

MORE MONEY TO RURAL SCHOOLS.

Government Grant to be Largely Increased.

THE PROVINCIAL SURPLUS.

Balance on the Right Side Will be Over \$300,000.

Central Prison Will be Removed and Prison Labor Will Not Compete With Free Labor—Important Announcements in Legislature—Mr. Graham in His Place as Opposition Leader.

A statement by Premier Whitney as to the intention of the Government with regard to the public school act of last session was the feature of the session of the Legislature yesterday afternoon. The minimum salary clauses of that act have been the subject of considerable controversy, and amending legislation has of late been several times foreshadowed. The Government will not only largely increase the grants to the schools, but the new legislation will wipe out the basis of distribution as adopted last year, and specially encourage the payment to teachers of salaries above \$300. It provides a new unconditional grant of \$15 yearly to each school section, and substantial appropriations for equipment and accommodation. In the aggregate the Government increases its grant of last year to the rural schools by \$202,000.

The Premier's statement was as follows:—

"The situation as to rural schools is: (1) We have found that there is not a sufficient number of properly-qualified teachers to meet the demand under the present law, and that this condition of affairs is likely to continue, to a greater or less extent, until the new normal schools are established and begin their work.

"(2) It has become evident that considerable difficulty will arise in working out the provisions of the law as to increased salaries dependent upon the assessments, which vary very much.

"For these reasons we think it best to make certain changes in the law as follows:—

"(a) The minimum grant of \$300 per annum by the township to each school section for salary will be retained.

"(b) An unconditional grant of \$15.00 per annum will be made to each section.

"(c) A grant will be made for the purposes of equipment and accommodation, and

"(d) A grant of 40 per cent. will be made on the excess of all salaries above \$300 and up to \$600.

"This will work out as follows:—Appropriation for equipment and accommodation, \$60,000; appropriation of \$15 to each section, \$80,000; appropriation of 40 per cent. on salaries over \$300, \$240,000; a total of \$380,000.

"The last annual grant to rural schools by the late Government was \$118,000. We increased this last year by \$60,000.

"To recapitulate, the total of proposed grants to rural schools this year is \$380,000; the last grant by the late Government was \$118,000; therefore the increase by the present Government is \$262,000."

New Opposition Leader.

Mr. George P. Graham, the new leader of the Opposition, sat for the first time in the seat formerly occupied by Hon. Geo. W. Ross. When he entered the House Premier Whitney and several other Cabinet Ministers walked across the floor and shook hands with the new leader. Later in the afternoon the Premier, in agreeing with Mr. Graham's motion to adjourn the debate until Tuesday, made a pleasing reference to the new Opposition leader. "We on this side of the House," he said, "wish him every personal comfort and satisfaction in the position he occupies."

Surplus Over \$300,000.

A Provincial surplus of \$300,000 and a revenue exceeding \$7,000,000 was foreshadowed by Mr. G.H. Ferguson, in moving the reply to the speech to the throne. A number of petitions praying for the abolition of section 606 of the municipal act were presented. This section holds municipalities responsible for accidents caused by non-repair of highways and bridges.

Mr. Hoyle gave notice of motion for a return giving the following information regarding the Toronto Electric Light Company, Limited: Date of incorporation, applicants for incorporation, objects of the company, names of the provisional directors, amount of capital, increases of capital stock, names of the directors and shareholders of the company, according to last return to the Government.

What About Redistribution?

Mr. Preston (Brant) asks: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce during the present session a measure for the redistribution of seats in the Legislative Assembly?

Is it the intention of the Government to permit persons who have made locations under the veteran land grants act to surrender the same for the cash equivalent now offered to those who have not yet located?

An interim vote for the purposes of carrying on the government prior to the introduction of the main estimates was carried.

Mr. Ferguson Moves Reply.

Mr. G. H. Ferguson, in moving the reply to the speech from the throne, said that it was a great pleasure to announce that the Provincial Treasurer would be able to report a revenue of over \$7,000,000, and a surplus of over \$300,000. The matter of school textbooks, he continued, was still before the commission, but if they gave consideration to the information gleaned from newspaper reports of the evidence, there was no doubt that the cost of school books would be reduced to the public at least one-half.

Touching upon the mineral development of the Province, the speaker said that it was thought proper that mines and minerals should be subjected to some sort of taxation. There should, however, be some form of exemption, so that the burden would not fall upon the mining man of small capital, but upon the large mining corporations. "I think a share of the tax so derived will be set apart for the opening up of roads for settlers in New Ontario," he said.

Solution of Prison Labor Problem.

Mr. Ferguson, referring to prison labor, said: "The object of the Government has been to remove the objection, so far as possible, that prison labor is coming into competition with free labor. In the Central Prison there is a population of from five to six hundred prisoners, about 80 per cent. of whom are fit to work. It has been a serious problem how prison labor could be employed without conflicting with free labor, and some means will be devised to that end. The prisoners have to be fed at the public expense. It is in the interests of the public—and, indeed, a public duty—that they shall be employed. The location of the prison should be changed. The present property would sell at as much per foot

as farm land could be bought for per acre. On a farm prison the prisoners could be employed during the summer months and the products could be consumed in the public institutions of the Province. A subsidiary prison should be established along similar lines in the Soo district, thus effecting a saving in transportation expenses."

Mr. Donald Sutherland.

Mr. Donald Sutherland, South Oxford, who seconded the motion, devoted some time to a discussion of the state of agriculture in this Province, and the encouragement given by the Government to that industry. There was, however, he continued, a feeling of unrest among the farmers in the Province because of the exodus of their fellow-farmers and the scarcity of farm help. During the past seven years 76,321 farmers had left its boundaries. The Government had undertaken to try to remedy this state of affairs and was making special efforts to turn the tide of skilled agricultural help into this Province. Quantity rather than quality was aimed at, but it was the latter that Ontario wanted.

Electric Power Problems.

Mr. Sutherland dealt with a number of other Government measures now on the statute books or projected, and passed on to a discussion of the electric power problem, arguing that it was on this power that Ontario, in the absence of coal fields, must depend largely for industrial expansion. He spoke particularly of the situation in connection with Niagara Falls development. Vested rights were spoken of, but he wanted to know to whom vested rights belonged. Was it not the public?

Mr. Sutherland referred in complimentary terms to the Attorney-General and the manner in which the law had been enforced in many cases where, he alleged, it had been lax before, to the fact that the day was the second anniversary of the defeat of the late Liberal Administration, and concluded by expressing the belief that under the present Government the development of Ontario would continue as satisfactorily as during the past two years.

New Leader Moves Adjournment.

Mr. Graham rose after the motion had been put, and said: "Mr. Speaker, owing to the peculiar circumstances in which I find myself this afternoon I beg leave to move the adjournment of the debate." This was agreed to, and the debate will be resumed on Tuesday afternoon.

An interim vote of \$610,000 was made by the House, on motion of Hon. Mr. Matheson, for the purpose of carrying on the government pending the adoption of the main estimates. The House adjourned at 5 o'clock.

Hon. G. P. Graham, the new leader of the Opposition, was the recipient yesterday of a flood of congratulatory telegrams from all parts of the Province. All were appreciated and are being acknowledged. One which gave Mr. Graham exceptional pleasure was a telegram from the Liberal Association of Brockville, his own constituency.

W. L. T. PARRY SOUND WANTS.

Urges Guarantee of Bonds for a C. & N. O. Extension.

A Parry Sound district deputation waited on Hon. Mr. Cochrane and Hon. Dr. Reaume yesterday and urged Government to guarantee the bonds for an extension of the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway from a point nine miles north of Parry Sound to North Bay; such an extension, among other things, as the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway has over the Grand Trunk Railway and the C. N. O. to Toronto, and also to connect with the three main railroads of the country.