

MARCH 19, 1909.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE C. N. R.

Land Grant for the Sellwood- Fort William Section

MR. MACKENZIE'S VIEW.

Considers the Proposition is Not Satisfactory.

Premier Whitney Explains in the
Legislature the Government's In-
tention—Dominion Aid is Also Be-
ing Sought.

"This is the first intimation I have received as to the Government's proposals," said Mr. William Mackenzie, when interviewed by The Globe as to Sir James Whitney's announcement. "Before making any general statement as to the position of the Canadian Northern I shall want to study the details and learn what the Government have in mind. Speaking offhand, I cannot say the proposal is satisfactory. The Province has aided lines of less importance to a larger extent. The offer is very small in view of the character of the work to be carried out. The building of a line through such a country takes a good deal of courage, and the Province could well afford, in view of the benefits it would derive, to consider the giving of much larger assistance.

"It is hard to tell whether we can go ahead on those terms. In building our lines we have to get on a basis to make financial arrangements." Mr. Mackenzie added that the company was seeking aid also from the Dominion Government in view of the connecting of the eastern and western roads, and largely upon the results from the two Governments the project for the present must depend.

Standing, schoolmasterlike, on the floor of the Legislature beside two pages mounted on chairs and holding up for the view of the members a large map of North Ontario, Sir James Whitney enunciated the policy and ultimatum of the Government on the request of the Canadian Northern Railway for Provincial aid, at the close of yesterday's session of the Legislature. The Premier illustrated his remarks from the map, while the members deserted Mr. Speaker and crowded down to the end desks for a better view.

Offer a Land Grant.

Briefly the Government's proposals, as Sir James explained them, comprise final refusal to guarantee bonds or to make cash grants, but to allow, for the construction of approximately five hundred miles of railway from Sellwood to Fort William, skirting the north shore of Lake Superior and tapping the great clay belt of the north, a grant of 400 acres per mile, the acreage to lie within the clay

belt. None of the mineral area is to be given, and the Government will retain the right to the minerals under the land and the pine timber thereon. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council also reserves the right to dictate to the new owners when the land granted shall be sold and the price for which it must be disposed of. These provisions, the Premier observed, were demanded to prevent the holding or disposing of the land, as the country was opened up, for speculative purposes.

Sir James added that the Province's offer had not yet been accepted by Mr. William Mackenzie. He made the public statement "that there may be no cavilling on the ground that we delayed the announcement of our policy unnecessarily."

The Liberal leader was absent, being detained in Owen Sound by professional business, and the Opposition attendance was light. Asked concerning the proposal, Mr. Wm. Proudfoot (Centre Huron) said, "At the first blush it is difficult to express an accurate opinion. The proposals will have to be examined closely. As the Premier explained them, however, should the railway accept, it would seem to be a good bargain for the Province."

In opening, Sir James Whitney explained that the Canadian Northern proposed extending their line from Sudbury to Fort William and had made alternative requests to the Province for aid, viz., a guarantee of the company's bonds for some 500 miles of track from Sellwood running north to Lake Superior through Nepigon to Fort William, or a grant of land and a cash subsidy for the same mileage.

The Government's Position.

"The Government decided at once to decline any proposition that looked towards any guarantee of any bonds," the Premier stated. "The Government has also declined to look favorably upon an application for a land and cash subsidy combined. We have," he continued, "decided not to accept any proposition for a guarantee or land subsidy combined. We propose to say to this company—and I may say that we are not at all sure that the company will accept it—provided that you will, according to this map, practically at once begin the construction of this line to run approximately as it is laid down here, we will give you 4,000 acres of land per mile, but we will retain the minerals ourselves, and we will also retain the right to say when that portion of the land given to the company shall be put on the market. We will, moreover, retain the right to fix the price at which the land shall be sold. That is our proposition. I don't know what the company will say."

Proceeding, the Premier said that years ago the old Conservative Government as well as the Liberal Government at Ottawa, and the former Government of the Province, had "run side by side in the strife to see which could be the more reckless in giving away immense tracts of land and immense sums of money to railway enterprises that were mostly speculative." The present Provincial Government had been returned on a policy opposed to that, except in exceptional cases, such as the road on Manitoulin Island.

To Secure Settlement.

"I want to be perfectly frank," said Sir James. "I wish to be perfectly frank and say that I don't claim that this is an exceptional case." As he had said, the Province spent many thousands of dollars in getting immigrants for whom the great clay belt would afford an opening. Some of the older citizens of Ontario might desire to move their families there, and in turn their places might be occupied by the immigrants. It was the duty of a responsible Government to open up the country and make every effort to develop its agricultural and mineral resources."

The Premier repeated the conditions on which the land grant was to be made. They were giving it on condition that something would be done which would make the whole valuable, and what they were giving was about one-eighth of the whole. The transaction would be accompanied by the proper checks and guarantees, which, if the company accepted the conditions, would be incorporated in a bill to be brought before the House.

To Prevent Cavilling.

"The reason I mention this to-day,"

he said, "is to put the matter before the House in order that there may be no cavilling on the ground that we delayed announcing our policy unnecessarily. The pine timber we also retain, and the Government will give the right to sell the land at a price to be fixed at such times as we insist on it being sold. We will then have no monopoly holding up the people to pay a high price for it."

Mr. Studholme—In case the company don't build the road can this Government build it?

Better Than Building.

Premier Whitney—The Government propose, and they think that the people of this Province will endorse them, to say that they will give between one and a half and two millions of acres which are now valueless because undeveloped and unproductive, and get the road instead of the people having to spend \$25,000,000 in building a road of their own."

TO AMEND PHARMACY ACT.

What Country Storekeepers Will be Allowed to Sell.

Mr. P. H. Bowyer (East Kent) has scored a victory with his bill to amend the pharmacy act. Reporting for the special committee appointed to deal with it to the Legislative Municipal Committee yesterday morning, the Chairman, Hon. W. J. Hanna, stated that after consultation with the authorities of the Ontario Pharmacal Association an amicable arrangement had been reached.

As a result the country storekeepers will now be allowed to sell carbonate of magnesia, Rochelle salts, bluestone, copperas, rhubarb root, saltpetre, spirits of nitre, solution of ammonia, phosphate of soda, chloride of lime, green camphor, citrate of magnesia and quinine, Paris green, tincture of iodine, hellebore, a five per cent. solution of carbolic acid and arsenate of lead, the latter three largely used for spraying purposes.

A record of all sales must be kept, and schedule "A" of dangerous poisons is still prohibited. No compounding of medicines is, of course, allowed.