

Feb. 19.

pressed the hope that the Highways Department would not suffer too greatly while the Premier is breaking in his new lieutenant. He thought that "much money would have been saved this Province and the municipalities if School Boards had not been allowed to run wild because of lack of supervision in the building of schools and payment of building grants."

Mr. Robertson declared a similar plea to that made by Argue Martin (Conservative, Hamilton West), in moving the adoption of the Address, that the Opposition would not indulge in much criticism in this time of stress, had been put forward the preceding year. At that time, he said, "we were inclined to listen, in the belief that the Government really was seized with the gravity of the situation—but what do we find? The same reckless extravagance, the same disregard of the people's money, their rights and opinions. Economy was a word without intent or meaning, and it was not until late in 1931 that the Government suddenly realized what was apparent to every one else."

#### "Fatherly Solicitude."

"Then, in a spasm of fatherly solicitude for the municipalities, we see ~~two~~ of the Cabinet, Mr. Price and Mr. Macaulay, imploring the minor municipalities to go slow and economize," he continued. "Their solicitude was the joke of the season. They may have been actuated by the belief that when the municipalities borrow

too freely the Provincial credit also is impaired, but no matter which way you turn you see evidence of their folly. The latest evidence came when they floated the recent loan, paying 6 per cent. interest—spendthrift folly and altogether unnecessary, besides setting a higher rate of interest for private loans. Simultaneously with the floating of the Provincial loan my own town got money for 5 per cent.

"A reduction is made in the salaries of the civil servants, only to be handed to the money interests of Toronto or to other financial institutions," Mr. Robertson went on.

Criticizing the erection of the addition to the East Block of the Parliament Buildings, Mr. Robertson said: "The sad part of it is that, unless it is rushed to completion soon, the Minister of Public Works will have done as many another has done—built himself out of house and home, only to have somebody else move in and enjoy it."

#### Road Tax Reduction Urged.

Urging a reduction in road taxes, Mr. Robertson said: "The crying need of the people today is a more equitable system of taxation, and nowhere is that more patent than in the various methods used to obtain money in the name of good roads. The cities and separated towns build their own roads, contribute to sub-areas, pay the usual license and gas tax, and because they receive no aid they allege an injustice. The county units pay the same gas and license tax as the cities, and in addition 20 per cent. of the cost of Provincial highways and 50 per cent. of the cost of county roads, all feeders of the great centres of population, besides building their own local roads, and they contend the burden is too great.

"It is a generally accepted fact that those who use the roads and those who benefit should pay, but the question is: Are we paying on an equitable basis? Roughly, the assessment of the cities and separated towns is \$2,000,000,000, and the county units \$1,000,000,000.

"Why have county rates doubled within the last ten years?" he asked, stating that it was largely because of the increased cost of education, good roads, and administration of justice and old-age pensions.

"The Government," he said, "will no doubt point to the sum of \$10,000,000 spent on education, yet I want to point out that, largely because of regulations by the department, a vicious grant system and the authority given School Inspectors, many School Boards and municipalities have been forced into an elaborate building scheme that is breaking their backs today. The total school debenture debt of the Province today is \$86,551,000."

#### Liquor System Denounced.

On the subject of the Liquor Control Act, Mr. Robertson said this was not the time to "take from the people \$50,000,000 in hard cash for something not in the interest of economy but rather the reverse. The Government enforcement officers," he said, "recognize the fact that the purchase of liquor is a vicious habit by cancelling the permits held by people who apply for relief, and the same principle should apply to those who can afford to purchase liquor. Many business men today are working overtime to make ends meet, yet we see three Commissioners in the employ of the Government drawing \$40,000 a year to conduct a business that could be managed by one good executive.

"Simply because the Government has a monopoly is no reason for having such highly paid officials and extensively overstaffed stores. Maybe I am prejudiced—because I would not sell the stuff in any form. The Government pleads for economy, yet in the administration of the Liquor Control Act we see the greatest example of recklessness and favoritism existing in Ontario today."

Referring briefly to the question of Hydro, Mr. Robertson said that what was needed was reduced horsepower cost to urban municipalities. "After that," he averred, "the situation will adjust itself."

**"I Never Have Criticized Public Ownership, But What I Have Criticized Is Policy Which Has Made Hydro the Distributing System for Quebec Power Companies," Says Mr. Hepburn in Statement**

#### DETAILED ANSWER IS BEING PREPARED

(By WILLIAM MARCHINGTON.)

(Staff Correspondent of The Globe.)

OTTAWA, Feb. 18. — "I have repeatedly stated that I am strongly in favor of public ownership," said Mitchell F. Hepburn, M.P., Liberal Leader in Ontario, when asked tonight if he had any comment to make on Premier Henry's latest attack on him. "The Premier of Ontario is simply throwing out another smoke screen," said Mr. Hepburn.

"I never have criticized public ownership, but what I have criticized is the policy which has made the Ontario Hydro the distributing system for Quebec power companies."

Mr. Hepburn said his Milton speech, which Premier Henry assailed, was delivered eighteen months ago, and he did not remember offhand what he said at Milton.

Only a synopsis of the Premier's speech was available in Ottawa tonight, and Mr. Hepburn declared he would reply to it in detail after he had read a full report of the speech.