in thousands of cases and tens of thousands of dollars of expenditure for their partial suppression. Much this money was spent in an unwise way because of there being no one to supervise its expenditure along economic lines. A further suggestion was made of the school buildings and their surroundings throughout the rural districts, were in an undesirable condition regarding the conservation not only of health, but the lives and the morals of those who tomorrow we expect to undertake the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. Little was said by John Hall regarding the physical and mental status of our school population, other than to have remarked that no doubt the percentage of children attending school in this province, where medical school inspection did not exist, would be at least equal to that of other states and provinces similarly situated. It might say that since that report was issued we have been able through statistics, to prove that our school children, including the condition of unhealthy teeth (that by-the-way we are able to say contributes very largely to the existence of many other maladies from which children suffer) to the extent of sixty-five per cent are below the normal. In other words, there are but thirty-five per cent of our school children in this province that we can say present a normal physical status.

"If that obtains at this period of their lives, Mr. Speaker, what must we look for during the later years? One of the

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75c Yard Bleached Sheet 8-4 width Sale 39c Yd	50c Pair Boys' Heavy Ribbed Cotton Hose Sale 39c Pr	\$1.69 Each White Flannelette Gowns Sale \$1.29 Each	\$1.25 pair . . . . . Sale 89c Pr \$1.50 pair . . . . . Sale \$1.19 Pr \$2.25 pair . . . . . Sale \$1.89 Pr \$3.50 pair . . . . . Sale \$2.69 Pr
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things that you can count upon as sure as the night follows the day is the scourge of smallpox presents itself and the barrier over which it is absolutely impossible for smallpox to gain an entrance.

"Further, from year to year, every scholar that enters school must become vaccinated. In country districts, remember, as well as in the city. This means a continued line of defense becoming stronger year by year. As a result of this service, together with the fact that every occasion of an outbreak of smallpox, which is recurring almost every week or two, due to people coming from lumber camps, from neighboring states and provinces, there are large numbers being vaccinated as contacts. Just a few years more of such a service and apart from the individual case coming under our gates, above referred to, there will be no opportunity for a spread among others.

"From careful reports made of some twenty-five years of experience under other forms of health legislation, there is no doubt in my mind, the annual saving to the province as a whole, an amount that would represent nearly the smallness of money today being paid out in support of the department at Fredericton and its staff.

"Will my honorable friends discount this and say that this service is not efficient? And, if so, will they kindly explain upon the table of the house some other plan that will be less expensive and more efficient?

"Kindly remember that practically all I have referred to thus far concerns the

folks in rural districts whom my friends in opposition claim are not in need of such health legislation.

"In addition to the vaccination of school children, we have attempted to make a careful physical examination of every child attending the public school in this province, at the latest, during his second year in attendance and endeavor to have pointed any condition either physical or mental that would serve to depreciate his future progress in seeking an education and later in life would render it other than a perfect citizen.

"Can my hearers for one moment estimate what a service such as I have just outlined, properly applied and carried out would mean to this province, not only along the lines of health, peace and happiness but, when you consider how much money would be saved and taxes eventually lowered because of such saving? Reduce, if you will, fifty per cent at least of the cause for hospitalization, both general tuberculosis, insane, for the indigent, municipal homes, children's aid, case of criminals, your jails and penitentiaries, and I do not think it would take a specialist in mathematics to see plainly what the results would be and yet, do my friends still contend that the cost to this country is preposterous and should be reduced? Mr. Speaker, you will kindly bear in mind what this great expenditure means practically insuring, as it does, our citizens against epidemics, contagious diseases, such as smallpox, typhoid, diphtheria, etc., preventing the cost connected with illness and, in many

Some of the Things Done.

"Now to organize, so as to combat these conditions effectively and take over the additional services, we have required just what organization we have asked for neither more nor less. And with this organization we have been able to accomplish the following things in this province:

"Forty thousand pupils have undergone medical school inspection. All of these have been vaccinated, and the premises inspected in hal reference to this department during his address, without one cent extra cost to the municipalities of the province. This was part of the medical school inspection service. Under the old regime, the municipal councils would have had to pay private physicians either fifty cents or one dollar per scholar. What does this mean—forty thousand school children

vaccinated? It means an army of defense when the much to be dreaded scourge of smallpox presents itself and the barrier over which it is absolutely impossible for smallpox to gain an entrance.

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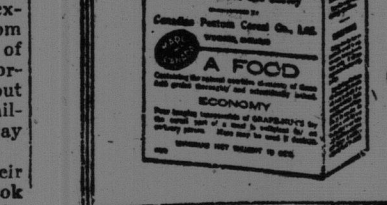
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## What every mother should know—

THE one subject nearest a mother's heart is the welfare of her children. It is during childhood that their health is most important.

Weak, under-nourished children seldom develop into vigorous, healthy men and women. Malnutrition produces anemic constitutions, liable to many diseases. Food is the most important factor in the development of children.

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Your grocer sells Grape-Nuts, the same delicious Grape-Nuts that is served in the leading hotels and restaurants of Canada.

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You must remember that in inaugurating this Public Health Service the government of this province did not wish for one moment to become dictatorial to the municipalities, or, as our friends are pleased to denigrate it, to become autocratic, but they did feel that with the returns of the war and epidemic coming in, that there should be some different form of legislation than pre-existed. The framing of such was left with myself after going most thoroughly through almost every piece of public health legislation in England, Australia, Canada and the United States, with the result as you see. The government was willing to establish a more efficient service as to be able in this way to give advice and administer but at the time it was impossible to carry the whole burden and, (Continued on page 10, first column)