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THE MORNING GUARDIAN

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1903.

THE OPENING SPEECH.

The speech with which His Honor the Lieutenant Governor opened the Legislature yesterday is more largely devoted to the past than to the future. It touches upon the coronation, the illness and recovery of the King, the ending of the South African war, and the annexation of the Dutch territories there, the delegations to Ottawa, the conference of Premiers at Ottawa, the efforts to secure our share of the Fishery award, and to establish our claim to a representation of six members in the Commons, the advances in agriculture, the long ice-blockade and the efforts made to end it, and finally the praiseworthy endeavors to secure a greatly improved telegraph service. So far the speech dealt with matters of the past and present, but they are matters of importance and fitting to be brought under review at a time when our representatives assemble in their annual meeting.

The measures promised are reduced to the lowest possible limit,—a single one to provide for the consolidation of the laws of Province. We presume this has become necessary as it has become necessary from time to time in all other countries that have free institutions. We do not think there will be much real complaint because few measures are promised in the speech from the throne, as the omission will by no means prevent the introduction of such legislation as may be urgently called for. It was no doubt generally expected that some reference would have appeared in His Honor's speech to the agreement made by the Government with the Dominion Packing Company, which agreement was made subject to the approval of the Legislature. We are left to infer that the popular hostility which the publication of the agreement evoked throughout the Island has operated as a salutary caution to the Government, and that no effort will be made to secure legislative sanction for the agreement as first entered upon.

From the present outlook there appears no reason why the session should be a long one. It will be in the interest alike of the Government and of individual members that the necessary public business shall be transacted promptly and the session brought to a close. We are now close upon the opening of the spring's business activities and a large proportion of our representatives will desire to give their attention thereto. It seems a pity that the Legislature could not be called together at an earlier date but various causes have this year prevented an early meeting. The time is not propitious for new or risky ventures involving expenditure or increased obligations. We have at present a very scant allowance of income for provincial housekeeping and until our financial circumstances are in some way definitely improved a very real and practical economy seems to be imperatively demanded.

MR FOSTER'S DEFEAT.

A great deal of space has been devoted by the political newspapers east and west to the discussion of Hon. Mr. Foster's defeat in North Ontario. On a perusal of what these newspapers have to say we conclude that the reverse which befel the ex-Minister of Finance was due not to one but to many causes. One of these undoubtedly is the tendency of constituencies to elect at a by-election a supporter of the party in power. Another strong factor in the contest was the fact that the Liberal candidate, Mr. Grant was a resident of the riding, was personally acquainted with a large number of the electorate, is a good looking, magnetic

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young man, a capital speaker and a personal canvaser of remarkably captivating qualities. No doubt also that in a community of farmers the advocate of a moderate tariff had an advantage over one committed to high protection, as Mr. Foster is.

But as against a resident candidate Mr. Foster's greatest weakness was in the fact that he was a non-resident. Worse still, he was by birth and long residence a Maritime Province man. There is a strong prejudice in Ontario against the men from the east. An Ontario member once evoked great applause amongst his colleagues from that Province by representing Ontario as a well appointed milk cow at whose udder three Maritime calves were drawing their sustenance. No man from the Maritime section of Canada has ever yet been elected for an Ontario seat except after long residence, and no man defeated in a native Maritime constituency need hereafter apply for admission to the Commons by way of Ontario. An Ontario constituency frequently elects a man not a resident of that particular riding but he must be an Ontario man wholly devoted to the interests of the big Province, and one who has never coquetted with or courted any constituency outside of its bounds.

Being what he was, a Maritimer born and bred, and with his political past wholly identified with the eastern section of Canada, Mr. Foster attempted an almost hopeless task when he sought election among the Ontario farmers. He is an outsider; his opponent was a resident. He is not magnetic, but cold in temperament; his opponent had emphatically a winning way. Mr. Foster did not know the people whose votes he sought; his opponent knew the electorate very generally. Mr. Foster was never a successful personal canvasser. He depended altogether upon his fine platform efforts and the personal canvas of friends, Mr. Grant was alike brilliant on the platform and strong in personal canvas. Such were the circumstances as we gather from our exchanges. They indicate pretty clearly that in seeking a Commons seat Mr. Foster made a mistake to go outside of his own Province.

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