

Doings In The Local Legislature

Government's Financial Statements Criticized-- Their Supporters Disagree Re Stumpage-- Extra Taxes Suggested.

Fredericton, June 11--The House met at 2.45 p. m.

L. P. D. Tilley
Mr. Tilley referred to the late administration's magnificent record in increasing the stumpage returns from \$180,136.45 in 1907, to \$354,042.52 in 1916. He questioned the fairness pursued by the government in the statement of the bonded debt such liabilities as those in connection with the International Railway and the Miramichi Railway, which the province would never be called upon to meet by reason of the arrangements which the late administration had consummated. In 1908 under the old regime stumpage receipts had been \$180,136.45. In 1916 under the late government the stumpage revenue had been \$354,042. There was a great difference.

The total liability and bonded indebtedness had been said to total \$30,000,000, but in making that statement he had not taken into account liabilities which had been reduced. The International Railway which had been taken over by the Canadian Government Railways was one and the Fredericton and Grand Lake Railway, now a part of the C. P. R. was another. In these particulars the government minister of finance did not give due justice to the province or his own financial statement. The government supporters were open to the charge of insincerity in claiming that economy would be secured through the appointment of a deputy attorney general. For the past nine years the attorney general had collected the succession duties without a deputy. The real saving brought about by the appointment would amount to no more than \$385.

Speakers on the opposite side of the House had placed great weight upon the fact that in the last eight years the provincial debt had increased \$3,451,000. Yet one of the first acts of the new administration had been to increase the public debt \$700,000 for permanent bridges and half a million for highways, an increase in bonded indebtedness of \$1,200,000.

Hon. Mr. Veniot said that the hon. gentleman must not forget that his own party was responsible for half a million of that \$700,000.

Hon. J. P. Burchill
Hon. Mr. Burchill said it was too early yet to criticize the present government, as they had not been long enough in office to commit any indiscretions, but he could assure the leaders that if when the House assembled next session it was found that they had given cause for criticism, members on their own side would not fail to tell them of it. There was no need to criticize the actions of the gentlemen on the other side of the House for the people at large had done that to some purpose in February last.

Mr. Smith (Carleton)--Not along the St. John River.

Closing of Accounts
Mr. Burchill said he was not consulting himself to the St. John River. He was speaking of the province as a whole, and the evidence of the criticism was very plainly to be seen by a glance round the House and it was not circumstantial evidence either. If he could take the Auditor General's report he could probably make up from it a great many tergiversations of hon. gentlemen opposite to their stewardship during the last few years, but it was not necessary, as the people had done the criticizing for themselves. The late government promised to close all accounts at the end of the fiscal year. He had heard them say so many times on the floors of the House. He always took that statement, however no matter who made it, with a pretty large grain of salt, because personally he felt that it was almost an impossible thing to do. There must necessarily be many accounts that

must remain over. He had frequently thought that the statements made that all bills were paid was not a wise one and now it was found that it was not only untrue but untrue. The report of the auditors, he pointed out, varied somewhat from that of the auditor-general. Looking through the latter he found reference to some sinking funds from the Crown lands. The bonuses which were received from the Crown timber land licenses were supposed to go into a sinking fund that was to be bonded to reduce the funded debt. Under the heading of sinking funds there was to be found the sum of \$93,478, consisting of bonds and bank deposits. In addition there was \$427,000 which had been put into the consolidated revenue and used there. That was not a proper disposition of a sinking fund. Instead of being put by to be used to redeem the bonds when they became due it had been used with the ordinary revenue and spent accordingly. The money should have been used for what was intended.

Re the Valley Railway: personally he (Burchill) had fought that bill from start to finish. If the road was to be built the Dominion government should pay the cost. Now that the road was built the interest should be charged to current account, not capital account.

Mr. Burchill claimed that the first move in having a new survey of the Crown lands was made in 1906. The greater collection of stumpage by the late government was, he claimed, due largely to the increased cut. He was strongly opposed to increased stumpage. He would like more attention paid to bye roads to enable poor settlers to get their goods to the front.

The House adjourned at 12.15.

June 12
The House met at 3 p. m. Fred Magee, Government member from Westmorland, said that the Crown Lands, which forestry experts valued at \$49,000,000, should be made to yield more revenue or be sold. If they should be disposed of for something like forty-nine million dollars, some scheme might be worked out by which the public debt could be discharged, and from the balance, if placed on interest, there would be a substantial revenue to assist in carrying on the business of the country. It did not seem to him like good business to be deriving one per cent. from the crown lands and borrowing money for the public services at the rate of five per cent. His honorable friend from Northumberland and other lumber men might not agree with his suggestion but he thought it could be worked out. If it was not possible to work out a plan such as he had outlined, the sum of \$120,000 might be added to the revenue by an increase of 50 cents per thousand in the stumpage rate. Mr. Magee also suggested tax on theatre tickets, extra taxes on telephones, fire insurance companies, express companies and banks, and an increase in coal and iron royalties.

June 13
The House met at 3 p. m., and continued the Budget debate. Dr. McGrath opposed selling the crown lands, and wanted all pulp wood manufactured in the province.

June 14
The House met at 3 p. m., and took up the Prohibition Bill. Doherty Act Not to be Used

Hon. Mr. Byrne said since the bill was last in committee he had had the amendments suggested incorporated in a new bill, which he proposed to substitute for the original bill. The amendments included a provision that a magistrate might be empowered instead of ordering seized liquor to be destroyed to have it sent to a hospital; that beer shops might keep open until 11.30 instead of 10 as in the original act, and the section providing for the application of the

House went into committee and agreed to the bill relating to the appointment of civic officers in the City of Fredericton, and reported progress on the bill authorizing the destruction of dilapidated buildings. The bill to permit the C. P. R. to extend its round houses in the Parish of Lancaster, and also the bills relating to dilapidated buildings and sidewalks in the Town of Woodstock were agreed to, as well as the bill to facilitate the drainage of farm lands.

The House went into committee of supply.

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Doherty Act to this province was struck out. All persons who sold hop or root beer needed a license. The advertising of liquor in newspapers was prohibited all over the province.

The Amended Act was adopted. Would Charge Interest on Taxes
Fredericton bill to charge one per cent. per month interest on default taxes passed the Municipalities Committee, but was opposed in the House.

June 15th
The House met at 2.30 p. m.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale introduced a bill to enable the cities, towns and municipalities of the province to borrow money for the purpose of purchasing food and other necessities for the purpose of assisting the inhabitants of any such city, town, or municipality in supplying themselves with such articles during the continuance of the war.

Hon. Mr. Foster introduced a bill respecting the St. John and Quebec Railway company, which he explained was intended to extend the time of the completion of the road; to authorize the reduction of the directors to three; to enable a further sum of \$1,000,000 to be borrowed, if need be, for the completion of the work; and to enable the cancellation, if need be, of any contract for the construction of the road, or any part of it.

Hon. Mr. Byrne introduced a bill relating to executions upon judgments issued out of inferior courts. This bill would permit an execution issued by a justice of the peace in one county to be levied upon goods and chattels for a debt or on a resident in another county, but will not permit the taking of the body.

The Budget debate was completed. Ex-Premier Murray, in amendment to the Premier's motion to go into supply, moved, That the speaker should not leave the chair "until the government shall have submitted to this House proposals for increasing the current revenue of the province for the present fiscal year to an amount sufficient to meet the estimated current expenditure together with such estimates of the sums to be derived from such proposed sources as shall reasonably assure the House of the ability of the government to provide such revenue."

This was defeated 22 to 15. Adjourned till 8.30 p. m., June 18th

June 18
In the legislature today Hon. Mr. Byrne introduced a bill to amend the Schools Act in order to permit of the raising of the assessment for school purposes for the city of Fredericton; Hon. Mr. Smith a bill to amend the Game Act, which prohibits the shooting of wood chuck and coniforms in this respect with the treaty made between Great Britain and the United States, and also increase the size of horns below which limit no moose may be shot. Hon. Mr. Smith an act in addition to the General Mining Act.

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\$1,450 for the Equity Court chambers. St. John said that the government lease of the property was about to expire and an application had been made for increased rental.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale, on the item of \$1,750 for miscellaneous and insurance in connection with the Agricultural Department, said that this included six months' salary for Judson Manser, who represented the province in Cuba.

On the item of \$500 for butter and cheese factories, Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said that \$100 had already been expended in two grants to parties in Madawaska made by the late government.

Good Work of Radia Flour Mill
On the item for bonusing wheat mills Mr. Tweeddale said a mill which had received a bonus should be compelled to continue in operation. Some years ago a mill in Northumberland was erected and the people in the district commenced to grow wheat on a much more extensive scale than they had been used to. Without any warning the mill gave up operation with the result that wheat growing went out also. Incidentally, he spoke of the good work done by the mill at Newcastle.

Value of Mussie Mud
Mr. Burchill called attention to the great value of mussie mud as a fertilizer and hoped the government would take steps to enable farmers living in North Shore counties to obtain a supply. In his own county the matter had received the attention of the Agricultural Societies and with some assistance from the government a supply could be obtained for farmers who do not live adjacent to the sea shore. He thought if it was right to assist farmers living in districts where there is lime rock, those who live in places where mussie mud is available should be assisted.

Mr. Murray (Kings) said that the late government had encouraged the use of mussie mud by granting a bonus of \$500 towards the cost of a dredge. He thought they had spent as much on mud diggers as on lime rock crushers.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said that a grant of \$500 was authorized by law for mud diggers and he would be pleased to look into the claim of Northumberland County.

On the item of \$5,000 for greater production, Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said

that \$1,150 had already been expended. The school inspectors were giving the month of June to the work and their travelling expenses would be paid from the grant. The work would be continued during the season.

On the item of \$30,000 for purchase of seed wheat, Mr. Pinder said that he noticed that the estimated receipts were \$27,675. He wanted to know if the government anticipated the loss of \$2,325 on the transaction.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said that the transaction had been carried through for the benefit of the country and a loss had been anticipated. Precautions had been taken in making the expenditure. The farmers had experienced difficulty in procuring seed and the government by purchasing large quantities had been able to make quite a saving in the price.

Mr. McGrath said that in many parts of his country the ground was too wet to plant the wheat. Had there been any application to return it?

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said none had wanted to return it yet.

Mr. Foster thought that the conditions existing amply justified the government in making the expenditure. The farmers had experienced difficulty in procuring seed and the government by purchasing large quantities had been able to make quite a saving in the price.

Mr. Murray (Kings) asked what salary the Secretary of Agriculture was getting.

Hon. Mr. Tweeddale said \$2,800 a year.

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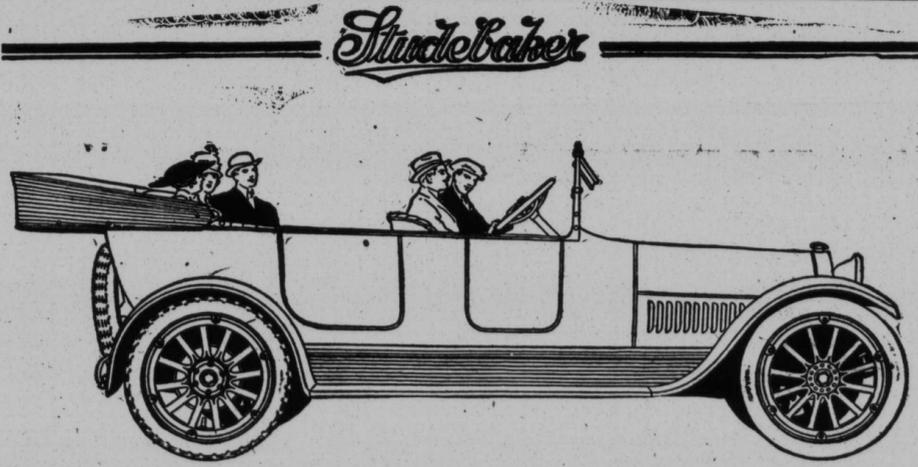
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