

BONUS SUGGESTED ON ONTARIO STEEL FROM ONTARIO ORE

Probe of Hydro Costs, More Modern Farming in North, Threefold Plan to Better Liquor Law Conditions and New System of Gas Tax Col- lection Urged

LONGEST SESSION OF HOUSE TO DATE

Suggestion from Hon. James Lyons (Conservative, Sault Ste. Marie) that the Government might well legislate a per-ton bonus on grades of steel producible in Ontario; suggestion from C. A. Robertson (Liberal, North Huron) that the Government investigate Hydro distribution costs, and make Provincial Universities of Queen's and Western; suggestion from F. G. Sandy (Progressive, South Victoria) that the Government undertake more modern scientific farming methods in aid of Northern settlers, and a study of cheaper transportation in aid of agriculture generally; suggestion from W. S. Haney (Conservative, West Lambton) that the Government consider establishment of accident insurance for Provincial Air Force fliers; suggestion from P. W. Pearson (Liberal, North York) that the Government adopt his threefold plan of bettering the Liquor Control Act and present conditions thereunder, and suggestion from J. G. Taylor (Progressive, North Grey) that the Government abandon the present system of gas tax collection were features of the debate in the Ontario Legislature yesterday afternoon and last night, and, incidentally, of the longest sitting in which the House has indulged to date this session.

"Suggestion Day."

It was truly "Suggestion Day" with Opposition and Conservative members doing the suggesting, and with the Government on the target end of the situation. It was a dragging day, too, and there were no complaints heard at 11.15 when H. H. Ball (Conservative, Toronto-Eglinton) suggested adjournment, and quits were called until Tuesday afternoon next.

The one particular sparkle of seven hours of debate was made manifest when Hon. Joseph E. Thompson, deputizing for the Speaker of the House, suggested that Mr. Pearson retract a statement he had made, and got from the North York member the blunt declaration that he would resign his seat rather than back down on the fact that he had been furnished the information on which his statement had been based.

Rural Hydro, liquor, education, agriculture, St. Lawrence waterway, Northern development, roads, and a dozen other matters of policy on which Opposition critics like to train their sights, and which Government benchers never fail to laud, passed in review before the curtain dropped.

Legislative Proposal.

When Mr. Lyons resumed his address yesterday afternoon he continued with his remarks on the iron and steel situation, maintaining that the industry in Canada should be put in such a position that it could compete with the United States. And with this in view he had a legislative proposal for the Ontario authorities.

"I want to suggest to the Government and to the House," said he, "that they give serious and careful consideration to the passing of legislation that will provide a bonus per ton on certain grades of steel that can be produced right here in Ontario, with the understanding that the steel so produced shall be manufactured from the iron ores mined in the Province of Ontario, and with the further provision that the bounty will cease to apply on all grades of steel which may be included in tariffs brought down by the Dominion

Government from time to time applying on similar steel imported in the Dominion of Canada."

"This," said Mr. Lyons, "puts us in the position of doing what the Dominion Government ought to do, but we should do it." It might, said he, be considered as a radical move, but so had been the Liquor Control Act, which, he maintained, had turned out to be such a fine piece of legislation.

Calls for Protection.

He thought that the bonuses as provided for in his suggestion would not exceed half a million dollars a year, and this was not such a great amount when one considered the sums already advanced for the carrying on of the Industrial Research Foundation in Ontario. And, as far as research was concerned, said he, "we don't need research in the steel industry, for we know what is wrong with it already. The trouble is that we haven't got our own markets protected." Why, he asked, if the Government bonused Hydro, education and agriculture, should it not also bonus the steel industry?

Next, computing his figures on the basis that more than \$312,000,000 worth of iron and steel was imported from the United States by Canada last year, he observed that if this industry had been in Canada \$187,000,000 would have been paid in wages. If this business was here, it would mean that 95,000 workers would be employed and that, with each having five of a family, 475,000 people would be added to the population. Moreover, he figured out that these people would provide a market of \$131,000,000 for agricultural and other products. On the basis that there are seven tons of raw material to one of steel, he figured that the railways would get 70,000,000 additional tons of freight if the iron and steel industry was in Canada. There would be \$8,600,000 worth of increased railway earnings, and 5,000 extra railwaymen would be given employment.

Ottawa Atmosphere.

From this Mr. Lyons led into a general review of tariff conditions, and then the atmosphere in the House seemed to be more that of the Federal Parliament than the Ontario Legislature. For he talked of tariff walls and protection, and denounced the "free-traders across the floor," and foresaw that there would be "no more chance of reciprocity within forty years than of the Liberals getting back into power."

He produced speeches of Government heads in the United States to show how the States were throwing the tariff walls higher and higher. But when he quoted Mr. Hoover on the subject, Hon. H. C. Nixon (Progressive, Brant) suggested that he also quote Mr. Hoover on the prohibition question, and suggested that the prosperity in the United States attributed by Mr. Lyons to the tariff might be attributed to prohibition.

Mr. Lyons referred again later to developments in Northern Ontario. He analyzed the production of the Hollinger Mine and the payroll to show what an important part such developments played in the development of the Province generally. Then, on the subject of Hydro, he took the view that, considering the Government bonuses, the farmers were getting electric power at less than cost.

Something Wrong.

C. A. Robertson (Lib., North Huron) praised Foster Moffat (Conservative, South Bruce) for his "fearless discussion of Hydro matters," and stated that the people of Bruce were loyal to the Foshay interests for the very good reason that the Foshay people offered better rates than the Hydro Commission. Something was seriously wrong, he stated, with Hydro costs. For instance, in his home town, Goderich, the rate was \$42 today, with more than 1,000 Hydro horsepower being used, when 14 years ago it was only \$37, notwithstanding the fact that less than 200 horsepower was consumed.

"These figures are difficult to understand," challenged Mr. Robertson. "I'm afraid I'm like the Prime Minister and am not an engineer. Consequently the figures are a bit beyond me. I do feel, however, that the time is ripe for an investigation into the costs of Hydro distribution."

Not so long ago, said Mr. Robertson, he had taken a case to Hon. J. R. Cooke, Hydro Commissioner, and Mr. Cooke had admitted that the matter was one of "real grievance." At the latter's suggestion, he, Mr. Robertson, had taken the case up with the Hydro engineers, and had been advised that "politicians should keep out of Hydro." When he had quoted Mr. Cooke's opinion he had been met with the reply that "the Minister hasn't anything more to say about it than you have." Rather arrogant talk, observed Mr. Robertson, for people who "fixed their own salaries."

Ask Maitland Power.

Goderich's situation had reached the point, said the speaker, where Council had passed a resolution asking the Hydro to develop power on Maitland River, rather than bring it all the way from Niagara, under existing rates.

Mr. Ferguson had suggested, he said, co-operation between Hydro and the rural power user. Well, he observed, he could not see how co-operation could be achieved in the face of the present methods of power distribution. North Huron, he said, had a population of about 12,000 people. They wanted Hydro, but at the present time he doubted if more than 50 farmers were getting it.

Mr. Robertson claimed that the country was getting away from the first conception of "good roads." Back in pre-motor-car days good roads were taken to mean the building of market roads to leading towns. Nowadays they meant nothing more than trunk lines connecting one town with another, and meaning little to the back concessions and the remoter districts. The present Government, he said, was laying too much stress on Provincial highways, particularly in the face of what the farmers had to contribute toward them.

Hon. Mr. Henry—You wouldn't ask for any more Provincial highways in Huron, then?

Mr. Robertson—I'm afraid I'll have to warn the honorable member that our County Council will be down before long asking some extra concessions of him.

No Action on School Bill.

A show-down on Premier Ferguson's Township School Boards Bill—"to pass or not to pass"—was demanded by Mr. Robertson. In 1925 the Minister of Education had termed "deplorable" conditions existing in the rural districts, and yet the department had remained inactive on the matter—had not supplied remedial measures.

"What do you mean by inactivity?" asked Mr. Henry. "When the Prime Minister speaks on education, I'm certain you will find that considerable progress has been made."

Mr. Robertson expressed fear that the large interests which towns had vested in local high schools might be lost if the suggestion in the Township School Boards Bill—that high schools might be built in every township—was adopted.

"It's purely a local matter," put in Premier Ferguson. "The people have the say as to what they need or want. They always initiate movements for schools. It is solely in their hands. The department does not force anything on them."

Extra Aid for Western.

For Western University, at London, Mr. Robertson asked extra financial aid from the Government. The University of Toronto, he stated, was in the fortunate position of drawing the greater part of its student enrolment from the city and close outside. The time would come, he figured, when the university would serve Toronto alone. Western and Queen's Universities were doing good work, and it was only right, he submitted, that they should be taken over as Provincial universities, too.

"I think Western will be satisfied with what we are going to do for them," said the Premier.

"I'm glad to have that assurance," said Mr. Robertson. "Down there, they figure that you are going to increase your contribution, but they wanted more assurance if they could get it."

Mr. Robertson could not see how "temperance" was to be promoted if the sale of liquor in the Provinces was to increase from 25 to 30 per cent. yearly.

"The Premier," he giped, "waxes eloquent when he talks temperance, but is not very convincing. In other words, he 'shouts' temperance and 'whispers' the evils of the Liquor Control Act."