

**The Herald**

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**The Legislative Session.**

The first session of the thirty-eight General Assembly of this Province was opened with the usual ceremonies on Wednesday afternoon last. At 2.30 the members elect were sworn in by Mr. Justice Hazard. At 2.45 Mr. John S. Martin, member for the Belfast district, on motion of Premier Mathieson, seconded by Hon. Mr. Arsenault, was chosen Speaker of the Legislature. Hon. Mr. Martin was escorted to the chair by the Premier and Mr. Arsenault. In a brief speech he expressed his thanks for the honor conferred upon him and bespoke the co-operation of all the members in preserving order and decorum in conducting the sessional business.

A few minutes after 3 o'clock his Honour Lieutenant Governor McDonald was ushered into the Legislative Chamber, by the military escort. After conferring with Mr. Speaker in office and granting all the privileges claimed at the inauguration of a new speaker, his Honour took his place in the Speaker's chair and read the following

**SPEECH.**

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:—

It affords me much pleasure to welcome you to the performance of your legislative duties at this the first session of the Thirty-eighth General Assembly of this Province and the first meeting since my appointment as Lieutenant Governor.

The war in which our Empire is engaged has extended over a greatly widened area, with varying fortune upon the land, but on the seas the fleets of the Empire have maintained supreme control. The unity of action between the British Empire and her allies has been maintained with unswerving good faith and mutual confidence.

The Overseas Dominions of the Empire have co-operated with the Motherland in a spirit of loyalty and devotion unequalled in the world's history and the prompt response of the Canadian people to the call to arms and the heroism displayed by our soldiers on the field of battle shed a lasting glory on our country.

Not only within our borders, but from all parts of the Empire and from foreign lands, the sons of this Island have rallied to the standard of freedom. Our people have also responded generously to every appeal made on behalf of the Patriotic Funds and I am confident that loyally and with zeal they will so continue to the end.

I commend for your most careful attention the consideration of suitable provisions for soldiers returning from the war and the steps which should be taken to meet the special responsibilities and opportunities now existing and that may arise by reason of the war.

In educational matters, the year's record is one of steady progress. There is an increase of the enrolment and daily attendance of pupils in the schools and the amounts voted by the districts for school purposes have been largely increased.

The absence of military duty of the Chief Superintendent, three Inspectors and fifty teachers is creating a situation of difficulty for the ensuing year. But the Spirit of sacrifice inspired by their action should prove a great stimulus to those remaining in the profession to keep the service unimpeded.

During the past year Agriculture has made substantial progress. Heavy rains did considerable injury in the western part of the Province, but on the whole a fair average crop was secured. The increased price of live stock products is having a beneficial influence on farm practice.

I am pleased to note the rapid progress made during the past year in farmers' co-operative movements and the success attending the co-ordinating of agricultural work with our educational system. This, with the improved transportation facilities now nearing completion, will I am convinced, open a new era of prosperity in this Province.

You will be asked during the present session to pass legislation giving effect to the preparation now being made for drainage of farm lands.

The fisheries around our coast have produced abundantly at prices somewhat below the standard of late years. You will also be asked to consider means of securing the further development of this great industry.

Since the last meeting of the Legislature the Right Honourable Sir Charles Tupper, the survivor of the Fathers of Confederation, has passed away. He lived to see his clear vision of Canada's unity and development realized. He was a master builder, a great statesman and his monument is United Canada.

The Public Accounts for the past year will be laid before you and the estimates of the income and expenditure for the current year will be submitted.

I now invoke upon your labours the blessing of Divine Providence in the confident assurance that the result of your deliberations will greatly benefit our people.

After the opening ceremonies his Honour withdrew and Premier Mathieson introduced the usual proforma bill. Mr. Speaker read the speech just delivered by his Honour, and then followed the usual routine, as to the address in reply to the speech, the appointment of committees, the appointment of sessional officials etc.

On the nomination of sessional officials, Mr. Bell, Leader of the Opposition, asked more than once, if those nominated for messengers etc., were returned soldiers. Premier Mathieson replied that all returned soldiers available for these positions had been employed.

On the motion to adopt the report of the select committee to nominate the sessional select and standing committees, Mr. Bell, Leader of the Opposition, took exception to the manner of selecting the different committees. He said that although he had been named a member of the select committee, he was not asked as to what members of the Opposition he might wish to have on any of the committees. The personnel of the committees had been entirely arranged, he said, by the Government without regard to the wishes of the Opposition. Mr. Bell closed his speech by moving an amendment to the motion, to the effect that the composition of the Public Accounts committee be changed as set forth in his amendment.

Premier Mathieson, in reply to Mr. Bell, pointed out that the usual procedure had been followed in making up the committees. All committees are committees of the House and it is the privilege of the House to say who shall be on any committee. If Mr. Bell was not pleased with the manner in which the nominating committee acted, he should have brought in a minority report. When the report of the committee on public accounts comes before the House, it would be the privilege of the Leader of the Opposition to take exception thereto if he is not satisfied.

Mr. George E. Hughes supported the views advanced by Mr. Bell. He went on to discuss the importance of the committee on public accounts.

Hon. Mr. Arsenault said it was certainly the intention of the Government to give every opportunity for investigation. He pointed out that when Mr. Hughes was a member of the late Liberal Government, the Conservative opposition of that day asked for a

representation of three members on the Public Accounts committee but Mr. Hughes was the man who opposed this request most strenuously. He expressed the opinion that probably Mr. Saunders, as a man and a lawyer before the courts was just as good a man as Mr. Bell for committee work, perhaps a little better.

After a little more discussion by the Premier and others, the Premier pointed out that the amendment presented by Mr. Bell was out of order. If the Leader of Opposition, said the Premier, would bring in a minority report he would then be in order. Mr. Bell reiterated his contention, but he said he would bring in a minority report if that would be more pleasing to the Leader of the Government.

After some time occupied in preparation, Mr. Bell presented his amendment in the form of a minority report. Mr. Speaker put the motion on Mr. Bell's amendment which was lost on a strict party vote 16 to 13. This first division, in a full House, showed the exact strength of the parties.

Premier Mathieson now announced the present personnel of the Government, following reorganization after the general election. The House then adjourned.

The House met on Thursday forenoon, a few minutes after 10 o'clock. After the usual routine, Mr. Paton moved the address in reply to the Speech of his Honour the Lieut. Governor at the opening of the session. He began to speak at 10.30. He passed briefly in review the operations of the present Government in the different public departments re-organizing to the advantages of our Province, and was quite optimistic regarding the future. He expressed the opinion that our fresh fish industry was capable of very great development. Referring to the war he said that over \$329,000 had been contributed by our people towards the various patriotic funds. This was indeed a goodly sum; but our greatest contribution we have made of our young men, who have joined the colors to fight for the preservation of the Empire and the perpetuation of our liberties. He pointed out that of the Islands sons who had gone forth one hundred and twenty-one had fallen from the ranks in killed, wounded and missing.

The motion was seconded by Mr. R. J. McLellan in a fine address. He, too, passed in review the different matters outlined in the speech of his Honour, the Lieut. Governor. He graphically described the different phases of the war, pointing out the noble part taken in the struggle by Canada and especially our own Province. Education, Agriculture, and other Government departments received due and lucid attention. He emphasized the importance of the drainage, and paid a noble tribute to the memory of the late Sir Charles Tupper. He closed his excellent speech with these words: These old walls remind us of the early struggles of our patriotic legislators of a past generation, for the loosening of bonds in order to secure for themselves and those who would come after them, untrammelled, all the rights and privileges, which the Constitution accords. And they in turn had worthy and patriotic successors. I am safe, therefore, in saying, that we have received from those builders at the fortunes of our Island Province, a noble, precious, yes, a magnificent heritage, and it is ours now to do our share in still furthering to the utmost the material interests of the "Garden of the Gulf"—this "Fair Island of the Sea."

"Our home the spot of earth supremely blest, A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest."

Mr. Bell, Leader of the Opposition, began speaking at 10.50. He opened by congratulating Mr. Speaker on the high and honorable position which he holds and he likewise complimented the mover and seconder of the address. He animadverted upon the fact of their reading their speeches. Premier Mathieson considered Mr. Bell was out of order in his remarks on this point. Mr. Bell then proceeded to criticize in a general way the speech and the operations of the Government generally. He had not concluded his remarks when recess was taken at 1 o'clock.

When the sitting resumed at 3.10 in the afternoon, Mr. Bell resumed his speech, and continued till 3.50.

Hon. Premier Mathieson followed. He first congratulated Mr. Speaker on his unanimous selection for the high and honorable position of presiding officer of the Legislature. He also extended more than ordinary congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address. He then started in to riddle the long winded harangue of the Leader of the Opposition. He severely animadverted upon the conduct of Mr. Bell in reiterating in the Legislature, after several years, matters relative to Prohibition that had been investigated and decided by the late Judge McLeod of Summerside. He characterized Mr. Bell's course, in this matter, as bold and reckless. The Premier showed quite plainly that Mr. Bell's charges against this matter, were altogether without foundation. He showed up the utter hollowness of Mr. Bell's tactics and speeches as exemplified by the emphatic repudiation of them by the electors of the first district of King's County, where Mr. Bell first aired his frothy declaration, after being chosen Leader of the Opposition. Taking up the question of education, he showed how false and empty were Mr. Bell's references thereto. He pointed out how the Government during four years, had succeeded in overcoming the wretched deterioration to which the late Liberal Government had reduced it. Referring to the special agricultural grant from Ottawa, he showed the falseness of the assertion of Mr. Bell that this grant went into the general fund of the Provincial Treasury. He pointed out that not one dollar of this grant goes into the Provincial funds. Every dollar of this money has to be expended in accordance with plans approved by the Federal authorities. The Premier said he had no doubt false statements about the Federal grant and other matters of a kindred nature had much to do with securing the election of several members of the Opposition. These unfounded misrepresentations had a most unfortunate effect among the electorate. Taking up the oyster fisheries, he pointed out the falseness of Mr. Bell's assertions on this subject. He showed that before the present Government had taken up this question, the output of oysters in this Province had declined from 40,000 to 8,000 barrels a year. The present Government grappled with the problem and adopted what they considered the most approved and successful system of which they could avail themselves. Some mistakes had been made; but it would be unreasonable to expect anything else. The course followed by the present Government was in direct contrast to that pursued by our Liberal friends. He accused the Opposition of inflicting very great injury on this industry by partizan attitude assumed by Mr. Bell and his associates on that side. Turning to Mr. Bell's reference to the Public Accounts, he showed how false they were. He showed how defective and misleading had been the system employed by the Liberals regarding the finances of the Province. The Premier,

taking up the matter of taxation, showed beyond question that Mr. Bell's treatment of the subject had been outrageously incorrect and intended to deceive the people. By issuing the annual report of the external auditor the present Government are furnishing information which the late Liberal Government had constantly refused to give to the public. In the same manner the Premier refuted Mr. Bell's assertions regarding teacher's salaries and other public questions. Teachers salaries are now paid monthly, and consequently the amount that may be carried over from one year to another was quite small. All the other misrepresentations of Mr. Bell were trenchantly and emphatically shown up and refuted. Taking up the charges of Mr. Bell relative to the Public Works department in connection with the affair at Summerside, Premier Mathieson showed how Mr. Bell and his partner had worked up this would be scandal to injure the Commissioner of Public Works and the Government in connection with the bye-election in the first district of King's County. Mr. Mathieson plainly told Mr. Bell, and his friends that the proper manner of investigating charges against the Government or any member of it is for a member to rise in his place in the Legislature and assume responsibility for his charges. Whenever Mr. Bell and his associates were ready for this, the Government would immediately grant a commission to investigate such charges. The Premier animadverted upon Mr. Bell's reference to the increase of the Premier's salary and showed that the office engrosses all the time of the incumbent. It is a most onerous and exacting office and any one fit for the position is entitled to a salary sufficient to live decently. Every member of the Legislature agreed to the increase in the Premier's salary. Reference to the Leader of the Opposition, to the automobile and the slanderous charges that had been circulated about the Government was vigorously refuted by the Leader of the Government. Taking up the question of the recent conference, the Premier discussed the importance of the questions therein discussed. He dwelt the importance of the drainage, with which it was the intention of the Government to deal with during the present session. Referring to the clause of the speech which spoke of Sir Charles Tupper, the Premier dwelt upon the fact that this great Canadian statesman had been here in our very Legislative building when the question of Confederation was initiated. The present war he considered would be the greatest benefit to the Empire, by welding together more solidly than anything else, all classes and conditions of men. The price we were called upon to pay was great but the greatness of the result would, more than compensate us for any sacrifice we might make.

Hon. George E. Hughes followed the Premier and spoke till six o'clock, when the House adjourned.

House met on Friday forenoon at 10.15. After usual routine, Mr. George E. Hughes concluded his speech.

Hon. H. D. McEwen, from the Government side, continued the debate. At the start he congratulated Mr. Speaker on his unanimous selection by the Legislature for the high and honorable position he occupies. He considered that members of the Legislature should not waste their time talking about things that are not at all pertinent; in brickbats concerning past issues. There are too many matters of the greatest possible importance that should engage our serious consideration, rather than that we should waste the time in useless discussions. Referring to

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(Continued from page two)

Mr. Bell, he said that a gentleman was not in the habit of giving services for nothing. He said he understood Mr. Bell had been in a bill to the Government through the Temperance Alliance for \$148.38. He said he understood this bill was for a seven-hour speech in connection with the prohibition proceedings. Summerside. Mr. Bell denied that he had presented any such bill. Mr. McEwen then presented the bill and proved his contention. Mr. McEwen went on to show that this much money for seven hours speaking would amount to \$27,250 in a year. He considered that was a pretty steep charge. He then reviewed the different paragraphs in the speech.

Mr. Benjamin Gallant continued, on the Opposition side. He continued speaking in criticism of the Government until 12.45. Hon. Mr. Dalton continued the debate on behalf of the Government. After congratulating Mr. Speaker on the honors conferred on him, he referred to the war, and said that all things considered, no part of the overseas Dominions had done better for the war than the Province of Prince Edward Island. He moved the adjournment of the debate and then the House at 1 o'clock took recess.

The House resumed at 3.30 and Hon. Mr. Dalton continued his speech. He took Mr. Gallant and other members of the opposition severely to task for the reckless and misleading statements they had made regarding the public affairs of the Province.

The debate, on the opposition side was continued by Mr. James D. McInnis. He made a brief criticism of the operations of the Government.

Mr. Johnston was the next speaker on the side of the opposition. He extended his congratulations to Mr. Speaker on his elevation to the chair, and then started in to criticize moderately the operations of the Government. On the question of the war he warmly commended all that the Government had done and were doing in this connection.

Hon. Mr. Arsenault followed on the Government side. He extended his congratulations to Mr. Speaker and to the mover and seconder of the address. He expressed his regret that the spirit of partisanship had so strongly manifested itself by the Opposition so early in the session. He said that the Government were prepared to deal with some of the methods of the opposition during the election campaign, since they had thrown down the gauntlet, so early in the session. Dealing with the question of drainage he showed it had been taken up last session and was not now referred to in consequence of the proceedings at the recent conference, as some members of the opposition had said. He struck the opposition hard in connection with their vicious and slanderous campaign conducted against the Government. He had not concluded his speech when the House adjourned at 6 o'clock.

The House met at 10.40 Saturday forenoon. After routine Mr. George E. Hughes asked a question of which he had given notice on the order paper. The Premier said it had been the practice of the House from time immemorial not to answer any question until after the Governor's speech had been answered. He was quite prepared to answer the questions, but he thought it perhaps best to follow the usual procedure. Mr. Hughes agreed to this.

A few minutes after 11 o'clock Hon. Mr. Arsenault resumed the debate on the address. Referring to the reasons advanced by the opposition for the reduction of the Government's majority at the last election, he went on to point out it was only a matter of his party repeating itself. The same thing happened to the Sullivan Government, as well as to the Government of Mr. Frederic Peters. The pendulum swung far against the Liberals in the elections 1912. These and other reasons were advanced for the reduction of the Government's majority.