

FINANCE CONTROL BELONGS TO HOUSE

Opposition Takes Vigorous Objection to Placing Expenditures With Executive—Debate on North Ontario Appropriation.

Sharp words characterized the debate in the Legislature yesterday afternoon over the proposal of the Government to spend the \$5,000,000 appropriated for New Ontario development by order in Council. The Opposition took the ground that this money, and subsequent grants, should be authorized by the Legislature from year to year, and the clause in the bill vesting power in the Lieutenant-Governor in Council was depriving the House of its right to control the finances of the Province.

In an able and effective address Mr. N. W. Rowell said this provision in the bill was the most vicious piece of legislation that had been introduced in recent years. The Opposition was in hearty accord with the proposal to spend the money on development in the north country, but the right of the Legislature to control all public expenditure had been won by the Liberal party in 1872 and carried out ever since.

The Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, in an animated speech, replied that the objection of the Opposition was not an earnest of its intention to aid the Government in its development work. At the best only about \$350,000 could be used this year. This would build about three hundred miles of roads, open up about three-quarters of a million acres of land and provide some five thousand farms.

Mr. J. C. Elliott (West Middlesex) said the policy of the Government was hazy, and the Prime Minister argued that the people of the Province were prepared to entrust the Government with any such expenditure.

Approve of Development.

Mr. Rowell commenced by expressing approval of the policy of developing and opening up Northern Ontario. It was a policy necessary in the interests of the Province, and particularly in the interests of that north country. He was glad to see that after many years the Government had awakened to the fact, and suggested that a recent meeting at Kenora at which a desire was expressed to have that section of the Province annexed to Manitoba might have been held with a view to waking up the Government to the needs of the north.

The voting of \$5,000,000 for this purpose was an acknowledgment that the Government had not been awake to the needs of that country in the past. "The Government has at last awakened. It desires to do something, but it does not know what to do. It desires some money to spend, but it does not know how it wants to spend it. The Government is like a man who wakes out of a dream, and has not yet got its bearings, nor found out where it is."

Why \$5,000,000?

According to a statement of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, \$350,000 was all the Government proposed to spend this year for that purpose, and yet the Government was asking the House to vote a sum of \$5,000,000. What was needed in Northern Ontario was not so much a loan of \$5,000,000 as a comprehensive policy for the settlement of that country—as getting good settlers who

would work that policy out. Having got the men there the House would cheerfully give them the money.

"This matter is so important," continued Mr. Rowell, "that I may say that the Government would be justified in creating a whole new department for the work of opening up Northern Ontario. If it had a Minister who could give the whole of his time to that work we would get some very practical and beneficial results if there was a wise man at the head of it."

Did Not Understand.

The Government, he said, was trying to deal with a situation which it did not understand and which it had not worked out. There was no stated period over which the spending of the \$5,000,000 was to extend. What good reason was there for thus taking away from the Legislature the right to appropriate each year the amount to be spent for this purpose?

It had been instanced as a precedent the action of the Federal Government in appropriating an amount for exploring the Northwest Territories without actually stating what work was to be done. The cases were not parallel, said Mr. Rowell. Nothing had been known at that time of the Northwest Territories, whereas Ontario had now been partly explored. The only precedent Mr. Rowell could find was a similar appropriation made by the Sandfield Macdonald Government, where it attempted to take the power of spending money away from the House. The result was that the Government had to resign. The principle which the Liberal party fought for in 1872 was the right of the Legislative Assembly to control the expending of its money. That had become part of the constitution. Since that time no money had been placed in the hands of the Executive to spend without the approval of the House.

"I venture to suggest that if the control of this money is placed in the hands of the Executive, in place of having one Elk Lake telegram we will have no one knows how many."

Mr. Rowell also pointed to the British Parliament, where the power of spending money was always reserved to the House of Commons. The only case in which money was placed in the hands of the Executive was in case of emergency, such as war.

Mr. Rowell said he did not propose to block the second reading of the bill, but at a later stage he would move an amendment to it.

Would Use Federal Grant.

The most pressing need of the north country, explained Mr. Hearst, was good roads to help the settler in with his effects and out with his products, and to assist in opening up the land. It was the intention of the Government to use the whole of the expected grant from the Dominion for good roads in New Ontario, which was about \$350,000, but unfortunately, through the action of the Senate, the money would not be available for another year at least. The Government was anxious that there should be no delay, and work would be commenced as soon as practicable. This would provide employment at remunerative wages to settlers. Considerable attention would, of course, be paid to the Temiskaming district,