

Thursday - January - 31st

OLD-AGE PENSIONS WILL BE CHIEF TOPIC BEFORE LEGISLATORS

Government's Proposal to Charge Municipalities 25 Per Cent. of Cost Prob- ably Most Contentious Item on Sessional Agenda

REFERENCE IN SPEECH TO ILLNESS OF KING

"Legislation Respecting Old-Age Pensions" is the outstanding item on the sessional bill-of-fare for the Province of Ontario.

This was evident when the Speech from the Throne was brought down at the opening of the Assembly yesterday afternoon.

This Speech, which embodies the menu for the session, turned out to be more in retrospect than forecast. And while, through it, the Government speaks with pride, and at length, of developments and progress in agriculture, education, mining, highway extensions, health affairs, and Hydro undertakings, and while it refers to the administration of the Apprenticeship Act of last session, the workings of the legislation to prevent frauds in the sale of securities, and the financial support of the Research Foundation, there is but a comparatively brief outline of the legislative business to come before the House.

All in One Paragraph.

A score of paragraphs constitute this speech. And the preview of new legislation is given in one. It reads: "Legislation will be submitted to you respecting old-age pensions, respecting Provincial forests, for the preservation of the pulpwood resources of the Province, to amend the Niagara Parks Act, dealing with frauds in real estate transactions, respecting widows and orphans, respecting the Election Act, to improve the mining regulations, to amend the Registry Act, to amend the Constables Act, respecting the school laws, to amend the Probation Act, respecting the sale of Alberta coal, and for other purposes."

From this meagre description it is seen that the "feature" of the year's legislative program is the old-age pensions scheme. The Government's proposal, heralded in The Globe yesterday, to have municipalities foot 25 per cent. of the pensions will apparently be the chief topic of the session, and probably the most contentious.

The other legislative proposals have also been forecast before in The Globe, so that, as far as the public is concerned, there was but little new announcement in the document brought down yesterday.

Will Be Surplus.

The Speech contains a reference to financial matters. For instance, there is to be a surplus. And also the members are told that they will be asked to make further financial provision for carrying on developments in the north and northwestern sections of the Province.

There is no mention in the Speech of the Liquor Control Board or the operation of the act, which seems to corroborate the pre-sessional statements that there would be "no more amendments."

At the outset of the Speech reference is made to the illness of his Majesty. There is an expression of gratitude for the progress that he had made toward recovery, and an earnest prayer that he may be speedily restored again to complete good health.

Speech From Throne.

The Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor was as follows:

"Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

"It is my privilege to welcome you to the Third Session of the Seventeenth Legislature of this Province.

"I join with you in an expression of devout thanks to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest of the past year, and for the manifold blessings we have enjoyed as a people.

"On this occasion we are all conscious of a deep solicitude for the health of our Gracious Sovereign, and of gratitude for the progress he has been enabled to make toward recovery. Our earnest prayer is that it may please God to restore his Majesty fully to health and strength.

Since your last session, this Province has been favored by a visit from the British Empire Parliamentary Association, representing all the self-governing portions of the Empire. As a result of the gathering, a branch of the organization was formed for Ontario, which will bring the members of this Assembly into closer touch with British Parliamentary institutions throughout the world.

Condition of Agriculture.

"Agricultural production on the whole sustained the outstanding position of the industry, notwithstanding handicaps experienced in some localities from unusual seasonal conditions. The marked progress in the methods of dairying has resulted in the great volume and value of our dairy products, but the most gratifying feature has been the general improvement in quality. Efforts to place Ontario fruit advantageously before consumers in the British Isles have been well received, and offer a promising field of usefulness. An encouraging feature of the activities of the department is the ever-increasing interest manifested in the work of the Agricultural College, and in the facilities for the spread of agricultural instruction throughout the Province.

"Negotiations have been carried on between the Overseas Settlement Board and representatives of the Federal Government and my Ministers with a view to the encouragement of British immigration to this Province.

"There are many signs that progress in education continues to characterize the Province. The extension of auxiliary classes for the advantage of the underprivileged is meeting with satisfactory results. The development of the special agricultural courses, established in several secondary school centres, warrants the expectation that the demand for this type of education will increase. Commendable progress has been made in the efforts to carry instruction to the frontiers of settlement, through the medium of the correspondence courses and the "schools on wheels."

Electric Power Problems.

"There is gratifying evidence of the advance of the publicly owned electrical power undertakings, both in the quantity of power supplied and the number of municipalities served. Important development operations are awaiting judicial decision as to the constitutional rights of the Province regarding water powers. A special feature of this year's work is the rapid spread of the service throughout the rural parts of the Province, thus bringing more and more to the agricultural community the great advantage of the power resources by which we are endowed.

"Our system of highways was extended during the past season by the addition of 200 miles of permanent pavement. The increased traffic, and the attendant dangers, have necessitated the active campaign which has been carried on in the interest of public safety. A revision of the tax on gasoline is contemplated in order that the cost of the construction and maintenance of the highways may be more adequately borne by those who receive the advantage of this public service, and may be more equitably distributed.

"It is encouraging to observe the ready response on the part of the public to the educational campaign of the Department of Health. In several localities it was found that the home nursing classes rendered valuable service during the recent epidemic of influenza. Further attention is being given to the hygienic conditions in industry with a view to coping with diseases incidental to its operations.

"The administration of the Apprenticeship Act, passed at the last session of the Legislature, has been inaugurated. A Provincial Apprenticeship Committee, comprising an equal number of employers and employees, an Inspector of Apprenticeship, and other assistants, have been appointed. A number of apprentices engaged in occupations pertaining to the building trades have been registered, and arrangements are being completed for their proper training in all matters associated with the vocations they intend to follow.

Progress in Mining.

"The past year was one of notable progress in the mining industry, which surpassed all previous records of production. Increasing interest marked gold mining, both in the established fields and in the new and extensive areas under exploration. The discovery of large masses of rich copper ore constitutes an important addition to the copper resources of the Empire.

"In pursuance of the legislation for the prevention of frauds in the sale of securities, brokers and salesmen of securities have been brought under a measure of public control and regulation. There is reason to believe that the law will prove an effective means of maintaining a higher standard of service, and affording a necessary safeguard to investors.

"The very generous response made to the appeal for financial support for the Research Foundation of Ontario has ensured the satisfactory launching of that important undertaking. Inasmuch as the individual contributions have exceeded the sum provided by this Legislature, you will be asked to increase your appropriation correspondingly.

"You will be requested to make further financial provision for carrying on the important work of the Department of Northern and Northwestern Development in the advancement of the newer portions of the Province.

Old-Age Pensions.

"Legislation will be submitted to you respecting old-age pensions, respecting Provincial forests, for the preservation of the pulpwood resources of the Province, to amend the Niagara Parks Act, dealing with frauds in real estate transactions, respecting widows and orphans, respecting the Election Act, to improve the mining regulations, to amend the

Registry Act, to amend the Constables Act, respecting the school laws, to amend the Probation Act, respecting the sale of Alberta coal, and for other purposes.

"The revenues of the Province have been in excess of the estimates, and have enabled my Government to meet the increasing requirements of the Province with a favorable balance on the year's financial operations. At an early date the Public Accounts will be laid before you, and the estimates of expenditures required to maintain the various Provincial undertakings.

"In conclusion, I trust that, under the guidance of Providence, your consideration of the various matters that will be brought to your attention will advance the common welfare and promote the prosperity of this Province."