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THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

What Our Legislature Is Doing To Develop The Country

When the electorate of Alberta in 1905 sent the Rutherford Government into power with the overwhelming majority of 24 to one they placed in the hands of these men and particularly in the four members of the Executive practically unlimited powers.

Under all the old canons of party government and "strong opposition" theories this would constitute a dangerous experiment. But it has proved in the actual current of events the wisest possible action, for without exception Alberta has been in the past three years the most strikingly well-governed and prosperous province in the Dominion. Not only have the financial affairs of the province been well administered, and law and order been enforced in a manner that has won commendation within and without the provincial limits, and education and agriculture and public works been generously aided and built up, but the legislation of the province has been so advanced and full of foresight that the other provinces of Canada have been in many instances glad to follow the example of their youngest sister.

This would not have been possible if the men elected had not been men of high character and ability. But the provincial western shrewdness had made sure of that in the selection and election of men. All through their administration they have shown themselves conscientiously aware of the responsibilities placed on them. E. W. Thompson, a well-

known writer who made a tour of the West last summer, studying the country from every point wrote in the Boston Transcript his impressions of the Rutherford cabinet, as he had seen them personally and as the men of Alberta reported them to him.

"The ministers were but four," he writes—"all conspicuously well known for straight private and business lives", all fairly wealthy, and all of that fraternal disposition which is so curiously notable all over "The province of the glad hand." They were not one bit demagogic, and yet they were comradeship with all decent folk Church-going men, teetotalers; and what is remarkable, and may be instructive, not one eloquent man in the lot. Quiet men. The blather-skite is one of the curses of politics everywhere. His performances cause multitudes of people to mistake gab for reasoning, and the gift of it for fitness to do public business. The Alberta ministers were all very capable of explaining slowly what they thought the right thing to do and they were duly convincing and persuasive. Hearing them in 1905, and their principal opponent, a man of platform fire works, I concluded that he was beaten every time, just because the audi had discounted his rhodomontades and believed every word the slow conscientious talking fellows uttered. These proved to be as quick in action as they were steady, if rather awkward on the stump.

John W. Woolf, M.P.P.

The best test of a man's worth is in what he has done for his people; what he has been able to accomplish for them; how well and faithfully he has represented their best interests. Under this view no man is more entitled to the esteem and regard of his fellows than John W. Woolf,—the Pioneer member of the Cardston Electoral District—the first and the last and the next to be. It is not to be the object of the writer at this time to deal very much with what Mr. Woolf has been able to accomplish for the Cardston Electoral District, that would occupy more space than is reserved for this sketch—which is

civilization and reformation across the waters. It may not be amiss to state right here that at the present time the Woolfs, (sometimes spelled with a final "c" or one "o" or two "fs") are contesting in the Courts of the United States for their inheritance which lays claim to a large portion of the present city of New York.

The early life of John W. was spent at Hyde Park where he attended the Public School and assisted in the work on the farm which he did with marked success. He was then in his early teens. At the age of 17, just one year prior to coming to Canada,

young province where money is everywhere needed to be expended; consequently the surplus of \$283,373 of 1906 was brought down in 1907 to \$69,650, and for next year a surplus of \$21,328 is estimated. The policy is to have all available money employed in the people's interest in public works, education, agriculture, etc.

2. There is no debt upon this province, the supplementary vote of \$1,200,000 passed at the last Assembly for the purchase of the provincial telephone system. This system, upon which \$241,244 had been previously expended out of the general revenue of the province, constitutes a provincial asset of growing value.

3. There is no direct taxation in Alberta, the only tax on land being that upon land in unorganized school districts, which is especially directed against those speculators who hold land unoccupied retarding settlement. This tax is applied to education purposes only.

4. Corporations and railroads are taxed, the latter tax already yielding \$60,000 annually to the revenue. Railroads are not taxed during the first seven years of their existence, nor are loan corporations taxed on business done with public bodies in the province.

5. Favorable terms have been secured for the province in regard to the financial provisions made by the Dominion government in a handsome subsidy in lieu of the public domain, grants for government, population, etc. With the existing basis of population the annual subsidy is \$1,254,125, increasing with a quinquennial revision of the census so long as the population increases. When the population has reached 2,500,000 the subsidy will be \$3,770,375. There is no maximum grant, as the subsidy increases

with the population. These terms secured by the Premier and Attorney-General at the Premier's conference of 1905, are the most favorable enjoyed by any western province.

THE PICK OF THE BASKET
A writer in the National Review recently, comparing the province of Canada, referred to Alberta as being "the pick of the basket." In provincial legislation and its enforcement and in provincial finances, as well as natural resources, the term is well merited.

In the Budget Speech at the session of 1908 Premier Rutherford stated in a resume of conditions in 1907:

"So far, however, as the Government of the Province of Alberta is concerned there has been no financial stringency. At no time during the past year has our account in the bank been overdrawn. We met our liabilities, and have a surplus at the end of the year 1907, amounting to \$69,650.05.

"Honourable members will recollect that last year I predicted a surplus of \$56,276.40. That prediction has been more than fulfilled. In calculating this surplus I would draw the attention of honorable members of the House to the fact that we have made no charge under the head of capital expenditure. Some other governments in order to make a surplus, or to swell their surplus, have a capital account and charge certain expenditures against it. We have charged all our expenditure to the ordinary consolidated revenue of the province."

For 1908, when the detailed figures will be made public at this session of the Legislature, the conditions of administration will be found to be equally admirable.

Proud of Administration

It has been the boast of this province since it received political autonomy that its administration has not only given lessons to every sister province in Confederation in its original and progressive legislation, but the members of the executive have conducted the financial affairs of the province with the same thrift and prudence that is expected in the successful modern "business" man.

The Alberta government has led the way among Canadian provinces in the government ownership of telephone; in the adoption two years ago of the Torrens system of land registration, just recently adopted by New York State; in the taxation of railways that have been in operation seven years; in the taxation of corporations; in the abolition of the old and loose system of sheriff's fees and in the inception of ten o'clock closing for bars. Its Compensation act, while similar to that existing in one other province, was a most advanced piece of legislation. This in itself makes a notable record for the young province whose executive can and do think independently, and plan for the progress of the province without mortgaging its future by a slavish following of precedents set by older governments ruling under other conditions.

But there is still another striking instance of fearless and capable administration in the Attorney-General's uncompromis-

ing attitude toward combined action against combines by burying the evidence for two or three years in the offices of some "high legal authority." Alberta, on the other hand brings the matter to a speedy decision within five months after the collection of the first evidence. This was the actual case last year in the lumber combine in which conviction was obtained in November.

There was no noisy bluster or threatenings of the "big stick" as with President Roosevelt in his campaign on trusts. There was, instead, quiet, decisive action whose very lack of display made doubting Thomases prophesy that the action would not be carried through. It was, however, and at a rate of speed that is almost unique, even as the introduction and passage of a bill for the relief of the town Frank occupied less than half an hour at the last session. An administration run on business principles is this first government of Alberta.

FINANCES ON BUSINESS BASIS.
With regard to the financial affairs of the province there are some outstanding features of general interest that may briefly be summarized.

1. The government, while carefully avoiding to go in debt, does not favor large surpluses in a



JOHN W. WOOLF

merely intended to be a brief biographical one. However, in passing we may say Mr. Woolf, "Johnny," as he is proverbially called by his colleagues and friends, is a peer among his fellows in the Legislative Assembly, an influence with the Government and it may be added without fear of controversy, the most popular young man in Southern Alberta.

It was at Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, U. S. A. on the 27th day of November 1869 that he first saw the light of day. He is the eldest son of John Anthony and Mary Hyde Woolf—his forbears on both sides springing from the best stock of the American Continent—Pioneers, Colonizers, Nation Builders. On his father's side he has a claim upon that Germanic stock which set the pace and blazed the way for

a number of his associates joined him in engaging a private teacher for studies in higher education than that which was provided in the Public School, and it is not at all unlikely that one of the causes was that which we frequently meet with today where young men feel out of place in the school and sometimes in the very class-room with mere boys and girls.

In June 1887 he accompanied his parents, overland, from Cache County to Alberta. They crossed the St. Mary's river where the old Detachment used to stand, where the Pilling House now stands. Sergeant Cotter, whose name and memory will ever be dear to the hearts and feelings of the pioneers of the Cardston District, met

Activity In Public Works

The proportion of the expenditure devoted to public works as indicated in the statistics reproduced here is eloquent of road-making bridge-building and the erection of public buildings needed here and there. In the first year of authority by this government work on a Normal school building to cost \$150,000 was begun in Calgary, and the first outlay was made upon the construction and operation of a telephone line. Upon this in all, during 1906 and 1907 the sum of \$262,262 was expended in constructing and operating 544 miles of a telephone system and acquiring 53 miles of other lines.

While in 1908 the Legislature approved a vote for the purchase by the government of the Bell Company's monopoly.

During 1906, 1907 and 1908 every effort was strained by the government through its department of public works to meet the continually multiplying demands for roads, bridges and ferries. Hundreds of miles of new roads

were cut out and graded, and many hundred other miles improved. Over 700 new standard bridges were built and many others repaired and improved, while over 70 steel bridges are already completed or under construction. In addition to this twenty ferries have been installed.

The most marvellous point in connection with the necessarily large expenditures of the government is that all were provided for out of the thrifty administered revenues. The actual expenditures can best be shown by statistics.

OUTLAY EACH YEAR—1906.
In 1905 (four months) after the inauguration the outlay amounted to only \$162,521.93, of which \$98,562.18 was expended on public works, and out of the item of \$18,501 for the administration of justice, \$11,339 had to be paid to Brandon and Selkirk Asylums for the maintenance of insane.

OUTLAY 1906.
Receipts \$2,251,455
Expenditure 1,968,081

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