

The Opposition

(Continued from page 1)

people at Ottawa, that we received consideration. To whom then is the credit due?

A VOICE: The Bell Government! (Laughter.)

MR. SAUNDERS: It is only a Liberal Government that recognizes our rights. Had a Conservative Government been in power we would not have received this amount. Under the last Conservative Government we were wandering in the wilderness.

Mr. Saunders reverted to his contention that in view of increased Federal subsidies the Government should do something to lessen the burden of provincial taxes. They had taken off the poll tax, but had substituted a gasoline tax from which even more revenue was being derived. Today he maintained that the Government is taxing the people far more than they were ever taxed under the Liberal regime. The same Income Tax was operating but they had endeavored to increase the Land Tax. "Talk about taxing everything tangible and intangible! You have taxed the living to death, and now that they have died you have increased the succession duties on the dead. Mr. Saunders contended that in many cases, owing to succession duties, it would be almost as well for a person to die without a penny, when their estate is taxed to the tune of 20 to 30 per cent."

The Government is pursuing their iniquitous taxation system to an alarming extent. The public are not prepared to stand for their estates having to pay such large succession duties. Our friends will say that our Succession Act is no more severe in this Province than elsewhere. I will admit that; but my point is that this Government have been increasing taxes.

"As leader of the Liberal party," Mr. Saunders continued, "I want to say that one of the planks of the platform of the Liberal party is at least a reduction on the Auto Tax and a downward revision of taxes generally, because we know that the Federal Government at Ottawa is going to implement its promises contained in the Duncan Report and together we will be in possession of \$125,000 more than we ever had before; and we believe in face of these facts and with proper economy our people are expecting some reduction in taxes."

Mr. Saunders reviewed past conditions in federal politics to show the greater financial burdens facing us today. He regretted the retirement of Hon. Mr. Meighen from public life; it will be a great loss to Canada and a still greater loss to his party. In the present Prime Minister however we have one of the greatest statesmen not only of Canada but of the British Empire.

MURMURS: Oh! oh!

After some further wandering in the field of Federal politics the Speaker requested Mr. Saunders to confine himself more particularly to Provincial matters. Mr. Saunders replied that he merely wanted to know by comparison the greater difficulty today upon the Federal Government of making revenue and expenditure meet.

The Opposition leader expressed surprise that one of the most vital announcements that the Province was looking forward to for a considerable time should be made at a banquet held on the very day His Honour presented the Speech from the Throne. The Speech itself contained no reference to it. Such an action was unique in the annals of the Province. The Speech is also devoid of any thanks to the Federal Government for the subsidy received in lieu of railway taxes.

He challenged supporters of the Government to point out any advanced movement that has been carried out for the Province since the Liberals were defeated. He cited what the Liberal Government had done to improve the Falconwood herd and pigs; also the operation of the Technical School, and the outfit for butter and cheese making at that institution. He went on to tell him where that outfit is today. It was probably going to ruin and decay, like the huller on the ice and snow last winter.

Continuing the debate on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Saunders complained that in the way of advanced legislation has been suggested by the Department of Agriculture. This Department had just pursued so far as it reasonably could the policy of the late Liberal Commissioner of Agriculture, except that in many instances the direction seems to be backward. He again referred to the Falconwood herd and to the increased production of roots and vegetables at Falconwood farm under Liberal rule. He admitted that the late Conservative Minister (Hon. Mr. Myers) had done all he possibly could to get the Federal grant for educational purposes turned into a grant for technical instruction, and he believed this grant is being so used today; but this could not take the place of the Technical School inaugurated under the Liberal Government and discontinued by their successors. Butcher and cheese makers came in from all parts of the Island for instruction to the Technical School and the industry was being put back on its former sound basis. The result was shown in the high quality of last year's production. He feared that with the abandonment of this instruction the industry would again decline.

Mr. Saunders challenged the hon. member who moved the address (Mr. McLure) to tell what this Government has done for the fox industry. The only thing he (Mr. Saunders) knew they were doing was to take thousands of dollars in taxes from the foxmen. True, when they were starting an experimental fox station in this province the Government put into the Estimates about \$5,000 for that purpose; but the thing did not materialize. The Association itself had to take hold of the matter with the result that the experimental station is now in operation in Summerside; but this Govern-

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ment never paid out a single dollar. He claimed the foxmen should have received some assistance from the Government.

The second of the Address stated that the Government had created by this Government. This Mr. Saunders contradicted. He never heard of such a thing. This was the work of the Federal Government. The Provincial Government contributed a certain amount to the veterinary surgeons and saw that they were conveyed from place to place. This involved an expenditure of some six or eight thousand dollars; but apart from that the Provincial Government had positively nothing to do with it.

The Duncan Report recommends that the grant for technical education shall be applied along agricultural lines. Mr. Saunders was pleased with this and hoped that the statement in the Speech concerning it is correct. He gave Premier Stewart credit for his efforts in this connection. Mr. Saunders quoted from what he explained was a resolution passed by the Provincial Premiers at Ottawa last year, and he believed the Minister of Labor is now doing the best he possibly can to secure this grant. It was a splendid thing.

PREMIER STEWART: May I ask the date of that?

MR. SAUNDERS: It doesn't seem to be dated, but it is a copy of the resolution that was then passed.

PREMIER STEWART: This winter.

MR. SAUNDERS: Possibly. There is no date. It clearly shows that you have the interests of the Province at heart in this connection, and you have our sincere sympathy that it will be successful.

In this connection Mr. Saunders referred with approval to an article in the Guardian suggesting that in matters of this importance to the Province we should forget politics and work together. He declared that Messrs. Sinclair, Jenkins, McLure and himself had done all they possibly could to secure these benefits. He was satisfied that when we do work together in this way we will always obtain results.

It had been remarked by a previous speaker that Sir Andrew Duncan had said the presentation of our claims by Premier Stewart before the Commission impressed him more than the presentations made in the other Provinces. Mr. Saunders would not question the statement, but read from page 11 of the Commission's report where the submission of the Nova Scotia Government was commented on as containing a very full and comprehensive review. It did not say anything that Premier Stewart submitted a very comprehensive claim.

A MEMBER: But the record says it! (Applause.)

Mr. Saunders contended that it was strange it should not be specially referred to in the report, if such was the case.

He next reviewed the oyster fisheries. The Federal Government have shown that they want to foster this industry and assist our fishermen and they have endeavored to get the Provincial Government to turn over the provincial rights to them in order that they might expend the necessary money to overcome the disease that has depleted our oyster beds. This matter has been before the Federal and local governments for some considerable time. The other Provinces said have been quite willing to turn over the provincial rights to the Federal Government.

PREMIER STEWART: That statement, I may say, is not correct.

MR. SAUNDERS: Well, I am subject to correction. This is the information that I got, that you yourself happened to be in Ottawa last year when an agreement was drawn up which I understand was quite acceptable to you as well as the Federal department in this very matter, and that you had then requested that the agreement be put into effect in order to put the seal of the Province on it and have it returned. This is the information I got from Ottawa.

PREMIER STEWART: May I ask from whom did my hon. friend get this information? It is quite incorrect.

MR. SAUNDERS: Well, I have the letter here. The letter is from

than the people around here.

A MEMBER: Save them for the election! (Laughter.)

Mr. Saunders then took up Finance. According to the Provincial auditor, from 1920 to 1923 the Bell Government was able to show modest surpluses every year of from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

HON. DR. McMILLAN: But you didn't pay your bills! (Applause.)

MR. SAUNDERS: What happened to our friends? In 1923 they assumed office. On Dec. 31, 1923 we have a deficit of \$197,000. But they say: "You Liberals were in power for eight months of that year work." When you consider that this Government carried over from the year 1923 and 1924 over \$25,000 that was collected in 1923, I ask what they did that for? Was it not for a purpose? They collected \$3,500 out of the prohibition Act in 1923 and carried it into the account of 1924. What was that for? Simply because they knew the Liberals had taken a certain amount of time—eight months—in that year, and they said, "We will make as bad a showing as possible for that year." The result is there was expended by the Liberals in 1923 \$123,000 more than that year expended in 1922. Why? Can you point to any single benefit that we received in 1923 more than in 1922 for that expenditure? And you collected \$78,000 more in 1923 than in 1922. Add these together and you get \$202,000. Had you been doing business as you should have done and as we did in 1922 you would have had a surplus of three or four thousand dollars, because you would have a difference of \$197,000 and \$202,000. Paying an additional amount on it. Then there was the hon. member who had the privilege of going to the West Indies and enjoying the Southern climate at the expense of the Province. Mr. Saunders need not enlarge on these things; we will keep them.

HON. DR. McMILLAN: Tell them all!

MR. SAUNDERS: I won't repeat them now. There is another time when the people will hear of something when the people will hear and understand them a little better

abilities of the Province over \$15,000."

The Liberals, Mr. Saunders contended, built at least 450 miles of improved highways and about 570 concrete bridges that are permanent and alone are worth more than the \$255,000 of total liabilities which the Bell Government incurred.

"While we were in power from 1919 to 1923 our average year's expenditure was \$670,000. What have my hon. friends been doing? In 1924, \$712,000; in 1925, \$730,000; or a difference of \$60,000 more in 1925 than the average Liberal expenditure. Can my hon. friends point to one advantage they got with this extra expenditure?"

In educational matters Mr. Saunders complained that possibly the best and finest educational head this province ever had was among the fallen when this Government began to handle the political axe. The Liberals had come into power at a time when the school teachers were on strike and the schools were closed. They had said the teachers about \$100,000 increase in salaries and in a very short time splendid teachers were placed in the different schools and all the schools were opened and refilled, and it was then an easy matter for the succeeding Conservative government to continue the good work. But unfortunately they have today at the head of this department a man who is an engineer. He cannot possibly make a success of the department of Public Works and act as head of the Educational Department; he is either going to fall in one or both. It seemed to Mr. Saunders that the Government, knowing the necessity of higher education, should have at the head of the system a man who is competent. Mr. Saunders concluded, after briefly reviewing some of the points of his speech, by declaring that he was not particularly interested in the eulogies paid to the Government by its supporters. What he was concerned in was what the electors felt about matters.

The Opposition leader was followed in his address by Premier Stewart.