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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1912.

FROM BEHIND THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR.

New Brunswick and Immigration.

Occasionally, after midnight, a subject of general interest comes up for discussion in the House and is not fully reported in despatches by reason of the lateness of the hour. An instance occurred recently in committee of supply when an item of \$400,000 for immigration agencies in Canada, Great Britain and foreign countries was considered. Mr. Rogers, the Minister of the Interior, in reply to questions, gave much valuable information as to the Government's immigration policy under the proposed plan of Federal assistance to the Provinces and made special references to New Brunswick. He rightly concludes that good market gardeners would find an excellent opening in the Province and is of opinion that Belgium is the country from which to get them. In view of the interest that has been aroused in the prospect of increased immigration to the Province the debate is worthy of more than passing mention.

In the course of his remarks, the Minister of the Interior went at some length into the policy the Government intended to pursue in regard to New Brunswick. A recent conference with representatives of the Provincial Government, he said, had been held and a proposition suitable to the needs of the Province had been accepted as satisfactory. The Dominion Government was arranging a plan of co-operation, combining forces with the Local Government, whereby a considerable amount of money would be saved in future. "I believe," he added, "that we shall gain a great advantage by working together, especially in respect to literature. The Dominion is preparing literature suitable for the different Provinces, and literature suitable for the Local Governments. Under their direction it will be distributed by our agents as well as in the localities in which they may have their agents' offices."

Mr. Rogers, in passing, paid a tribute to the memory of the late Mr. Duff-Miller who was for many years Agent-General of New Brunswick in London. "I met him," he said, "on more than one occasion in England. He was a worthy representative of the people of New Brunswick, and a credit not only to that Province, but to the Dominion of Canada as a whole. He did much to make pleasant the visit of any Canadian that he met upon the other side while he occupied that position. I can understand that any Government will co-operate with and lend assistance to such an individual as was Mr. Duff-Miller, occupying the position which he did in England as the representative of New Brunswick."

It is, unfortunately, a matter of record that the late Liberal Government never attempted to co-operate with Mr. Duff-Miller in immigration matters. Their policy was "go West." The Provincial Government, prior to 1908, beyond supplying the Agent-General with literature of questionable value, also left him practically without means to prosecute any active immigration campaign in the interests of New Brunswick in the Old Country. It is only since the advent of the Hazen Administration that definite and progressive steps have been taken to make the advantages of the Province more widely known. This policy is being continued by Premier Flemming, who will now have the hearty co-operation of the Borden Government.

In earnest of this co-operation Mr. Rogers told the House that the Ministers of the Province of New Brunswick had a plan of their own in respect to how they propose to divide up their own immigration work. He presumed they would announce it in their own Legislature in due course. "But, I may say," continued Mr. Rogers, "I gave them the assurance that we were prepared to supply an agent named by the Province to represent them at London, England, and to do the work as representing that Province, but paid by the Dominion. I also told them that we were prepared to give them one or two agents for special work in the Province of New Brunswick. This plan is being prepared, and I shall be glad to furnish any information in connection with its progress."

It is not too much to say that this announcement of the Minister of the Interior is the first definite intimation of Federal aid on practical lines the Province of New Brunswick has received in all the years since immigration became a Provincial problem.

A new view point and one of especial interest to the Maritime Provinces was introduced into the debate by Mr. Michael Clark, Liberal member for Red Deer, Alberta. He was referring to the custom of sending farm delegates, who were mostly recruits from the West, over to England, and, on account of the deplorable conditions in the Prairie Provinces, suggested that it would not be wise for the Government to send large numbers of immigrants at present to Western Canada. "There are circumstances in the present condition of Western Canada," said Mr. Clark, "that I think should be in the Minister's mind in connection with his immigration policy. We had what to me was a very pregnant admission from the Hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Foster) in this House in another debate the other day. He said that it had to be admitted that for the moment production has outrun transportation in Western Canada; that is to say, that production had outrun our present ability to dispose of what we produce. The only object of production is to dispose of what we produce, and, clearly, if we do not dispose of it, it would be better not to be produced. If we are to pursue unrelentingly this immigration propaganda the difficulty occurs in my mind that in a few years production must invariably, by the process of logic, still further outrun our transportation and marketing facilities."

Mr. Rogers took a more hopeful view of the future than the member for Red Deer and pointed out the relief that would be obtained by the early completion of other lines of transportation, including the Hudson Bay Railway. There can be no doubt, however, that immigration to the West will be affected by the adverse reports of existing conditions. The Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island should make the most of this opportunity.

The Minister of the Interior made a further reference to the Government's immigration policy as affecting New Brunswick, in reply to a question by Mr. Oliver, his predecessor, as to the way in which duplication of work by the Provinces would be avoided and the expense decreased by the system of co-operation proposed.

"We can employ the same offices," replied Mr. Rogers, "and we can have a uniform arrangement in regard to our literature, and in many other ways we can work to advantage by co-operating. I know that all the Provinces have spoken to seem to agree with the idea

"and see an advantage in it. I certainly do so far as the literature and the using of the same offices are concerned. Take an agent going from Ontario or the West and generally speaking he knows very little about the conditions in the Maritime Provinces. Our own friends from Westmorland (Mr. Emmerson) told us the other day that our present representative in London did not appear to know that there was such a place as New Brunswick, and we want to avoid any suspicion of that kind of thing. We want representatives there that will know the special conditions prevailing in each Province of Canada and be able to meet intending immigrants who would be suitable for these particular Provinces. For instance, the class of immigrants wanted in New Brunswick would be good market gardeners and the like, and in my opinion we can get immigrants from Belgium who would be suitable for that Province. Probably, I might say the same thing in regard to Nova Scotia. In that way it would be an advantage to co-operate and it would save the duplicating of offices and literature."

The Government's policy of co-operation with the Provinces in matters of immigration was such a new departure as to be quite beyond the ken of members of the Laurier Administration. It was evident Mr. Oliver and Mr. Lemieux could not grasp the idea of equal justice for all the Provinces. The following extract from Hansard towards the close of the debate is worth quoting:

Mr. Oliver—I would ask the Minister if the arrangement he has sketched is equally open to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, which are not represented in the Government, as to the Province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Rogers—The same conditions will obtain in all the Provinces.

Mr. Lemieux—I would like to clearly understand the new policy of the Minister as regards this co-operative work between the Provinces and the Dominion. If I understand rightly the officers thus working together will be paid the one by the Province and the other by the Dominion.

Mr. Rogers—Yes. Mr. Lemieux—And then the Department of the Interior will see to the literature to be issued to the public. Will the literature tend to move immigration towards the West especially?

Mr. Rogers—No, the idea is to have special literature for each Province prepared by the representatives there. Mr. Lemieux—The Dominion Government will do just as much to help immigration towards the several Provinces as towards the public lands of the West.

Mr. Rogers—Just the same.

This policy of equal rights is in striking contrast to the old method of directing immigration almost exclusively to "the public lands of the West." With both Governments working in harmony together New Brunswick may look forward with confidence to a large and steadily increasing number of desirable settlers. That's what the Province wants.

THE NEW CITY CHARTER.

The Times seems to regard the desire of the Globe and The Standard for fuller information regarding the changes proposed by the new city charter as having something sinister behind it. The Times may bury its suspicions so far as The Standard is concerned. The citizens of St. John, by a large majority, decided that a change in the form of civic government was desirable. Very little information was given at the time as to the exact nature of the proposed reforms, and what has been furnished since is of the same general character. It is highly important that the people should have the fullest information as to the exact changes in the charter to be placed before the Legislature for enactment, and there is no reason whatever for withholding such information. The majority of the people of St. John desire that the provisions of the new charter will be of such a character as to secure better government than the city has heretofore had. This, those who profess to be acquainted with the provisions of the bill say, will be provided for. In such a case the Charter Committee should take the people into their confidence and show them the means adopted to bring about this improvement in government. There is no doubt that an act containing provision of the nature suggested above will be heartily endorsed by the whole people irrespective of how they voted last year. Everyone acquainted with the conditions which prevailed around City Hall for years is aware that there is still room for improvement. Practical reforms that will secure for the city better value for the money expended in civic works than heretofore is the principal provision in this city and if the new act contains provisions to bring about this change it cannot fail of indorsement by all classes who contribute to the city treasury. There has been a feeling in St. John for a long time that a system could be devised by which the public services of the city could be greatly improved without any increase in taxation. It was the prevalence of this idea that carried the commission scheme at the polls. This being the case it is not surprising that all who interest themselves in civic politics should be anxious to know the provisions of the new charter which means so much to the future of the city.

The Times fails to recognize the difference in the position occupied by Mr. Hazen and Dr. Pugsley in connection with the Courtenay Bay improvements. Dr. Pugsley dangled the scheme of improvements before the eyes of the people in two successive general election campaigns. In 1908 he told the people that the improvements would be ready when the Grand Trunk Pacific's first train reached St. John, but did nothing whatever to give effect to his pledge for three years. In 1911, after three years of a do nothing policy, he produced a much more elaborate plan of improvement, called for tenders, which were opened six weeks before the election, and retired from office without accepting the lowest tender, because of "the magnitude of the work." Mr. Hazen representing New Brunswick in the Borden Cabinet, took up the proposition where Dr. Pugsley had left it and with the assent of his colleagues in the Government, has put it into practical effect. Dr. Pugsley was either unwilling or unable to accept the responsibility of carrying out the plan which the Times says he originated, leaving this all important part of the matter to someone else. That someone else proved to be Mr. Hazen who, without delay, has succeeded in doing what Mr. Pugsley failed to do. This being the case, why should not the credit for carrying out so important a work be given to Mr. Hazen? Certainly he deserves the praise of the citizens to a far greater extent than Dr. Pugsley, whose anxiety for the Courtenay Bay improvements was only in evidence when he was running an election.

Current Comment

(Mail and Empire.)
It is a striking fact that it is by two Roman Catholic judges, Mr. Justice Kennedy of Ireland, and Mr. Justice Charbonneau of Quebec, that the power of the Vatican to interfere with marriages in the British Empire has been most emphatically denied.

(Montreal Herald.)
Collecting some fraction or multiple of a million in from three to six days is getting to be one of Montreal's favorite sports. The Hebrews are at it now, and it must be said they have chosen a splendid stimulus for their enterprise. Fighting the white plague is a work worthy of the most practical among imaginative peoples.

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