

To the People of Alberta

No apology is necessary or will be expected from the Government of Alberta in presenting to the people of the province a statement as to the work being done by the principal spending departments of the Government. It is becoming more and more the practice of democratic governments in all countries to take the people of the country into their confidence in regard to all the measures they undertake, and in accordance with this progressive tendency the Liberal Government of Alberta deems it advisable to present to the people of Alberta for their consideration and criticism an outline of the work of the different Government Departments. The work of the Attorney-General's Department and the Provincial Treasurer's Department, being of a purely administrative character, consisting respectively of the oversight and enforcement of the laws of the province and the charge and distribution of public moneys in accordance with the decisions of the Legislative Assembly, is not detailed here, as it is presumed that information will be desired rather regarding the work of the principal spending departments of the Government.

Department of Public Works

\$8,000,000 Spent on Roads, Bridges and Ferries

The Department of Public Works is one of the big spending departments of the Government. It has spent nearly eight millions on roads, bridges and ferries.

The Department has built hundreds of bridges, many of them fine steel structures, costing thousands of dollars. These bridges are built for the settlers in a remarkably short time without direct taxation, and are standing evidence of the policy of the Government in making capital expenditure with a view to giving the settlers needed facilities, without the long weary waiting experienced in other countries.

Road building in this province, where in wide areas there is no little gravel or other binding material is a difficult task, as the first cost is the major consideration, the expense of maintenance being a very heavy charge annually. The Government, however, has before it an ideal, and towards that ideal progress is steadily being made. The ideal is to have a main trunk system, with feeders running in all directions, with the ultimate object of making it as easy as humanly possible for the farmer to haul his produce to market. Rapid progress is being made, but it is a Herculean task which cannot be accomplished in a year or two.

Work Not Yet Completed

The work is not completed, nor will it be for years, as every new settler means a new demand and so far as the Department is concerned the policy is to keep the settlers in the province if public conveniences will contribute to that end. Some idea of the cost of the work is conveyed in the expenditure of money on roads, bridges and ferries since the province was formed in 1905. The Government, since 1912, has made large capital expenditures in addition to money spent from revenues, and as a result the settlers have been provided with conveniences much sooner than would have been otherwise possible, and certainly without the heavy direct taxation which could have been imposed.

From 1905 to December 31, 1915, there has been \$3,853,855 spent from revenues and \$3,704,746 from capital account, or a total of over seven and a half millions. With the 1916 expenditure this would considerably pass the eight million mark. The capital expenditure has largely gone into trunk roads and permanent bridges, and every dollar has been spent as carefully as possible. In the past few years a system of maintenance has been introduced which will result in a large decrease in the cost of upkeep and will tend to make all the roads more permanent in character. Had we an abundance of gravel in all parts of the province, the maintenance problem would be more easily solved, but under present conditions the Department is entitled to the greatest credit for the work accomplished.

Department of Agriculture

Widely Extended Services in Developing Most Important Industry

Alberta's Department of Agriculture may have an equal in Canada, but there is no hesitancy in claiming that it has an superior. Prominent agriculturists from all parts of Canada recognize the work accomplished. Having for its motto, "Mixed Farming Alberta's Ideal," there has been steady progress along all educational lines, and the results achieved are a source of pride to patriotic Albertans.

The Department has several branches all steadily "on the job" of helping to build up Alberta, and each branch is headed by an expert. Several of the leading experts in Canada are to be found among the officials, selections being made on the grounds of fitness rather than personal or party considerations. It is difficult to discriminate or to make comparisons, each branch doing its own work well. Credit must be given, however, to the institution of a system of Agricultural Education which is attracting attention in all parts of Canada and indeed all over the American Continent.

Schools of Agriculture

The Schools of Agriculture in connection with the Demonstration Farms at Okla, Clarendon and Vermilion have already far exceeded expectations, and have firmly established the principle upon which they were founded, namely, to educate the farm boys and girls so that farming would become to them a scientific and attractive calling. This ideal is approached by systematized and specialized instruction in practical agriculture and the real science of farming as a basis and the Demonstration Farms provide the rural environment, and, as the schools are co-educational, there is every opportunity for cultural and social experience.

Demonstration Farms

The Demonstration Farms supply the schools with the opportunity of practical farm tests and are proving of immense worth. It is not the intention that these farms should become money making, but rather that they should supply the means of practical agricultural experiments. The Department maintains a Provincial Veterinarian who, besides lecturing at the Schools of Agriculture, visits all parts of the province and keeps a vigilant eye for diseases and for the presence of weeds causing sickness and death. In the remote parts where regular practitioners are scarce his services are given to the farmers. He also lectures at Short Course Schools and in connection with the Demonstration Farms.

The work of Alberta's capable Livestock Commissioner is well known. He has general supervision of the livestock industry and has contributed materially to the present position it occupies today. The Commissioner also supervises the administration of The Entry Animals Act, The Brand Register, Ordinance, and investigates all facilities for the handling and shipping of stock.

Dairying Industry

The Dairy Commissioner's Department has through its handling of the dairy products kept in close touch with the markets and given the farmers very valuable assistance. This branch also did pioneer service for the farmers in the marketing and grading of eggs. The industry is also showing great development, with bright prospects for greatly increasing the revenue of Alberta farms. The total of creamery butter produced in 1915 was 7,370,871 pounds, an increase of 35 per cent. One very gratifying feature of the trade was that 91 per cent of the butter was made from cream bought direct from the farmers and paid for on a grade basis. The figures reveal the pleasing fact that there are 14,000 dairy farmers in Alberta.

Cheese production in 1915 was 322,695 pounds, as against 20,581 pounds in 1914—a pleasing increase and significant of future development.

Fairs and Institutes

A Branch of the Department with a constantly growing influence for good is that of Fairs and Institutes. Well on to one hundred fairs are held in Alberta. At all these fairs the livestock was judged by experts provided by the Government, and every fair was granted substantial financial assistance for prizes to the amount paid out in prizes. This Branch also carried on valuable educational work. Short Course Schools of six days each were held at various points throughout the province, at which experts lectured on a variety of subjects pertaining to the farm.

A feature growing in popularity is the Mixed Farming Special Train, composed of twelve cars, and which is now a familiar sight throughout the province. The train goes over all lines of railway and in time will have visited every point in Alberta.

Women's Institutes

Too much could not be said in favor of the Women's Institute Branch, which is doing excellent service in assisting the farm women in solving their problems. At the beginning of 1916 there were 107 branches in the province, with 3,000 members. The Institutes contributed over \$7,000 to the Red Cross and other patriotic wars in 1915.

Seed and Weeds

The Seed and Weeds Branch is taking no second place in importance, and besides the number of seed fairs held and the general supervision given seed grain, the Branch has tackled the weed problem with vigor and with marked results. While a Government can do much in the way of education and supervision, the extermination of weeds in the final analysis rests with the individual farmers. That the farmers are responding to the educational work is one of the gratifying signs of the times.

Poultry Branch

The Poultry Branch is doing a big share in the development of this important industry, and each year sees a gradual improvement in the quality of the stock and a keener appreciation of the value of good stock, balanced rations and other methods of inducing egg production.

Other Branches under the direction of the Minister of Agriculture are: The Brand Branch, the Game and Fire Guardian, Crop Statistician, Provincial Sanitary Engineer, Provincial Laboratory, Provincial Health Officer and Registrar-General, and the Publicity-Commissioner's Branch.

Department of Municipal Affairs

A Work Which Comes Close to the People

When the Government of Alberta led the way in Canada in establishing a Department of Municipal Affairs, great benefit was expected to accrue. The record to date reveals the decidedly interesting fact that realization has been greatly in excess of expectation. Not only has the Department justified its existence in so far as administrative efficiency is concerned, but it has developed into a helpful leadership in all matters municipal.

Besides departmental routine its officials, all carefully selected with a view to special qualification, have been at the disposal of municipalities everywhere, and by way of expert advice and willing assistance have helped greatly in solving over the many difficulties which have arisen as a result of the re-adjustment period following upon the collapse of the real estate boom.

Leadership in Civic Affairs

In many ways Municipal Government is the most important of all, as it most closely touches the home, and the individual taxpayer exercises a larger measure of influence than he does in the wider field of political activity. For this reason great care is needed in protecting the municipality against over-zealous expenditure and too sanguinary a vision as to immediate prospects along the line of development. The two hopeful visions which guided the majority of urban councils prior to 1914 led to the creating of very large debenture debts, and in the reaction which followed, considerable distress was experienced in meeting obligations. It is during this period, therefore, that the Department of Municipal Affairs is showing strength in leadership, and there is no disputing the statement that civic affairs throughout Alberta are in a better position today as a result of the formation of such a department. The Department of Municipal Affairs has general supervision of the practical working out of the various urban and rural municipal acts, and by close association with the people has contributed very materially to the splendid conditions prevailing today, despite the wide readjustment of the past two years.

Encourage Self-Government

It has been the specific object of the Department to urge that people living in rural localities take on a greater measure of self-government, and with that object every encouragement has been given the establishment of rural municipal organizations. The one great objection met with is that the opinion prevails that self-government means added taxation, but the results so far go to strongly dispense that contention. The rate of taxation in a rural municipality, where the people create their own liabilities and fix their own tax rates, has been lower than in the Local Improvement Districts established under the old system. However, most satisfactory progress has been made, and the hope is expressed that in a few years rural municipal organization will become general.

There are in Alberta 6 cities, 48 towns, 102 villages and 87 rural Municipalities. It is hardly likely that there will be an addition to the number of cities or towns for a few years, as the disposition now is to await the filling in of the farm lands rather than looking for the development of congested or industrial centres.

Assists School Districts

The Department, besides its general supervision of municipal work, which includes an expert audit of all secretary-treasurer books, has charge of the collection of the Wild Land Taxes, the Timber Area Tax, Educational Taxes, and each year assists in the collection of Rural School Taxes. In 1915, for example, the Department assisted the rural school districts in collecting \$79,030, as compared with \$43,150 in the year previous. This is a constantly growing service which the Department is rendering rural school districts without charge. That it is appreciated is amply evidenced in the growing demand upon the Department for help.

The administration of the Wild Land Tax Act involves the assessment of the lands, and this entails an enormous amount of work. There have been two assessments made, and the greatest care is exercised to see to it that no man who is doing his bit in the way of adding to the wealth of the province comes under the Act. The Wild Land Tax is designed to promote production and is expected to work great good to the province. The total amount of money collected through the Department in 1915 for local improvement districts, school districts and through the special acts was \$694,286.36.

Provincial Secretary's Department

Enlightened Policy in Treatment of Prisoners

The Provincial Secretary's Department, besides having charge of the incorporation of companies and the collection of certain license fees, the regulation of theatres and moving picture censorship, etc., undertakes the management of such public institutions as the Asylum for the Insane at Ponoka and the Provincial Jail at Lethbridge and Fort Saskatchewan. In the administration of the Provincial Jail it has been the policy of the Department to utilize prison labor for the purpose of making the prison partially self-sustaining and also to give the prisoners the opportunity of retaining their manhood and dignity. Nowhere on the American Continent have humanitarian principles in prison administration been more widely applied or been more uniformly successful. Instead of being compelled to wear distinctive garb and be subjected to humiliating treatment, the prisoners are received as men who having made a mis-step, would probably be restored to useful citizenship if only given sufficient encouragement. Consequently the prisoner is given in the ordinary "blue jeans" of the workman, and if his conduct shows him to be "trustworthy" he is given the opportunity of working on the public roads, for which he is credited with fifty cents a day, and, if it is not sent to his family, it is kept as a "nest egg" to give him a start when he leaves the jail. In well do the men respect the privileges given them, there is very seldom an attempt at escape. At Ponoka, in connection with the last known modern treatment, the result showing a large percentage of complete cures. At each institution a farm has been established to supply food and beneficial employment for the inmates.