

BUDGET DEBATE ENDS: TWO REPORTS DELAYED

Hydro and T. & N. O. Figures
Not Available in Time

THE VOTE STANDS 73 TO 20

Mr. Rowell Criticizes Failure to Provide for 1913 Deficit — Colonization Roads Built for Political Purposes.

With a whirlwind finish the Budget debate was concluded in the Legislature yesterday afternoon, and the Opposition amendment moved by Mr. C. M. Bowman (North Bruce) respecting the expenditure on the new Government House was rejected by a vote of seventy-three to twenty. There were a number of absentees, and Mr. Allan Studholme (East Hamilton) gave the Government the benefit of the Labor support. There were only three speakers during the afternoon—Mr. Studholme, Mr. Rowell and Sir James Whitney.

A Broad Review.

The two leaders were in striking contrast. Mr. Rowell's speech was a broad review of the financial position of the Province. He criticized the Government for their failure to supply the members with the detailed reports of the Timiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway Commission and Hydro-electric Commission in sufficient time to enable the information to be useful in discussing the management of these two important departments of the Provincial services, and hoped the Government would be in a position to state that the proposal to extend the Hydro-electric system to benefit farmers and rural municipalities would be advanced a step. There was, he said, an unfortunate lack of information as to the success of the experiments conducted by the Hydro-electric Commission last year. There was an utter failure on the part of the Acting Provincial Treasurer to give any indication of how the Government proposed to meet the inevitable deficit on current account for 1913.

Sir James Whitney spoke for less than forty minutes.

The Opposition amendment declared a willingness to vote all the money needed for reasonable expenditures, but condemned the extravagance and waste of funds on the ill-chosen Government House.

Mr. Rowell's Address.

Mr. Rowell prefaced his remarks with a felicitous salutation to Mr. Lucas as Acting Provincial Treasurer, and expressed the hope that when he was next called upon to deliver the Budget he would be confirmed in the office of Provincial Treasurer. "I am sure, now that the Prime Minister knows he has the hearty support of the members on this side of the House in this matter, that he will deal with the matter at once."

Regretting that an adequate discussion of the financial affairs of the Province would not be possible while the reports of two of the most important departments of the Government were not ready—namely, the Timiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway and the Hydro-electric Power Commission—Mr. Rowell pointed out that the limited amount of information which had been given to the

members was entirely insufficient to enable the members of the Opposition to deal with the Budget in any comprehensive manner. He hoped this would be the last occasion when the members would be called upon to discuss the financial affairs of the Province without these reports in printed form before them. It was, of course, reasonable that certain information which it was desired to include could not be prepared in time for the House, but a detailed accounting of the transactions of these two important departments, along with the necessary tabulations, should be prepared in ample time for proper discussion before the House was called upon to deal with the finances of the Province.

Real Origin of the Hydro.

In a brief reference to the kudos claimed by the Government for the success of the Hydro-electric scheme, Mr. Rowell declared that this movement was the outcome of an urgent appeal by the municipalities, that something should be done, and the first committee appointed to deal with the matter was composed, so it happened, of three Liberals. The present Chairman of the Hydro-electric Power Commission came into the work as the representative of the municipalities under an act passed by the Liberal Administration which preceded the present Government.

"Not only do we rejoice in the progress that has been so far made," said Mr. Rowell, "but we are concerned about the future. On the first occasion on which I had the honor of addressing the House this session on the address in reply to the speech from the Throne I drew attention to the fact that two very important movements had been under consideration by the Hydro-electric Power Commission during the past year. The first was the application of Hydro-electric energy to the uses of the farmers of the Province, and the second to use it as a means of assisting the rural municipalities to secure cheap transportation.

"I asked the Government whether they were behind the Chairman of the Hydro-electric Power Commission in promoting these measures for the benefit of the people," he continued, "and I hope the Prime Minister will not close this debate this afternoon without making some statement on this important matter, and let us know where the Government stand." (Applause.)

Government Plans in the Dark.

Dealing with the financial statement presented by the Acting Treasurer, Mr. Rowell said an enlightening and interesting account of the receipts and expenditures for the past year had been given to the members, and even of the estimated receipts and expenditures for the current year. Mr. Lucas had been frank in admitting a deficit on current receipts and expenditures of \$245,990, but in his review of the finances for the year 1913 there had been no attempt at all to deal in a comprehensive way with the needs of the Province and how the Government proposed to meet them. In a growing community like the Province of Ontario little fault could be found with a nominal deficit so long as the money was wisely expended and the people received good value in return. The fault in the present instance was with a large deficit staring them in the face for the current year, and how the Government proposed to meet it, whether by imposing additional tax burdens or by borrowing on the credit of the Province.

Mr. Rowell ventured the assertion that no Budget was ever presented to the House of Commons at Ottawa that did not include an indication from the Government how the revenue for the current year was to be raised, and the same practice had been followed in the British House of Commons.

Successive Deficits.

In the absence of any statement from the Acting Treasurer, Mr. Rowell, turning to the public accounts, gave to the House a review of our financial outlook. While the late Liberal Government had always met the expenditures out of current receipts, he was not disposed to criticize too strongly a nominal deficit on the part of the Government if the money was wisely expended and the people got value for every dollar. Going back for a year, he pointed out