

Assembly.—In pursuance of the instructions of the Administrator, it is our duty to elect a Speaker to preside over the deliberations of this Assembly. I have great pleasure, acting under these instructions, in submitting to you, gentlemen, the name of Mr. William Andrew Charlton, member-elect for the South riding of Norfolk, to be Speaker of this Assembly during the present Parliamentary term. Mr. Charlton has had the honor of sitting in the House for three consecutive Parliamentary terms, in all, twelve years. He has had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the rules of the House, the methods of debate, and to generally inform himself as to the tone and temper of such a deliberative body as the Ontario Assembly has been and is likely to be. His long experience in that respect will do doubt prove of considerable service to him should you agree to elect him to the honorable position of First Commoner and Speaker of this Assembly.

A Useful Training.

"Besides the ordinary experience of a member, Mr. Charlton for six years presided over the Public Accounts Committee, a committee charged with very delicate investigations, and requiring on the part of the Chairman considerable tact in dealing with the various matters that come before him. In that position he has shown accuracy and affability, business capacity and the

other qualities which render a presiding officer successful and efficient. At the close of the deliberations of this committee, for several sessions, if not in every case, he received the united thanks of all the members of the committee. For five years he has presided over the Committee of the Whole House, and in that position the older members are quite familiar with his affability, with his attention to the business of the House, and the expedition with which he assisted the committee in the transaction of those important duties, and I have yet to hear of any member who is cognizant of the manner in which he discharged his duties having any complaint with regard to his conduct. He has shown courtesy on all occasions, he is eminently a fair-minded man, and I am confident, gentlemen, that in the chair he will maintain the dignity of that time-honored position, that he will expedite the business of the Assembly, and that he will deal fairly, so far as his duties are concerned, with every member of the House, and with every part of the public business that will come before him. I have very great pleasure, Mr. Clerk, in presenting to the gentlemen of this Assembly the name of William Andrew Charlton to be Speaker of the Assembly for the coming Parliamentary term."

The motion was seconded by Hon. Mr. Gibson.

The Clerk put the motion, and, there being no objection, it was declared carried. As the new Speaker advanced from an obscure corner he was first congratulated by Mr. Harcourt, and then by Mr. Latchford, the Premier and Mr. Stratton.

A Neat Acknowledgment.

Mr. Charlton, in acknowledging his election, said:—Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, I thank you for the honor conferred upon me in electing me to the high position of Speaker. In undertaking the important duties that you have assigned to me, I shall at all times strive to merit the approval of every member of this Assembly, and I hope that each one will do everything which lies in his power to assist me in maintaining the constitutional rights and privileges, the good name and honor and dignity of the Legislature of Ontario. (Applause.)

The Premier then moved that the House stand adjourned for ten minutes, and the Speaker, with a mental chuckle, in keeping with the spirit of the moment, declared:—"The House stands adjourned for ten minutes—more or less." (Laughter.)

The Bill of Rights.

In a few minutes the Administrator returned, whereupon the Speaker addressed him:—"The Legislative Assembly have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Assembly, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their King and country, hereby claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favorable consideration."

The Rights Assured.

Hon. Mr. Stratton then said:—"Mr. Speaker,—I am commanded by his Honor the Administrator to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the Assembly to his Majesty's person and government, and, not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognize and allow, the constitutional privileges. I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have ready access to his Honor upon all suitable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favorable construction."

His Honor then read the speech from the throne, as follows:—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:—

I have much pleasure in welcoming you to your duties as representatives of the people at this the first session of a new Parliament.

In common with all his Majesty's subjects throughout the British Empire, we rejoice at the coronation of Edward VII. as "King of Great Britain and Ireland and his Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas," and as loving subjects we sincerely pray that he may long be spared to occupy the throne of his ancestors as the sovereign of a loyal, contented and prosperous people.

On the 18th of December last a conference of Provincial Premiers and Ministers was held in the City of Quebec for the purpose of considering the financial relations of the Provinces to the Dominion. The conference, after coming to certain conclusions, adjourned to meet at Ottawa on the 26th day of January to submit these conclusions to the Dominion Government. A full report of the proceedings will be laid before you.

Great Influx of Settlers.

During the past year a greater area of the arable lands of the Crown was located by settlers than in any recent year in the history of the Crown Lands Department. The immigration from the United Kingdom was exceptionally large, the arrivals reported to the department in Toronto being nearly double those of any previous year.

Under the legislation providing land grants for military service, about six thousand certificates have already been issued. A large number of claims awaiting settlement will be disposed of as soon as their validity is established.

The progress which is being made in the leading branches of mining is matter for congratulation. The output last year was the largest in the history of the industry. Special attention is being given to the deposits of nickel-copper and iron ore, which constitute so important a part of the mineral wealth—yet largely undeveloped—of northern Ontario.

The lumber trade continues active, the revenue from Crown dues for the past year being the largest in the history of the Province.

Agricultural Prosperity.

I am pleased to notice that the past year has been one of exceptional prosperity in every department of agriculture, not the least significant evidence being the improved quality of our dairy produce, bacon, beef and poultry.

The thanks of the country are due to the estate of the late Mr. Hart A. Massey for the timely gift of a new library building, and also to Sir William Macdonald for his generosity in providing for a building devoted to domestic science on the campus of the Agricultural College. These munificent gifts show the growing interest of influential citizens in agricultural education, and will greatly assist in the work of the college.

The work of Farmers' Institutes has grown steadily; special fruit institutes, held in the orchard, have been very helpful; the Women's Institutes have increased in number, and are so promising that you will be asked for special assistance to carry on this work.

The Liquor Traffic.

The vote polled on the 4th of December last in favor of the liquor act of 1902, though not large enough to bring the act into force, may, nevertheless, be taken as an expression of the electors favoring further legislation with respect to the liquor traffic. A measure with this object in view will be submitted for your consideration.

It is greatly to be regretted that, notwithstanding the liberal provision heretofore made for the insane, the accommodation is still inadequate, and I trust you will find it possible to meet fully the necessities of this unfortunate class of the people.

It is gratifying to notice that many County Councils have provided for the indigent of their own counties by the establishment of Houses of Refuge. Some counties, however, have no other refuge for destitute persons than the county jail, and it is the intention of the Government to submit legislation for the further extension of this system of public charity.

To Suppress Disease.

In order to the better suppression of contagious diseases in many parts of the Province, it appears to be necessary to secure the effective co-operation of the municipalities with the measures adopted by the Legislature. Your attention will be called to a bill for this purpose.

I have been pleased to notice the highly beneficial results that have attended the creation in 1893 of the branch of the public service charged with the care of neglected and dependent children. Under its operations foster homes have been provided for over two thousand destitute children, assuring their growth in all that makes for good citizenship.

The legislation of 1897 providing for supervising and regulating the importation of children from the British Isles has, I am pleased to say, resulted in a more careful selection of children intended for settlement in this Province and in the greater comfort and security from injustice of all children for whom homes may be found under the act.

Educational Matters.

You will be pleased to know that great progress has been made during the year in the development of technical education and manual training in the public and normal schools of the Province. The growth of the Provincial University shows the increased interest taken in higher education, while the demand for the better training of teachers in public and separate schools calls for the extension of the normal school term. You will be asked to consider legislation with regard to these matters.

In view of the great demand for electrical energy for industrial and other uses, it is desirable that the utmost facility should be afforded, through municipal control or otherwise, for the utilization to these ends of the water powers of the Province. A bill to provide for this object will be laid before you.

Assessment Amendments.

Bills will be submitted for the consolidation of the municipal act and for the revision and amendment of the assessment act.

The reports of the various departments of the public service will be laid before you, including the first report of the commission for the construction of the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway.

The estimates for the current year will, at an early date, be submitted for your approval. They will be found to have been prepared with all the economy consistent with the efficiency of the public service.

I feel assured that your legislative labors during the present session will be characterized by the same earnest