

per policy. This represented an increase of about \$68,000,000 over the amount at Dec. 31, 1934. Ontario policyholders paid into these companies by way of premiums over \$87,000,000, and received back over \$63,000,000 in death claims, etc.

There were, he said, seventy-one farmers' mutual insurance companies in Ontario. Three of these were weather insurance companies, writing 30 per cent. of the weather insurance written in Ontario. The other sixty-eight were fire insurers, carrying 85 per cent. of the insurance on farm property in force in Ontario.

#### Fewer Unemployed.

The Department of Labor, said Mr. Hepburn, reported at present 10,900 fewer workers than a year ago registered as unemployed at the employment offices in Ontario. During the last year the employment offices placed 4,000 men on farms during the spring and summer months, and

through co-operation with the Department of Northern Development placed 2,000 men on trans-Canada highway work since Aug. 1. Altogether 122,324 placements were made by these offices in the first ten months of this fiscal year. With the improvement in business conditions in the manufacturing industries of the Province disused factory buildings were being opened up and staffs taken on.

From the Department of Lands and Forests, Mr. Hepburn offered the announcement that last year's cut of pulpwood exceeded that of the previous year by 20 per cent.; the cut of ties was up 300,000. During the five-month period covered by the Public Accounts, the total amount received from all forest sources was \$379,674.97—an increase over the same period of the previous year of more than \$250,000.

#### Department of Mines.

The total value of the output of Ontario mines in 1935 was \$152,600,000, said Mr. Hepburn, as compared with \$145,854,000 in 1934. Gold production exceeded that of 1934 by \$2,850,000, with forty-four mills in operation. The increase in nickel was \$3,250,000, and other metals increased similarly.

"In view of the importance of this industry," said Mr. Hepburn, "it is proposed to allot an additional sum to the Department of Mines for the enlargement of its fruitful work. The department will send out into the field next summer twice as many geological survey parties as it did in 1935, and more prospector classes will be held. On the other hand, steps have already been taken to collect the arrears of acreage tax which has been allowed to accumulate for more than twelve years, and to throw open to the prospectors vast areas of territory which had been allowed to lay dormant and unexplored for more than a decade.

"Before leaving the subject of the Department of Mines I should like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to a valuable servant in the department, Thomas W. Gibson, former Deputy Minister of the Department of Mines and now consultant of that department. Mr. Gibson entered the service of the Ontario Government in June, 1880, so that in June next he will have completed fifty-six years of service.

#### Municipal Affairs.

"There were at the end of 1935 thirty-two municipalities under the close supervision of the Department of Municipal Affairs because of their defaults. Only one new one has been added since I last spoke to you in a Budget address. It is anticipated that during 1936 some ten to twelve refunding plans will be formulated and presented to creditors for their consideration.

"May I point out two important facts? One is that, generally speaking and except for these few places, representing less than 4 per cent. of all our municipalities, the municipal affairs of this Province are on a sound basis, and loose talk of general instability of municipal finances is entirely baseless.

"The total taxable debt of our urban municipalities is less than 12 per cent. of taxable wealth upon the assessment rolls. Rural Ontario has a total bonded debt of only \$8,000,000, or less than \$10 per capita.

"The next remark I have to make is to correct the impression created by certain statements which have gained considerable circulation that defaults among our municipalities are about \$120,000,000, or one-quarter of the total bonded debt of all municipalities. That is far from fact. At the end of 1935 the total debt past due and unpaid was about \$16,000,000 of principal and about \$5,000,000 of interest, or a total of approximately \$21,000,000."

#### Northern Development.

Regarding Northern development, the Premier said negotiations had been carried on with the Federal Government in regard to sharing an equal part of the cost of completing the Trans-Canada Highway. The unimproved and untouched gap (125 miles) designated by the present Government from North Bay to Sault Ste. Marie to White River had recently been approved by the Ottawa Government. In addition to this, as a result of the Dominion-Provincial conference, held in December last, it was expected several other roads that will be a benefit to Canada as a whole will be jointly undertaken.

#### Jobless Relief.

"That unemployment relief continues to be a major problem is indicated by the latest complete monthly returns available. These cover the month of December, 1935, during which time there were 347,620 persons in receipt of relief, as against over 420,194 during December, 1934," said the Prime Minister.

"Through representations made at the Dominion-Provincial Conference held in Ottawa in December, the Dominion grant-in-aid was increased from \$600,000 to \$1,050,000 a month, to continue to March 31, 1936. While \$1,050,000 fell somewhat short of 50 per cent. of the amount disbursed from the Provincial Treasury, it made a much more satisfactory division of relief costs as between Dominion and Province than that which has previously prevailed."

The total deposits in the twenty-three branches of the Province of Ontario savings offices on Dec. 31, 1935, amounted to \$32,084,815, as compared with the total deposits of \$21,449,527 on Oct. 31, 1934, in all of the seventeen branches, which was an actual increase of \$10,635,288. Mr. Hepburn pointed out. On comparing the Dec. 31, 1935, figures with the balance sheet for the five months' period ending March 31, 1935, when the total deposits amounted to \$22,326,489, an increase was indicated for the nine months of \$9,758,326.

Seven new offices have been opened, situated in the following places: Parliament Buildings; Yonge and Davenport, Toronto; Yonge and Broadway,

Toronto; Guelph, Kitchener, London and Windsor.

#### Scores Farm Board Policy.

The operation of the Ontario Agricultural Development Board under Conservative Administration was bitterly assailed by Premier Hepburn during his Budget speech in the Legislature yesterday when he said:

"I question if there was in the history of any financial institution in this country such an exhibition of improvident lending as would be revealed by an examination of the files of the Agricultural Development Board."

He gave one instance, involving a broker who owned an island in Lake Ontario, and who, falling on evil days, borrowed \$7,000 from the Provincial Farm Board, and then forgot about both the island and the loan, with the result that the Province was "stuck" with a piece of property for which the highest offer to date was \$1,000.

The present Government, he said, had been forced to discontinue farm loans because of inability "to make satisfactory financial arrangements with the people who control the supply of money," and also because the Dominion Farm Loans Board was functioning adequately.