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BRANCH ROADS TO MUNICIPALITIES

Hon. Mr. Veniot Favors This— Might Be Good Policy.

At the meeting of the Union of N.B. Municipalities held at St. John recently Hon. Mr. Veniot delivered an important address upon the Road Policy of the present local administration. This in part was as follows:—

Hon. P. J. Veniot thanked the committee in charge for the invitation to speak. He thought this a fitting place to discuss highways. All were interested in roads. There was much to say on the subject. Referring to suggestions made yesterday regarding work for the unemployed he said it had been suggested that road work be done this winter. It was impossible to do road work in this province after November 20. Some bridge work might be done. The government had considered the question. As early as last April it was evident that the northern part of the province that there would be lack of work. A survey had been made and the result was that a large amount of road construction had been undertaken. In the northern part of the province millions of work were put to work on the roads. In the province \$2,142,000 had been spent this year on roads. He was not saying this for political effect. He did his work conscientiously.

Men all shames of politics were here. When the federal government was not spending much money here it was to the credit of the local government that they had spent \$2,140,000 in one department. On the C. N. K. men were being cut down and laid off and the buck being passed. We should put forth every effort to induce the dominion government to undertake work here instead of cutting down staffs and throwing men out of work.

In 1917 when he had taken office there was no system in the highways administration. The result was that there was no centralization. Organization had to be undertaken and it was seen that funds were necessary. There was no system of taxation. The automobile fund was thrown into general revenue. The sum of \$38,000 or \$40,000 was spent in some way. It was from the automobile taxes that support was obtained. In 1917 there were 2,700 automobiles in New Brunswick with a revenue of \$48,000. Today there were more than 13,420 cars with a revenue of \$270,000. If some of the delegates wanted the license fees divided with the municipalities, let them be fair. It was impossible to touch this money, and it was asking the government to violate the trust between themselves and the holders of the bonds upon which the money to build roads was obtained. It was impossible. The general revenue would not stand the strain. The system of using automobile funds on main trunk roads was abolished because the federal government had offered to bear 40 per cent of the expense of the highway construction up to a certain extent. None of the work on the main trunk roads could be undertaken without the approval of a federal engineer, after which the matter went to the governor-in-council. This was necessary in order to receive the 40 per cent.

In 1919 New Brunswick was the only province to undertake this. The New Brunswick road engineer had gone to Ottawa to consult with officials there. New Brunswick was the only province represented from this section.

The work was begun under federal aid. Work to the extent of \$750,000 was done beginning July 1. Because the act did not go into effect until July 8 the government had clipped off the value of the work done between July 1 and July 8. We had done more work under federal aid than any province in Canada. Yearly interest and sinking fund were provided out of the general revenue. Twenty year bonds had been issued to cover it.

A proper patrol system was essential. An attempt had been made to perfect a patrol system, and he predicted that within the next two years there would be a perfect patrol system.

Another source of revenue was the municipalities. The municipalities were compelled to keep up their roads. In Ontario the municipalities were taxed to the hilt. There was not a by-road in the province of Ontario that could touch, our by roads and branch roads. There were a road tax of 25 cents on the dollar and a two dollar toll tax. There were not 100 men living in the rural district of the province paying over and above the poll tax. Last year assessment for roads was \$242,000. There was over \$86,000 in default and St. John county was one of the main sufferers. The system of collection was had 25 per cent of all taxes were not collected. He thought the system of assessment should be revised.

Let the municipalities come to the government and ask them to inaugurate a system. The real property valuation was only about 80 or 40 per cent. Instead of from 80 to 100 per cent, as it should be. Something must be done and he would give it his hearty support.

He did not think the government with the restricted source of revenue, could ever afford to take more than \$250,000 out of the general revenue. If more roads were wanted more money would have to be borrowed. In four years the increase in the number of automobiles would practically stop. The municipalities were very jealous of their rights.

He was prepared to advocate placing in the hands of the municipalities the duty of keeping the by-roads and having absolute control. The government would attend to the main roads. All calls on the municipalities for road money would be abandoned. So long as he remained minister of public works he would never allow a municipality to touch a bridge. He offered the suggestion because he knew what the roads needed and he saw direct taxation for roads starting him in the face. He thought his suggestion would avert this.

Victoria and Madawaska counties were setting an example to the rest of the province. Both parish was not a rural settlement; there were many wealthy there who lived there in summer and in the city in the winter. The reason the government did not take the initiative in the matter of handing the roads over to the municipalities was that there was a democratic count.

State Labor.

Referring to the agitation to change the rule of the road, he said he understood the wish of many to have the rule changed to avoid accidents. In 1919 an act was passed proclaiming the rule of "drive to the right," but the law was effective only on proclamation of the governor. There had been opposition in the northern counties, in Kent, Westmorland and Albert there had been opposition because Nova Scotia had not changed. There would be no change here, in all likelihood, until Nova Scotia changed. The road from St. Stephen to St. John would be completed next September, and this would mean a flood of American tourists. If the rule was not changed there would be accidents, and it might be that many would not come.

Doing Him a Favor.

A man who had been running a dubious business failed, and at a meeting of his creditors all but one agreed to accept his four-month notes for ten cents on the dollar. The debtor took this man aside and by promising to make him a preferred creditor he won him over.

When the others had departed, the man said: "Well, now, I should like what's coming to me."

"Oh," replied the debtor, "you won't get anything, any more than the others."

"But I thought I was a preferred creditor."

"You are preferred."

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CANADIAN MOTION PICTURES.

The movie public in Canada may eventually be taxed by the United States proposal to impose a customs tax of 30 per cent on the value of imported films. It is a tax to discourage the production of motion pictures in Canada for sale in the United States. But it should stimulate Canadian enterprise to produce more pictures for the Canadian public.

At the present time, Canadian public opinion is inclined to demand more Canadian and British pictures, to relieve the monotony of so many from the United States. A beginning has, indeed, been made to meet this demand. A number of successful Canadian pictures produced within the last two years, including "Back to God's Country," "The Sky Pilot," "Cameron of the Mounted," and others, based on popular Canadian novels, seem to have satisfied patrons on both sides of the border line.

While the pictures have been produced in Canada, they have been released for general circulation from United States headquarters. But when the Canadian pictures are taxed \$30,000 or more—it is estimated that Ralph Connor's "The Man from Glenarry," to be produced in the logging camps of the Ottawa Valley this winter, would be subject to a \$30,000 tax—the supply of Canadian pictures by United States producers is likely to decline. The demand for Canadian pictures by Canadian enterprise is, at the same time bound to increase.

Coupled with the natural desire for pictures of Canadian origin—and there is unlimited scope for development in this direction—Canadian pictures could be improved by more British films. The British producers are handicapped somewhat by climatic conditions, but some very fine pictures have been made since the war, and capital is being directed with more confidence into the film business in Great Britain.

American producers seem to be quite well aware of the loss they may experience if the proposed protectionist tariff is imposed. Canada might justly remember by imposing a 30 per cent tax on films from the United States. There is a strong sentiment in Canada in favor of admitting British films in duty free. Reciprocity in motion pictures among the British overseas nations and the Mother Country might very well be established, with reference to United States tariff policies. The motion picture might be made a good medium for members of the British league of nations to get to know each other better.

OBEDY THE LAW.

Do you plan a fall hunting trip, or have you thought of taking a rifle, shotgun, air gun, pistol or other weapon with you on your automobile or boating trip? If so, remember it is against the law to carry any one of these weapons without a license. The near approach of the hunting season, makes it advisable to direct attention to the regulations now in force. A permit to purchase a gun or other shooting weapon is the first essential, but that only allows of having the weapon at home. Another permit is necessary if it is to be taken into the woods or carried around on the person. That means no hunter can enter the woods this fall without having first obtained a license to carry the weapon or weapons it is intended to use. The penalty for disobeying the law is a fine not exceeding the hundred dollar or three months imprisonment, or both, fine and imprisonment if circumstances justify. The license provision applies to all the various forms of shooting irons, also to sheath knives, bowie knives, daggers, slotted, metal knuckles, skull crackers and other offensive weapons should remember not only that it is an offence to carry them without a permit, but that it is an offence punishable as above to sell or lend any of them to one who has failed to secure the necessary permit. In the case of a sale, a record of the issued license to have the weapon. As one section of the act gives every peace officer the right of search, it is wise for whoever carries a weapon in his hand or in his pocket to have within reach the license authority, which alone one can prevent punishment for a violation of a law which, although drastic, is wise and in the interests of safety.—EX.

WHAT SCOUTING IS AND DOES.

Scouting is character-forming recreational education, carried on to a large extent in the great, healthy school of the out-of-doors. It develops the spirit and habit of resourcefulness and of cheerfully facing difficulties. Those were qualities of the Canadian pioneers and, embodied in their conduct, have given us a large number of the great names of Canadian history.

Recalling your own boyhood, do you remember how in your reading, you played, your dreaming, you loved to imagine yourself a great war hero? a discoverer and adventurer? a hunter in the jungles of Africa? a cowboy? a knight, rescuing the weak—the beautiful—and pursuing the evil-doer? The boy of today dreams the same dreams. Especially in Canada, does he love to imagine himself a pioneer back-woodsman; an Indian, a plainsman; log-house or wigwam building, hunting, tracking, riding bucking broncos. Scouting satisfies this love of romance.

Every normal boy must find some outlet for his super-abundance of animal energy. Like the healthy puppy, he must race, and chase, and struggle with his fellows. Scouting provides the outlet, and controls it.

He loves to form and play in gangs. Scouting meets this—safely.

Through a curious but well-known weakness of human nature, the average boy, by preference, is going to take advice and many examples of habit, speech and principle, from older boys and men outside his own family. Most men can recall how readily as boys they responded to the notice of older lads, or of some men other than their father, and accept them as authorities and examples. Scouting meets this with the safe advice of the Scoutmaster—the sympathetic elder brother.

At a certain stage the average boy, especially the small-town boy, is going to face the attraction of the poolroom, or some other similar always-open club with its free and easy fellowship, and its games of chance or skill—and with its too-frequent atmosphere of disrespect for authority, for womanhood and clean manliness. Scouting heads this off.

The normal boy is keenly, enthusiastically willing to do public service where it is directed, and recognized, and he is full of the desire for recognition.

All these points Scouting realizes. Not through a code of laws or a code of regulations applied from without, but by working from within—by directing natural, attractive, but directed channels of activity for the boy's own impulses, in the following of which his character is shaped toward its best possibilities in efficient manhood and citizenship.

Good As It.

"We women here ain't better than men."

"Who told you that? Your doctor?"

"No, my shoemaker."

The Ottawa correspondent of the Montreal Star predicts that the Quebec increase in population will raise

the unit of parliamentary representation from one member for every thirty-two thousand to at least thirty-six thousand, involving as a consequence a Maritime Province loss of twelve or fifteen seats at redistribution. The correspondent says "The total figures will not be available before the middle of October. Naturally, any decrease in Eastern representation will go to the West, while the tendency all over will be to increase urban and decrease rural representation." These municipalities can hardly fail to exercise an influence on the movement toward Maritime union.

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