Legislation To Fund the Amounts Already Advancea To Meet Interest On Valley Railway Bonas Coming

Announced in Speech from Throne at Opening of Legislature Today---House Will Also Be Asked to Provide For Future---Slim Legislative Programme for the Session Outlined in The Governor's Speech.

The most important announcement contained in the Speech from the Throne, which Lieutenant Governor Pugsley delivered at the opening of the Legislature today, was that "a measure will be introduced to fund the amounts already advanced to meet the interest upon the bonds issued in connection with the construction" of the Valley Railway.

The announcement followed a statement of conditions as they exist in relation to the Valley Railway in which it was frankly stated that "the estimated receipts have fallen far short of the requirements to pay the interest" and that "the province has, as a result of this, been called upon to pay large sums in interest for which no provision has been made."

The Government, it was also said, would ask the Legislature to consider how best to make the necessary provision for meeting the interest charges from the Valley Railway in the future. Otherwise the programme which the Government offered to the Legislature through the Speech from the Throne was most limited and unpretentious and exclusive almost entirely of contentious matters.

The Speech was featured by a declaration of provincial rights, and advantage was naturally taken of the opportunity to refer to the commencement that has been made with the development of the water powers by the Hydro-Electric Commission and that the revenue produced from the Crown Timber Lands in the past year was the largest in history as a result of the increased stumpage rates.

About the only new legislation that is promised is an act to provide assistance for students attending the Provincial Normal School in order that the available supply of teachers may be maintained; an act for the suppression, investigation and prevention of fires, such as recently suggested by the fire underwriters; and amendments to and consolidations of various acts now on the Statute Books. In agriculture it is proposed to encourage the flax industry by supplying flax seed to those interested in its production and an appropriation will be asked for that purpose.

SPEECH FROM THRONE

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

It affords me much pleasure to welcome you for the discharge of your legislative duties to the First Term of the Eighth Legislative Assembly of this province and to join with you in an expression of thankfulness to Divine Providence for the blessing of peace and generally abundant harvest and for the absence of that unrest in commercial and social conditions which has prevailed in many parts of the world since the Great War.

This is the first session since the general election, and I extend a hearty greeting to all of you, both new and old members, and trust that the result of your deliberations at this time may be of great benefit to the province.

To Assist Flax Industry.

During the recess my Government has devoted itself to the encouragement of agriculture and substantial progress is noticeable throughout the province. The crops were fairly good and the prices satisfactory in the earlier part of the year. The supply of one important product, potatoes, was, however, so abundant in our usual markets as to reduce the price very materially. However, the reduction in very many cases of the price of other commodities will assist to balance the decreased prices of some farm products, all fluctuations being a part of the readjustment process which has created so much uncertainty during the last year.

The establishment of one of the most up-to-date plants for the crushing of lime rock and the distribution of one of our natural resources as an aid to fertilizing the soil has been energetically and successfully carried on. The large demand for this product fully justifies the expectations that such would meet with the approval of agriculturists generally.

In further assistance to agriculture, my Government proposes to encourage the flax industry and to supply flax seed to those interested in its production. You will be asked to make an appropriation for this purpose.

I am happy to state that during the year very satisfactory progress has been made toward developing the water power on the Musquash River, where upwards of 8,000 horsepower will, in the very near future, be available for industrial and domestic purposes. The New Brunswick Electric Power Commission has caused investigation of other water powers to be made, and plans to meet the wishes of the people for water power development in those sections where it is most needed are under consideration.

Highways Construction.

The improvement of the highways was continued last year. Taking advantage of the Federal Aid programme, contracts were awarded for reconstruction of the main trunk roads in various sections of the province. This work was up to the standard approved by the Council of the Federal Aid Board and was subject to inspection by engineers of that Board, who expressed themselves well satisfied with the work being carried on. A certain portion of the main trunk roads, subject to Federal Aid, was carried on under the organisation of the Department of Public Works, which received the commendation of the Federal engineers. Owing to the Federal grant for main trunk roads, the Minister of Public Works was enabled to inaugurate the policy referred to at the last session of the Legislature, having in view the expenditure of funded automobile fees on the principal roads leading to the markets for the disposal of agricultural products. Very marked improvements were carried out on roads of this class, thus allowing the full amount of ordinary grants for roads, as well as the road tax money collected, to be expended on the by-roads or less important market roads. It is hoped to be able to continue this class of work until the four years' programme is carried out. The ever increasing automobile traffic has put to a very severe test the maintenance of ordinary wooden bridges. So great has been the necessity for replacement of bridges of this class that it has been found necessary, wherever possible to do so, to replace wooden bridges by structures of a permanent character. Many structures of this class were erected during the past season and the Government is hopeful of being able to carry on this programme during the present year. A patrol system for newly constructed highways is being gradually brought up to a standard of efficiency and last year this policy was particularly successful for which a special appropriation for this purpose will be required.

All citizens keeping in active touch with governments and their work will have recognized that the Public Health movement has received a very marked impetus during the last few years and that it has been placed among the first in importance of government services, because it is destined to relieve and correct the unfortunately large amount of unnecessary suffering and death brought about through the want of knowledge and application of its principles and practice. In this connection I am glad to be able to say that New Brunswick is keeping abreast of the times. Its Department of Health has been carried on with assiduity during the year. The several services of the department have been conducted with that measurable degree of success incident to an almost completely new department as far as this province is concerned. Prejudices and misconceptions are necessarily incident in all countries to such a service in its early stages; such prejudices and misconceptions are dissipated, however, by education and publicity. The institution of the department will, it is hoped, prove to be one of the most usefully forward steps ever undertaken. Certain amendments of the Act under which the department operates, looking forward to greater efficiency will be laid before you for your careful consideration.

It has been the policy of my Government to make the educational profession more attractive to persons of suitable capacity and attainments. Much difficulty has been experienced in carrying out this policy, owing to the increase in the cost of living, which prevents many who desire to fit themselves for the teaching profession from doing so. In order to overcome this obstacle in the way of the recruiting of the teaching profession in the province the Govrenment has had under its consideration a plan for the making of loans of suitable amounts to those students in attendance at the Provincial Normal School who may require assistance. An Act has been prepared to give effect to this plan and will be submitted to you for your approval.

Provincial Rights.

During the recess there was a conference of representatives of the Provincial Governments of the Maritime Provinces and plans were formulated for the pressing of all claims of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island against the Dominion. My Ministers are convinced of the justice of our demands and it is sincerely to be hoped that at an early date a decision will be reached between the governments concerned with regard to more equitable financial arrangements between the Dominion and the Maritime Provinces.

Recent occurrences make it my duty to say to you as the guardians of the interests of the people of New Brunswick, that our provincial rights must be vigilantly guarded and upheld, and any attempt to tamper with either the letter or the spirit of the British North America Act, particularly with regard to representation in the Senate and Commons, must be viewed with the gravest apprehension and should be resisted to the utmost. The terms of Confederation, being the compact of the Union, should never be disregarded and should only be varied with the approval of all the provinces interested.

The question of railway rates in the Maritie Provinces, so important to all commercial pursuits and having so great an influence upon the cost of living, was brought to the attention of the Government during the recess and a representative has been in attendance at several conferences, obtaining such information and preparing such arguments as may assist to safeguard the interests of business and the people of New Brunswick generally when this question comes up for final decision before the Board of Railway Commissioners.

Valley Railway Interest.

When authority was given in 1912 for the guaranteeing of bonds to the amount of four million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the construction of the Valley Railway, and when further authority for the issuing of the bonds by the province was given from time to time for the same purpose, it was understood that the railway would be a part of the Transcontinental system, and it was estimated that the revenue therefrom, under the agreement with the Federal Government, would be sufficient to pay the interest upon the bonds and establish a sinking fund. The expectation that export traffic would find an outlet through the port of St. John by passing over this line has not materialized. Consequently the estimated receipts have fallen far short of the requirements to pay the interest. The province has, as a result of this, been called upon to pay large sums for which no provision has been made. I have, therefore, to advise you that a measure will be introduced to fund the amounts already advanced to meet the interest upon the bonds issued in connection with the construction of this railway. My Government will ask you to consider how best to make the necessary provision for this expenditure in the future.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 202 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act of 1916 electors of the province were given an opportunity to express their opinion for or against the retention of this measure. The result of the referendum which was held on July 10th, 1920, will be laid upon the table of the House.

Territorial revenues during the last year were exceptionally good and are further evidence of the vigilance attending the administration of the Crown Lands of the province. Stumpage rates have been increased and a revenue of about a million and a half of dollrs from the crown assets of the province is something that even the most sanguine public man of New Brunswick never anticipated.

The Legislative Programme.

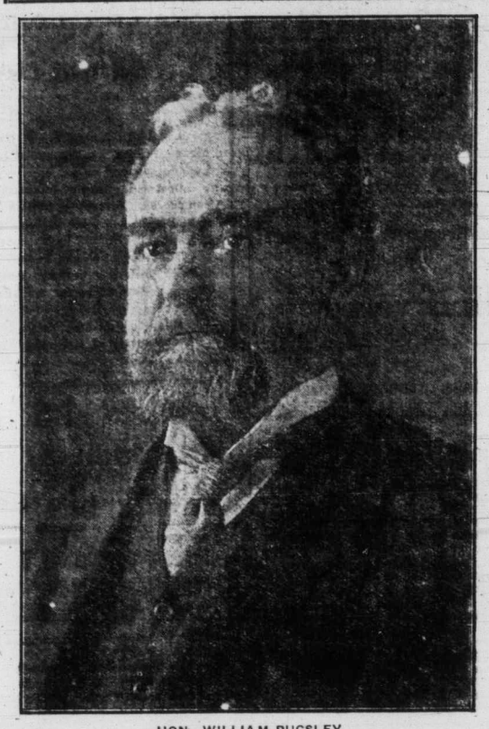
Legislation looking towards the suppression and prevention of fires will be introduced. Fires cause an economic waste and the replacement of property as destroyed adds materially to the economic problem. Through this proposed legislation it is hoped to bring this important matter more prominently before our people and to invite the co-operation of the municipal authorities towards the adoption of fire prevention methods.

The success attending two large provincial loans during the year is indicative of the splendid financial standing of New Brunswick in the money markets and the high value of its securities. The revenues of the province have been buoyant but the prevailing high cost of labor and materials and the demand for an expensive programme to meet the public needs caused a large increase in expenditure. Any additional outlay based upon popular demand must be very carefully considered in view of higher interest charges, and the larger sums required to pay increased annual obligations on new and refunded bond issues.

You will be asked to consider amendments to the Motor Vehicle and Highway Acts, further amendments to the Schools Act and to the Act respecting the Provincial Hospital for Nervous Diseases, also the consolidation of the Game Act, the County

(Continued on page three)

Opening the Legislature



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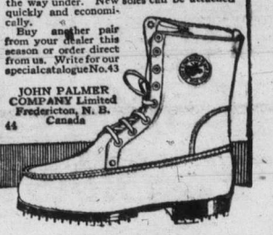

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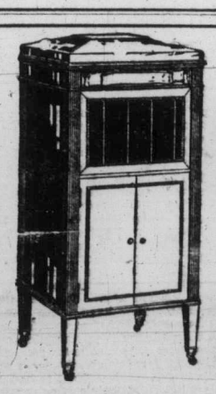

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