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Eloquent And Forceful Speech
 (Continued From Page 1)

of saying to the people of this Province that there were no vacant schools? (Applause) The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Bell Government for education in a splendid condition; that the schools were reopened, that the teachers' strike was settled and that everything was splendid as far as education was concerned. You know, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. gentleman knows, and the fact can be verified by looking up the report of the Chief Superintendent of Education, THAT EVERY YEAR THEY WERE IN POWER THERE WERE VACANT SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE, EVEN UP TO THE NUMBER OF TWENTY IN 1921, AND THAT THEY HAD AN AVERAGE OF ELEVEN VACANT SCHOOLS FOR THE FOUR YEARS THEY WERE IN POWER. One might reason from that, that education was in a much better condition under the two previous governments, when there was only an average of four vacant schools a year in the period of eight years.

But my hon. friends do not take into account the cause of those vacant schools, which they found when they came into power; the fact that if the schools were vacant, THEY AND THEIR PROPAGANDISTS WERE THE VERY CAUSE OF THEM. When they went through the Province and defeated the Arsenault Government on that point, as well as on one other which I will come to presently. When Premier Arsenault made a fair statement to the people that he would increase the amount of his education budget, he offered salaries by \$75,000; but that it would have to come out of the taxpayers of the Province, you know what happened. Those gentlemen opposite, and the party they supported, said they would give the increase AND NOT ADD ONE CENT OF TAXES UPON THE PEOPLE. And the people believed them!

Even after they came into power, if you want to pursue their policy a little further—then, by what manner of means did the teachers get their increase, and the increase of the Province of \$75,000? It was not only after the professors were compelled to go on strike, and also the teachers of the Province threatened to strike and post-poned their threatened action until the Government was given some time to consider it, but BOTH THE TEACHERS AND THE PROFESSORS HAD TO TAKE THAT GOVERNMENT BY THE THROAT IN ORDER TO GET THEIR INCREASE. Those are the gentlemen who are boasting today, who will stand up and say that they solved the education problem of this Province. It was an easy solution to find an additional \$100,000, by taking it out of the pockets of the taxpayers of the country!

Mr. Matheson increased the teachers' salaries by \$50,000, but did not take it out of the taxpayers' pockets; he found another source of revenue. So there are different ways of helping out education.

The Problem of The Small Schools.

My hon. friend from the First District of Prince (Mr. Blanchard) tried this morning to read into the Premier's speech the intention of this Government to lower the standard of education in this Province; to replace first class teachers by second class teachers. I think that every hon. member of the Opposition, the remarks of the Premier, or the Premier must have been misquoted, because I do not think that the Premier entertains any such sentiment, nor does any member of the Government desire to lower the educational standard of the Province. I think every hon. member is correct, and will be directed, to raise the standard. But the Premier's statement will certainly stand the test.

I think any reasonable man will say that where we have small schools, of from four to seven pupils, as the advanced members of the Opposition are concerned, whether you have a first class teacher or a second class teacher;—or I might go further and say, even a third class teacher; because as a rule those pupils are in the primary grades, having a third or second class teacher, and the Government made a mistake, and a serious mistake, was that they degraded the schools of the Province in this way; up to the time they amended the Act providing that first class teachers should not be paid first class salary unless teaching in first class schools. It was the opportunity of winning splendid prizes and they will be greatly stimulated in their studies. To both the Lieutenant Governor and to Mr. Shaw, who have been so generous in that regard I think the unstinted thanks of the Province is due. (Applause)

The Roads Problem.

The other big problem in this Province is Roads. We have heard a lot about roads and I suppose we will always hear about them. We hear a great many theories about them. I suppose it is a debatable question now among us, whether the road "improves with age" or not. It is just a question. Looking at it from a reasonable point of view, one would say that a road would not improve with age. Certain things might settle and become hard and more permanent, but you would think that age would make more out of it. However, we have got a good many conflicting reports. The strange thing is that a road like the Western Road, which was a good road in 1921 and 1922, should have kept improving with age until 1923, and since that time, that it should have gone all to pieces,—that the improvement with age should have ceased coincident with the return of this Government to power! (Laughter) It is a very strange phenomena that is pretty hard to understand. It is something that we have learned during the debate on this Address; that, whether older bushes can grow and become such an obstruction to traffic in one year,—another very strange thing. I didn't know that older bushes grew so fast. I suppose next year that Western Road will be impassable; those older bushes will grow up all this winter and there will be a complete blockade, if their growth is proportionate!

The member for First Prince (Mr. Blanchard) congratulated the Minister of Public Works upon one thing, that he had pursued the wise policy of the Bell Government with regard to the roads, never changing it one iota. From all that we have heard of the Bell Government from my hon. friends their record was perfect. There never was anything wrong with the Bell Government, if I had heard a little more I would have begun to think it was a supernatural Government. So I will ask the hon. gentleman, what could be expected? Isn't it the natural desire of every reasonable man to attain to perfection? If the Minister of Public Works is following out a perfect record, you could not blame him. But anyone who heard the Minister deliver his speech this morning, would not conclude, especially if he was not following the policy of the Bell Government; that he had changed it very materially in its essential points. He pointed out the weakness of the late Government's policy and showed, by the figures he gave in some particular instances how the work could have been done more cheaply. He pointed out, in brief, that he had gone away from the policy of the Bell Government. However they say it is the same policy. The public accounts will show just how their policy was carried out, and if it is the same policy, and if the Government has had able to build roads five or six hundred dollars a mile cheaper than the late Government, then this Government will be at least, entitled to some credit; for doing business a little more economically. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn from that argument. As far as the member in this case is concerned, I do not think any one has said that he was opposed to a policy of permanent roads. That statement has been made, that we have been opposed to this policy of permanent roads. I do not know of any man on this side who ever made such a statement.

MR. SAUNDERS: What about the resolution read?

HON. DR. McMILLAN: We will go back further than that resolution—to the time when the policy was instituted and inaugurated by the Conservative Government under Premier Arsenault. From the time this policy was instituted up to the present time our policy has been the very same, and I should remind the hon. gentlemen opposite of the fact that they gained the elections of 1919 in opposition to improved roads, and in opposition to the increase of \$75,000 for education. (Applause). Is not that so?

MR. SAUNDERS: No.

HON. DR. McMILLAN: That is how they gained the reins of power in this country; and when they came in they just did the opposite of what they had promised. That is the reason why the people of this Province turned them out so ingloriously just a year and a half ago,—for breaking faith. (Applause) It takes the Liberal party a long time to learn that lesson, that they must keep faith with the people, that when they lay down a platform and make certain definite pre-election promises, they must carry those promises out, and that it is better to make an honest endeavor to carry them out, even imperfectly than to do the opposite. But the Liberal party has never learned that lesson, either in Dominion politics or in local politics, and those gentlemen sitting opposite are the result. (Applause). The cause was not as one gentleman said in disgust that day in July 1923, "the divine disapprobation of a stiff-necked people." It was disapprobation, all right, but whether we have divine or not I would not like to say.

The "Charity" Plea Answered.

My hon. friends should be the last to make any criticism about road maintenance. They pleaded for charity for the Department of Public Works under the late Government because they were so much work going on that they did not have the time to attend to maintenance, that every effort of the Department had to be utilized in order to take every advantage of the highway grant from Ottawa. When the elections were over in 1923 many of those important projects which they were carrying out under the grant were still only partly completed, the roads being turned up and the road-bed exposed, leaving holes, stones and boulders to be driven over. What did the Bell Government do at that juncture? Everyone knows the disgraceful thing they did after the elections. THEY STOPPED WORK COMPLETELY. They might at least have gone on with their own contracts; they were in power for seven or eight weeks afterwards. WHY was not that most important time used in order to expedite those contracts, if they had had interests of those who travel their roads at heart? Instead of that they acted like spoiled children, evidently wanting to punish their people who had turned them out. They did not even have the manners to complete, the unfinished pieces of road, but left everything just as it was; and the roads remained in that state until this Government came into power. Those are the gentlemen who are now passing criticisms about the present condition of the roads, they even complain about how many auto springs they have broken!

The road problem, I know, is a big one, and I believe it is quite true, as the Leader of the Opposition said, that the Department of Public Works under the Bell Government had all the work on hand

Some Suggestive Expedients.

I think that money can be saved either by giving to these small schools a proportionate grant, or by allowing them to have a third or second class teacher at their attendance roll warrants; or even by putting in operation the clause in the School Act which says that in any school with an average attendance of less than three, the teacher shall not be paid the full salary; that where the average is ten the teacher shall only receive ten-fifths; and where the average is five, five-fifths. This provision is in the Act now, but it cannot be put in operation immediately. School districts and teachers must be notified so that a change is contemplated, so that they can be on the lookout. We know very well that the teaching profession in this Province now is a fairly lucrative one; and that is really one reason why the schools are filled with teachers. They are easier to get, or to pursue the analysis logically, one of the reasons why in 1919, the year immediately following the war, it was so difficult to fill the schools. In other words, economic conditions have a great deal to do with the school problem. At the present time, we know that there are first class teachers leaving the Province; they go to the West, but unable to get employment there they return to the island and many of them have been glad to go into our schools. These are reversed conditions from those prevailing a few years ago.

It was the Leader of the Opposition who suggested that a commission should be appointed to investigate our educational difficulties. That is a suggestion, all right, but I think he will remember that a few years ago there was an educational commission appointed in this Province. I know that they made an exhaustive study of the conditions, but they arrived at nothing very definite. There was an expenditure of some four or five thousand dollars for that commission, thought it is doubtful if it resulted in anything of any educational value.

The question of education is most important, so far as the Government is concerned, not only from its value to the youth of the Province, but also from its growing cost and I think it is the duty of any and every Government to try and get the best value out of the money that is being expended along educational lines. I think that what this Government is trying to do and we will be glad of any suggestions that will help to solve educational questions, because in a good many respects it is not satisfactory.

Before leaving this subject, I must say, as a member of the Board of Education and as one interested in the matter, that every one in this Province should be very grateful to the present Lieutenant Governor, who has made such a splendid gift to Prince of Wales College in setting apart \$1750 for prizes, to stimulate the interest of the boys in the province. This is a very great act on the part of any man; I think that he deserves, and I know that he will have the sincere thanks of every lover of education in this Province.

It is remarkable, too, that we have had another example of a peculiarly sad case, of a gentleman of this Province who was able to retire and who with his wife was making a trip to the Old Country, when unfortunately they both contracted influenza and both died in England. That man also has set apart a very large sum of money, the interest of which is going to afford a splendid prize in the second year class in Prince of Wales College. In other words, the chances these pupils will have at Prince of Wales College is going to be something really grand. They will have the opportunity of winning splendid prizes and they will be greatly stimulated in their studies. To both the Lieutenant Governor and to Mr. Shaw, who have been so generous in that regard I think the unstinted thanks of the Province is due. (Applause)

An Appeal to the People

There is one regrettable thing that is true of our people in this Province, and that is that there is not enough personal pride taken by the people in our roads. There is not enough work done by people on the roads. It is a strange thing a difficult thing to understand how a man will leave holes and ruts in front of his own gate, and drive over them all summer, when half an hour's work would make them good. I think every member here knows that this is perfectly true. The idea seems to be, "Let the Government do it." This road business will always be a hard one to carry through. It is always going to be a very difficult thing to keep the roads of this Province in good condition and unless our road masters and our people generally are prepared to get out on the roads at the proper time, we will not have good roads. A great deal has to be done by the people, and I think the Department is pursuing a wise policy in supplying the road drains that have been a great success by the Minister of Public Works. This will be completed in time this year, and there will be an honest endeavor made to keep those roads in good condition. (Applause)

We talk sometimes about the bad condition of the roads in this Province, but let us not imagine that they are worse than in other provinces. Conditions here are different in other provinces, even in the matter of our improved highways. We have been very generous with them in Prince Edward Island. You will not find the same proportion of good roads in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, or in any other Province of the Dominion. You will find that there is one main highway to the principal points of the Province, but whenever you get off that main road, and get into the collateral roads, they are infinitely worse than anything that we have in this Province. You will find, Mr. Speaker, that we have got very many more miles of road in comparison to our area than any other part of Canada,—cross roads, collateral roads and by-roads of every description; so that the road problem is a very great financial problem for the Government. That is one reason why we have so many small schools in this Province, because of the multiplicity of our cross roads. And so one financial burden keeps pace with another. The hon. members may have read of an interview, published in the local press, given by Mr. A. E. Morrison of Charlottetown, who is now visiting in Australia, wherein he says that the best roads he had seen in Australia do not begin to compare with our worst roads in this Province. That surely is something to be thankful for.

The New Accounting System

A few words now about our system of accounting. We promised to have the system changed, and we changed it. Perhaps if we did that and nothing else it would be enough to recover the Government to the people. It was an election promise of ours, and we have carried it through. And in order that we might receive competent advice on the subject, an outside auditor was brought here last year, who went thoroughly into our system and pointed out the improvement that would be effected by a more up to date system. His advice and suggestions have been followed, and I think any reasonable man will agree that it is an improvement. The hon. member from Summerside (Mr. McArthur) said he did not understand the change. One thing the change will do is this: a great deal of the work previously done in every department will be done in the main office, and that will give more time to those officials in the other departments. They are working