

Report From Parliament

By Michael Starr
Member for Ontario

It is my intention in writing this column to convey to you, the people of Ontario, the events as they transpire in the House of Commons here at Ottawa and to give you my observations on matters which I feel will be of interest to you.

The opening of the Seventh Session of the twenty-first Parliament was quite impressive although I understand that some of the frills have been deleted. For a first-time observer such as I was, it proved to be very impressive, traditional and educational. The speech from the throne delivered by His Excellency The Governor-General of Canada, did not give any indication to the Canadian people that drastic relief was coming from the present heavy taxation. Nor did it indicate any sweeping government policies which would affect the general economy of the nation.

The House of Commons settled down to making speeches in reply to the speech from the Throne and it gave the members of the Opposition groups an opportunity to express their views on the shortcomings of the present government and to make suggestions to them on matters which would help greatly to relieve the taxpayers of this country. I took this opportunity to deliver my first speech. In the speech I pointed out the Federal Government's shortcomings in respect to municipalities in the field of taxation and requested the Federal Government to call a conference between the Federal and Provincial Governments so that agreements could be arrived at in the re-allocation of taxing powers through which the municipal taxpayer would be relieved.

The outstanding debates in the House of Commons have been on the report submitted by Mr. Currie wherein he brings forward the waste, extravagance, and thievery which had been going on in Army Camps and particularly the one in Petawawa.

Instead of instructing Mr. Currie to proceed with his investigations into other camps and all branches of the services, the government has instead appointed a special committee to delve into the report submitted by Mr. Currie and seems loath to further his investigations. No doubt they are fearful what careful scrutiny may reveal elsewhere.

There have been in recent days many resolutions presented to the House by members from all parties. The majority of these resolutions have been very sound, practical and beneficial to the people of Canada. However, the present government has not allowed any of these resolutions, with few exceptions, to be voted on. They either talk-out the debate or present a motion to terminate the debate. The motion is always carried because of the government's huge majority in the House.

Since the opening of this Session in November 1952, I have contacted the Postmaster-General on mail delivery in certain sections of Ontario Riding. The Town of Whitby was one of these. The Postmaster-General advised me that mail delivery could not be instituted because the revenue for the past fiscal year in Whitby was \$34,391.10 and since economy restrictions have been imposed upon the Post Office Department, it has been agreed that Letter Carrier Delivery will not be given where the revenue of a Post Office is below \$50,000.00.

I also contacted him in regard to mail delivery in Ajax or the establishment of mail boxes in the North and South portions of the Village in order to save residents from having to travel to the Central Post Office to deliver or receive their mail. His reply to this was to the effect that the revenue of the Ajax Post Office was \$24,756.34 for the last fiscal year and as he had informed me in the case of Whitby, it was not possible under the present regulations to consider the request. He informed me also that he was inquiring into the possibility of having a mail box placed in the north portion of the village as well as the south portion, and that he would advise me as soon as he receives a report on this matter.

The estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1954, have been tabled by the Minister of Finance. In the estimates under "Public Works" a sum of \$650,000.00 has been included for the new Post Office in Oshawa, the contract for which has already been let. It is expected that work will commence as soon as a temporary building has been erected to house that portion of the Post Office staff who presently occupy the old Y.M.C.A. Building which will be torn down.

There is also under the Public Works estimates a sum of \$20,500 for the City of Oshawa to be used in the repairs to the Harbour Wall.

An item appears under the same department in the amount of \$100,000.00 for the Town of Whitby, which is specified as "Improved accommodation for Postal Service." Upon inquiring at the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department, they advise me that this amount has been placed in the estimates because the department intends to investigate the condition of the Post Office in Whitby and to ascertain whether the remodelling of the present building will be sufficient or whether a new building is necessary.

I will from time to time endeavor to keep you posted on the matters which transpire in the House of Commons. Meanwhile we are all anxiously awaiting the budget which will be announced on February 19 and to hear the good news in regard to taxation!

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Ottawa Letter



BY... J.E. SMITH
M.P. NORTH YORK

Hon. Douglas Abbott, Minister of Finance announced in the House this week that the annual budget will be brought down Thursday evening next, Feb. 19th. This is always one of the most important events in the life of a Parliamentary session, but there is particular interest in this year's budget because of the prospect of substantial tax reductions.

The contents of the budget are of necessity closely guarded secrets and the utmost precautions are taken to prevent any possibility of its contents being learned by any one prior to presentation in the House of Commons.

In the weeks preceding budget day private members made their representations to the Minister and likewise representative organizations and industries and associations present briefs on problems of particular interest to them. So budget night we all wait anxiously in the hope that our briefs and representations have found favor with the Minister and that the policy for the coming year will include our ideas and recommendations.

As we pointed out nothing authoritative can be said on the budget, previous to its presentation but we all can and do indulge

in speculation. We think it is a pretty safe assumption that there will be a substantial reduction in income tax, particularly as it affects those in the lower income brackets. We expect also a lowering in the excise tax on tobacco and cigarettes and the abolishing of the nuisance radio tax which I have advocated for many years. The tax reductions we hope for will be the result of the increased productivity of our Nation, and if they are not as large as we would like it will be because of the continuing very heavy cost of our defence preparations. Be assured however the reductions will be as large as possible consistent with the maintenance of our present strong and healthy financial positions. We look forward to the budget with confident anticipation that it will be good news for the people of Canada and an added impetus to our already buoyant economy.

Royal Title
The Royal Style and Titles Act was passed this week designating the official title of our beloved Queen Elizabeth whose coronation is an event of national and world interest next June. Section 1 of the Bill provides this Parliament's assent to the

issue by Her Majesty of a proclamation establishing for the use of Canada the royal style and title set out.

Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

The above is the text that was agreed to at the Prime Ministers' conference held in London last December. There was at that conference a general desire to have the royal style and title in accord with the constitutional position of the various members of the Commonwealth and as uniform as possible.

Her Majesty is now the Queen of Canada, but she is Queen of Canada because she is the Queen of the United Kingdom, and because the people of Canada are glad to recognize as their sovereign the one who is sovereign of the United Kingdom. It was felt that it was desirable to have that recognition retained in the title as a proclamation of the historical traditional link between this country and the United Kingdom.

The Bill passed in a splendid and encouraging spirit of unity and harmony. The Prime Minister spoke with unmistakable feeling and sincerity in tribute to the significance of the Crown and of Her Majesty the Queen, and his remarks were unanimously concurred in by all opposition parties. At the conclusion of an inspiring hour all at the suggestion of the Prime Minister joined in singing God Save the Queen.

Rail Strike Averted
There was relief and general satisfaction here as throughout Canada that the threatened rail strike was averted. That it was averted is a real tribute to the

statesmanship of Prime Minister St. Laurent, Labor Minister Gregg and to the good sense and public spirit of Railway management and labor leaders.

A nation-wide rail strike at this time would have been a very serious matter for every Canadian and an expensive blow to our whole economy. Food supplies, fuel shipments, livestock and grain shipments all would have presented a real problem and there would have been widespread loss and inconvenience. It is most fortunate that such a strike was averted and we all have cause to be grateful.

National Library
Canada's new National Library will probably be completed by early 1956. It is to be erected here in Ottawa just a short distance west of the Parliament Buildings. Plans call for a beautiful building of stone in modern design which will provide for shelving more than 2-million books. The new cataloguing of some 400,000 books now in the Parliamentary Library will commence at once.

By government order it is now required that all Canadian book publishers send two copies of their publications to the National Library.

Aid For Flood Victims
Canada through Parliament lost no time in extending sympathy and offers of practical aid to flood victims in the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands. A substantial grant by the government will be supplemented by voluntary subscription campaigns which are already under way in many communities.

Immigration Minister Harris announced a government decision to offer assisted passage to any of the victims of the flood disaster who desired to migrate to Canada.

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