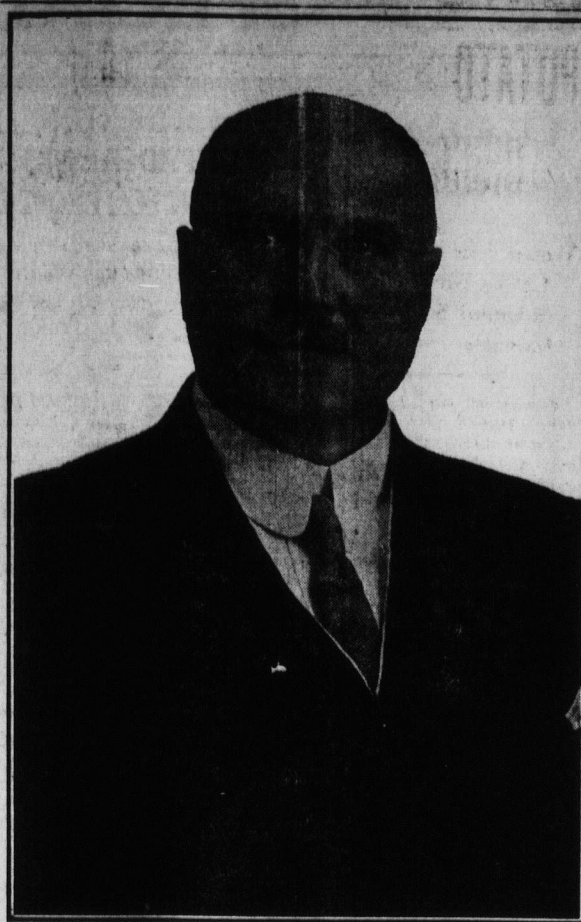


# HON. MR. MURRAY ABLY HANDLES THE SITUATION

## THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION MAKES FORCEFUL CRITICISM OF NEW BRUNSWICK AFFAIRS



HON. J. A. MURRAY

**What the Province Might Have Saved if Foster Government Had Handled Recent Bond Issue in Proper Manner—Central Railway Steel Should Be Investigated Along with Other Railway Affairs—How Crown Land Department Makes Political Football of Game Law Enforcement and Permits Shameful Slaughter of Game—Carleton Co. Deprived of One Representative by Fosterites.**

Fredericton, March 9.—The Legislature met at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon and the debate on the address was resumed by Hon. J. A. Murray, leader of the opposition. Mr. Murray dealt in a comprehensive way with the subjects mentioned in the speech from the throne and showed a grasp of affairs and a broad spirit in discussion. Dealing with the bond issue lately authorized by an order-in-council of the government, Hon. Mr. Murray said that the unbusinesslike way in which it was handled resulted in the province losing between \$15,000 and \$20,000. He claimed that the government had been very lax in their efforts to provide for the returned soldiers, and by their actions in this regard, had been rather seeking to create the impression that New Brunswick was not particularly adapted to provide adequately for them. He referred to the portfolio of public health to the government, which he declared was already too heavy.

### The Central Steel.

Speaking of the proposed action of the government in regard to the report of the commission on the Valley Railway matters, Hon. Mr. Murray thought that if the government were going to clean house they should go all the way through and investigate all the railways, mentioning in this connection the Central Railway, through which thousands of dollars had been misappropriated, as shown by the report of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the affairs of that road. He dealt in a general way with the address, but in such a manner as to show that he had given the public affairs of the province very serious consideration. The speech of Mr. Murray was admirably delivered, and moderate in tone, and gave promise that the various matters of legislation as they presented themselves would be taken up on their merits.

### Text of Address.

Hon. Mr. Murray, in rising to resume the debate on the address, said he was pleased to congratulate the mover and seconder on the very able manner in which they had acquitted themselves. He knew from personal experience that it was not an easy task, and it was pleasing to him to see them perform it so well. He heartily agreed with the sentiments expressed in the speech in reference to the lamented death of the late Governor Gannoe, who had passed away during the recent session. The late Governor was a man of broad, comprehensive views, who had achieved success not only in commercial life, but in the political world as well. He was a man of fine feelings and his death was keenly felt by personal friends in all parts of the province who had enjoyed his acquaintance for years. The hon. member from Madawaska, who seconded the address, had paid a

graceful tribute to two gentlemen occupying high positions in this province, in which he (Murray) heartily concurred. The Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice of the Province were men who had been actively engaged in the public life of the country, and each brought to his position a wide experience which would no doubt enable him to fill the position with credit to himself and to the advantage of the province.

### Food Production.

Reference had been made in the speech from the throne to the matter of increased food production. All hon. members approved of increased production, but there was difference of opinion as to whether or not the methods employed by the government had brought about the desired result. Although the Department of Agriculture no doubt did its best, the fact remains that the crop of 1917 was the smallest in many years. He was glad to know that the department was to receive assistance from Ottawa to the extent of \$25,000 to enable it to carry on the work during the coming year. He trusted that with this assistance the result of the campaign would be more apparent than was the case last year.

He was very glad that the government proposed to take up a Land Settlement Scheme for Returned Soldiers. The late government had formulated a policy of this kind, and the present government did not approve of it in its entirety, they should have either adopted a new policy long before this or amend it in such a manner as to make it unnecessary, as late as November last, for the Department of Agriculture to write to overseas soldiers stating there was nothing in this province for returned soldiers, notwithstanding that the department had received applications continually from returned soldiers desirous of going upon the land. It was the duty of the government to acquaint these men with the fact that the province did have something to offer them. Already he was informed there were some 1,400 returned soldiers in New Brunswick, and the tide of immigration to this country would set in strongly when the war was over. The government of New Brunswick should be prepared to take advantage of the tide of immigration which would follow to the conclusion of the war, as other provinces had done.

### Settlement Schemes.

He was very much pleased that the work of fighting the great White Plague, begun when he was premier, a member of the government, was still being vigorously carried on. It was a grand thing to have the Federal Government working hand-in-hand with the provincial government in carrying out plans for the caring of returned soldiers suffering from tuberculosis. Referring to the Prohibition Act, the speaker said he was pleased to hear it referred to in such glowing terms. He was proud of the fact that he was a member of the government which placed it on the Statute Book, and he believed that the people were only beginning to see the benefits that would result from that measure.

### Investigate All the Railways.

Reference had been made in His Honor's speech to the progress of the work of the St. John and Quebec Railway. He (Murray) recognized the difficulties being experienced in carrying on construction work at such a time as this, and could say that the late government had also had its trials and tribulations. However, he was glad to know that there was a good prospect of having the road completed and in operation by the beginning of next winter. He noted that the report of the Royal Commission on the Valley Railway inquiry was to be placed before the House and that certain legislation which would follow to the matter. He wished to point out that there had been other railways constructed

### Public Health.

With reference to the proposed legislation in regard to the public health he (Murray) while not a medical man, had grave doubts as to the wisdom of enlarging the government by another portfolio. It was questionable to his mind as to whether or not this was the time to add to a government already conceded to be too heavy. New Brunswick was a small province, sparsely populated, and he hoped it would be possible to work out the plan without increasing the expense. With reference to steel shipbuilding he could assure the honorable premier that if the legislation he proposed was safe and sane it would have the hearty support of the opposition. He noticed by the report of the Nova Scotia Commission that a steel ship building plant is likely to be installed in Halifax. He trusted that the government would be able to induce the federal authorities to establish plants in New Brunswick, and give this province a share of some of the vast contracts to be let. He was pleased to note that the report of the commission of the Workmen's Compensation Act would be placed before the House during the session, and that there would be legislation based upon the same. He trusted that this legislation would do full justice to the working men. This was a matter which should be dealt with by honorable members altogether apart from politics.

### The Highway Act.

He noticed that the speech from the throne promised a new Highway Act. The present manner of administering the act indicates the need of a radical change in some direction. He could say that never before in the history of the province had there been so much connection with road work as was the case during last season. Competent officials had been dismissed for no cause to make way for partisans of the government, and money borrowed on capital account, had been expended on work not of a permanent nature and charged to capital. This was true of practically every county in the province.

### The Crown Lands.

He (Murray) noticed that a new Forest Act was promised by the speech, and the honorable mover of the address was hopeful that it would go away with the cutting of Christmas trees. While he (Murray) would be one of the last to deprive the children of Christmas trees, he trusted that the act would go further and strengthen the back bone of the hon. gentlemen in charge of the Crown Land Department. Last season, it will be remembered, the announcement was made with a great flourish, that the stumpage had been increased to \$4.00 per thousand. Protesters came to the government from certain quarters. Mr. Foster—You know from experience. Mr. Murray—We never raised the stumpage and then reduced it. Hon. Mr. Veniot—You passed an

allowed to continue, New Brunswick will no longer have the reputation it enjoyed in the past as a game preserve.

Referring to the proposed measures to provide additional revenue, the speaker said that he realized that something had to be done. The revenue of the province must be increased to enable needed public works to be carried on. Any safe and reasonable measure submitted by the government will have the support of the opposition.

The hon. seconder of the address had stated that the financial affairs of the province were in the hands of men capable of greater things. He (Murray) wished to say that there were people who might doubt the truth of that statement. The speech from the throne had not mentioned the recent bond issue of one million dollars, but references had been made to it elsewhere, and they were not of a very complimentary nature. This issue was made on the authority of an order-in-council. What people wanted to know was, why no public tenders were asked for the issue? The bonds had been turned over to a brokerage firm at 96 and had been re-sold to the public at 99.08. He claimed that by this transaction the province had suffered a loss of at least \$30,000. Other brokers had been prepared to pay 97 1/2 for the bonds, but were not given a chance to tender. Had they been permitted to do so, this would have effected a saving of \$15,000 to the province. The fact that they sold in three days at 99.08 is an indication that they could have been disposed of over the counter at par and thus saved the province at least \$30,000. The whole transaction had created suspicion and was unbecoming in the public mind. The government had been particularly fond of investigations, and it might be well for the premier to explain in the house

and to the country the details of this transaction.

Last session his hon. friend from Carleton had asked the government why the vacancy in the representation of that county had not been filled. The government's reply was that it would be wrong to bring on an election during the busy farming season. Months have since gone by and the vacancy remains unfilled. The very men who when the old government was in power shouted to high heaven of the injustice being done by keeping seats vacant are now doing the same things themselves.

The first year of the new government has come and gone, and it has been noted for its partisan zeal. The old government had been accused of pandering to its supporters, but he could say that partisanship never was so rampant in the province as it was today. He did not believe that the government possessed nearly that measure of public confidence as was the case when it came into office. The members of the government had not done things as bad as they expected, and had been unable to implicate any member of the former administration in wrongdoing. So far as he (Murray) was concerned, if it could be shown by investigation that he had taken public money wrongfully from the public treasury, he would retire from politics and go back to private life. Proof that the government had found things better than anticipated was shown by letters written to a brokerage house, which referred to the splendid financial condition of the province. The opposition did not wish to indulge in carping criticism, but they were prepared to criticize measures which they deemed not to be in the public interest. They will, however, exercise their right in moderation, and in the best interests of the province as a whole.

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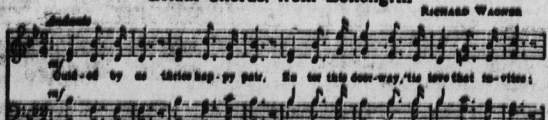
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