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THE EVENING TIMES-STAR, SAINT JOHN, N. B. SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1926

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LEGISLATURE SESSION ENDS; VENOT BEATEN

Former Premier's Motion On
Direct Tax Measure
Is Defeated
HOUSE PROROGUED
BY LIEUT.-GOV. TODD

Time - Honored Battle of
Papers Takes Place
At Closing

BY JOHN J. DUNLOP

FREDERICTON, N. B., April 30.—The provincial legislature was prorogued by His Honor Lieutenant-Governor Todd at 11.15 o'clock tonight.

Following prorogation, the usual time-honored battle of books took place on the floors of the house.

The last hours of the legislature saw most of the members in their places.

The house considered only three bills in the evening, the most important being the granting of authority to the Lieutenant-Governor in council to issue Crown Land licenses to pulp and paper companies for a period of 30 years, renewable annually.

Hon. Dr. Veniot again voiced his protest of this bill, but he did not call for a division.

The crown land license bill sets out that it is designed to support investment necessary to the pulp and paper industry and has particular reference to the hydro developments at Grand Falls and the Nepisiguit River. The bill says it is advisable that persons investing money in this industry should be assured of a reasonable rate of return and sufficient timber area to support such industry. An extension of 20 years, in addition to the 30-year period is provided for on certain conditions.

ALTERNATIVE TOLD.

Sound finance or disastrous bankruptcy was the alternative facing the Province of New Brunswick and placing direct taxation on the people his party was not influenced by political considerations, Premier Veniot told the house in speaking on the amendment offered by P. J. Veniot, leader of the opposition, to give the direct tax bill a six months' hoist. The amendment was beaten by a vote of 32 to 21.

VENOT TELLS STAND.

Hon. P. J. Veniot in discussing the direct taxation bill, directed his remarks to this on the ground that such a levy was not necessary and that it was an additional burden on the municipalities. He objected to the clause regarding the return of the face of the warrant to the government, claiming that any deficiency in collection would have to be made up from other sources. He therefore moved an amendment, seconded by J. E. Michaud, to give the bill a six months' hoist.

PREMIER DEFENDS COURSE.

The premier in opening his reply said the reading of the amendment must have afforded his honorable friend considerable satisfaction because it would form the ground of a political campaign for the next four years. Yet the amendment, after finding fault with alleged lack of economy in the Government program, immediately criticized the government for the righting of the provincial finances. He declared that he expected a great deal of ignorant criticism and lack of appreciation of the government's stand in this matter, but the more he studied the situation the more he realized the Government's course was the only right, proper and courageous thing to do.

The province, he asserted, had to get

away from the fatuous policy of the past or else the crash would come. He then explained the features of the bill.

DYSART FINDS FAULT.

G. Richard and J. P. Lordon opposed the bill. Hon. Mr. Dysart said he could not see anything meritorious in a system that bonded deficits and passed the burden on to the people. The government was doing the very thing it promised it would not do, he charged. He expressed the opinion that the idea of placing the entire defect on the people was brought about more by the party followers than from any regard for the taxpayers.

The bills relating to increased taxes on trust and loan companies, banks, telephone and insurance companies were put through, as were the bills providing for a gasoline tax. In the case of trust companies the tax is fixed at not more than \$800 yearly, instead of \$200, as formerly. The bank increase is placed at two-thirds of one per cent. on the gross business. A one per cent. increase in taxes for insurance companies, as outlined in the budget speech is also provided, making the tax three per cent. on business.

TELEPHONE TAX.

The tax on the New Brunswick Telephone Co., Limited, for a long distance toll, is placed at 10 per cent. Last year the company paid \$22,424 and it is estimated that there will be an increase of about \$9,000. This is in addition to an estimated increase of about \$4,000 in municipal taxation. Express companies are required to pay a tax to the province of \$100 for cities, \$75 for towns of less than 3,000 people, \$35 for towns of at least 2,000 people and \$15 for towns of not more than 200 people.

Taxes on extra provincial corporations also are increased. On those with a capitalization not exceeding \$10,000 the tax is \$150, exceeding \$10,000 and not exceeding \$50,000, the tax is \$250, and for those exceeding \$50,000 the tax is \$500.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

FREDERICTON, April 30.—The House met at 12 o'clock. Mr. Smith (Carleton) submitted the report of the Public Accounts Committee with copies of the evidence taken under oath in connection with the investigation into the highway expenditure in the parish of Lancaster and the charges for the River Valley Lumber Co.

Mr. Veniot said he must congratulate the members of the committee upon the very thorough way in which they had evidently done their work. As a member of the House he wished to insist that the government make a full investigation into the charges made regarding irregularities in connection with the work on highways in Charlotte county. He felt sure that nothing wrong would be found as between the department and Mr. Scott and he did not wish any stigma to attach to his (Veniot's) department. In connection with the charges regarding Supervisor McCrea in Quebec county, he would say that immediately after the 10th of August he had sent for that official to come to the department, but he found that he had left for the United States.

\$100 FOR DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. Gupill reported for the contingencies committee, and recommended that the Deputy Speaker receive a fee of \$100.

Mr. Dickson submitted a report from the Agricultural Committee.

Mr. Evans submitted a report from the Library Committee.

Hon. Mr. Baxter introduced a bill relating to the Province Hospital, which, on the grounds of urgency, was read a second time.

VENOT PROTESTS.

Mr. Veniot said he must protest against bringing down a bill of such importance within a few hours of prorogation.

Hon. Mr. Richards said that ample time would be given for discussion in committee.

Hon. Mr. Leger introduced a bill regarding taxes on corporations and to impose special temporary taxation on banks and certain companies.

Mr. Harrison submitted the report of the Law Committee.

Hon. Mr. Baxter moved that the Motor Vehicle Act be again submitted to the committee on the fourth House for some amendments re the parish of Lancaster; also that the bill relating to the Frederick School Board be submitted to the same committee.

SAINT JOHN BILL UP.

The House went into committee to consider the above mentioned bills, also bills relating to fire alarms in the city of Saint John, respecting assessments in the city and county of Saint John, the town of Edmundston to issue debentures, which were reported amended and ordered to be read a third time today.

The bill amending the Motor Vehicle Law was read a third time and passed.

Recess was taken at 1.25 p. m. till 3 p. m.

The House resumed at 3 o'clock and went into committee, with Mr. Squires in the chair.

An act respecting the floating debt of the province was taken under consideration.

OBJECTS TO OVER-OUTLAY

Mr. Veniot protested against the amount of over-expenditure on roads chargeable to automobile funds being funded as proposed by the bill. He did not think direct taxation should be imposed in connection with an amount that could be charged against the auto fund.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said the fact that this authority was being taken did not mean that it would be exercised. What could be carried by the auto fund would be taken care of in that way. If half of the amount mentioned in the bill could be taken care of under existing legislation, of course the Government would do it, and all this would be carefully examined before anything was done.

Hon. Mr. Baxter moved that the sum of \$105,453.37 be inserted in the clause of the act relating to the agreement made between Hon. P. J. Veniot, Minister of Public Works, and the highway board of the parish of Lancaster in the city and county of Saint John, to pay the share of the cost of a highway in that parish.

The last clause of the preamble of the bill, on motion of Hon. Mr. Baxter, was amended to read: "It is enacted that a sum not exceeding \$700,000 will be required to meet a deficit of the current fiscal year."

The bill was agreed to as amended.

The act to aid in the raising of the

revenue was next taken under consideration.

PRINCIPLE OPPOSED

Mr. Veniot said he already entered his protest against the principle of direct taxation and did not propose taking up much time of the House in again discussing the question. He was not convinced that ever that it was not necessary to take such steps as were proposed under this bill. He referred to the issuing of a warrant against a municipality and thought there would be a hardship worked by reason of the province demanding the full amount whereas there would likely be a shortage in collection from the taxpayers. If the bill went through, as he had no doubt it would, every possible step should be taken to lighten as much as possible the burden of taxation upon the municipalities. He did not think the province should collect up to the full amount of the warrant without making some provision for taking care of the shortage in collections. With

out discussing the matter further, he would move the following amendment:

AMENDMENT MOVED

Moved by Mr. Veniot, seconded by Mr. Michaud:

"Whereas, Bill No. 82 authorizes the Government to levy a direct tax upon real and personal property and income for the purpose of raising revenue for the services of the province; and "Whereas, the Government had given no evidence to this House of its determination to practice economy, retrenchment and adopt means to prevent the increase in the public debt of the province, but on the contrary, during the present session sought authorization to add \$5,000,000 to the public debt of the province; and "Whereas, the Government have not exhausted all the means of raising revenue from indirect sources, such as the stampage on lumber cut on Crown lands and taxation for privileges of developing our water powers; and "And whereas, in the opinion of this House conditions do not warrant the levying of direct taxes by government for provincial purposes;

"Therefore be it resolved, that bill No. 82 be not now considered, but be considered this day six months hence."

PREMIER SPEAKS.

Hon. Mr. Baxter said he noted with pleasure what his honorable friend had said that this bill had not come as any surprise to the opposition. The government had endeavored to bring down legislation in good time and he thought there was only one bill and that this morning that could be said to have been brought down in the dying hours of the session. With regard to direct taxation he thought his honorable friend would take more satisfaction out of it than almost anything else. It would be a great relief to the people and a great campaign for him the next year. He noted that his honorable friend had very materially reshaped his platform. After going as far as a man could go to destroy the stability of the finances of the province, he immediately found fault with the government's work. He thought the honorable friend had done the only thing a government could do.

This matter had given the government most anxious consideration. Had they gone on in the fatuous policy pursued in the past, the credit would have been eventually. It might have been postponed for a few years, but only for a few years. Today they found that it was taking all the ordinary resources to take care of the good roads of which he had boasted. It was time for the people to wake up to a realization of the true situation. It was not worth while to go back into past history, but it was time the people learned that the things they wanted must be paid for and that from them the pay must come.

Referring to the question of valuation he said no locality in the province could tell today what would be the amount of the tax bill they would have to pay. To get at this proposed taxation in the most favorable way there should be a complete valuation of the province.

The government, he said, proposed to get money enough to run this province. They would be as economical as a government could reasonably be. If the province could find any other system of raising revenue let it say so. To say that they would tax our water powers when they have not even a scheme to develop water power that could not be taxed, was a rather poor argument for him to use.

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present an opportunity for development, immediate and great, which would advance the growth of New Brunswick instead of retarding it.

His honorable friend had criticized the government for lowering the stumpage, yet he himself, had lowered it twice as much.

With regard to the amount to be collected from the different municipalities, the government would ask for the amount required and allow the locality to make the collection in their own way. He assured the House that there would be no haste in the matter of putting this taxation proposal into effect. Mr. Richards said he could not support the bill, and he hoped that the amendment would carry.

PREMIER GIVEN CREDIT.

Mr. Dysart said the Premier took a great deal of credit for facing the financial situation in a courageous manner, but instead of paying interest and sinking fund out of the ordinary revenues of the province he was proposing to bond the deficits. From all the criticism he had heard from those who composed the present government he got the impression that the matter of increasing the bonded debt of the province by bonding deficits on current account was to be a thing of the past.

Mr. Lordon said when this government, after reducing the stumpage, was also giving back bonuses to the lumbermen, and then directly taxing the people, he would oppose the bill.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT.

The vote on the amendment being called, it stood, yeas, 11; nays, 32.

The bill was passed on this vote reversed, the following clauses being in the amended preamble:

"Whereas it has been deemed advisable at this session of the Legislature to authorize the issue of bonds to provide for capital and current liabilities of the province up to the 47th day of February, 1926; and

"Whereas bonds of the Saint John and Quebec Railway Company will require to be issued to provide for capital expenditure incurred in respect of said railway to the amount of \$200,000;"

These clauses with the others bringing the total amount of proposed bond issue to between four and five million dollars formed the basis of the bill to provide for direct taxation.

GASOLINE TAXATION.

The bill respecting the taxation of gasoline was next considered.

Mr. Veniot inquired if any arrangements were pending regarding the collection from large dealers in gasoline.

Hon. Mr. Stewart said that a consultation was being held between the

provinces and the dealers were agreeing to a uniform system. Discussing the clause requiring all dealers to pay a license fee of \$2 before it was legal for them to sell gasoline, Mr. Richard said it was not fair for the small dealer to be required to pay the same license fee as larger ones.

Hon. Mr. Stewart said this plan was merely following the practice in other provinces, and he did not think that \$2 could be called more than a nominal amount for such fee.

DOUCET FAVORS TAX.

Mr. Doucet favored a tax on gasoline, but he did not consider it fair for the ordinary retailer to have to pay a license fee. Many men kept gasoline tanks and not for profit. He was opposed to that provision of the bill.

Hon. Mr. Tilley thought the preceding speaker was inconsistent in favoring a gasoline tax and then opposing a section which provided keeping track of sales.

Mr. Veniot thought the distributors of gasoline should pay according to their volume of sales. He thought there should be a license, but not a uniform fee for it. The amount could be regulated according to the importance of the district in which the sales were made. Large dealers in cities should pay more than men in the back country districts.

TANK CARS MENTIONED.

Mr. Smith (Carleton) said he did not see any provision to take care of tank cars coming from the United States and supplying customers in New Brunswick. All along the border from Houlton north, these tank cars carrying as much as 2,000 gallons at a time were daily coming over to supply customers in New Brunswick. There should be some means should be devised to collect the tax.

Mr. Taylor (Sunbury) thought there was need of regulating the wholesale of gasoline. There was a great

spread in price in different localities, and he felt that arrangements might be made with the large suppliers so

Continued on Page 10

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Continued on Page 10

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(Corset Department—Second Floor.)

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(Pattern Dept.—Ground Floor.)

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(Carpet Dept.—Germain street entrance.)

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