

"We will not give away any more pulp-wood lands. Every pulp concession that has been made has been made without any member of the Legislature having the slightest idea as to the propriety of the vote which he was about to give. And so on with every other act of the Government with regard to our great natural resources, and it will be our duty to stop that. With regard to the finances of the Province, whatever we will be able to do with regard to the educational interests of the country, with regard to the agricultural interests of the country, will be governed by what we can do with the finances of the Province. We do not say we should lessen the expenditure necessarily, but we will husband the resources and make two ends meet, or rather make the revenue exceed the expenditure by a proper handling and development of the great natural resources of the Province. And the moment we can do that—it will be our first task, ladies and gentlemen—the moment we can do that we shall turn our eyes to the farming and artisan population and set to work to devise a scheme by which the great men who in conjunction with Dr. Ryerson formed and instituted our public school system will find their ideas carried out here in the future.

The School System.

"Ninety-five per cent. of the children born in this Province begin and end their education at the public schools, and we will make it that instead of every pupil being obliged as at present to waste a certain amount of time there in acquiring a smattering of knowledge on certain subjects, the children of the farmer and the artisan and the machanics of this country will find the greatest possible opportunity for the acquiring of education, having in view two things, and holding them steadily in view, namely, their probable future lot in life, and the fact also that no matter how deserving they may be, through circumstances beyond their control, they will be unable to go further in the pursuit of secondary or higher education. (Applause.) Mr. Ross' idea that the public school should be a stepping stone to the high school, and so on to the university, is separated from our idea by a gulf, the width and depth of which can hardly be estimated. Then, we say there should be at least seven or eight agricultural schools in this Province, "though not great institutions like that at Guelph."

*February 20th 1902*

Continuing, Mr. Whitney said that the question of food transportation was of the greatest importance to farmers. The municipal law should be cut to pieces and melted over again. The assessment law was in a position which defied understanding, and now, two years after the Premier's promise of a commission, they were told it was too late to act this session. They believed that, so far as the ownership of public utilities was concerned, the municipalities should have the power to purchase them if they chose. The Government, he believed, was behind the age in its attitude to the labor problem.

A Heavy Task.

In concluding, Mr. Whitney said the Opposition had a heavy task before them. They were taunted by the junior Liberal organ that they had no money. That was tantamount to a declaration that if they were beaten it would be by money. "If the day comes," he declared, "when the Conservative party in Ontario wants to succeed by means of corrupt practice, it must get another leader." (Loud cheers.) Mr. Whitney's closing words were a further expression of gratitude and an appeal to his supporters to start local organization work at once.

At the conclusion of Mr. Whitney's speech the diners rose from their seats and crowded around the guests' table to shake hands with the Ontario leader, Mr. Borden and Mr. Monk. The remainder of the toast list, which included the Army and Navy and the Mayor and Corporation of Toronto, was abandoned, and three three Conservative leaders held a reception at the door as the guests passed out.