

A SHAMEFUL RECORD OF BROKEN PLEDGES

Charlottetown Member Scores Government For Incompetency

Mr. W.C.S. McLure in Brilliant Form in the Budget Debate Reviews Broken Promises of the Saunders Government With Respect to Tax Reduction, Prohibition Enforcement, Education, Old Age Pensions, and Other Matters of Public Interest.

The following speech was delivered by Mr. W. Chester S. McLure, junior Conservative member for Charlottetown, during the debate on the Budget in the Provincial Legislature. Mr. McLure began his address on Wednesday evening, April 10th.

Mr. Speaker: I did not intend to speak in this debate, but when the hon. member from Montague (Hon. Dr. Grant) threw the gauntlet into the arena, going back some twelve months to refer to a speech I had made at that time in this House, it is perhaps only fitting that I should reply. I might say that the hon. member of the Government from Montague is quite a story teller. He can tell stories of many kinds, and he has one especially, which he referred to in his address, of an incident that occurred about a year ago. It was rather interesting at the time, and for your information and the information of the House I think I might repeat it since my hon. friend has elaborated so much upon it.

I might say that it was a calf story. There is no more suitable member of this House to associate with a calf story than the gentleman who just told that story. (Laughter.) The story, as he told it, was at the expense of a certain newspaper, and I thoroughly enjoyed it because he told it very well indeed. It went something like this: It seems that one of the farmers in the district which my hon. friend has the honor now of representing had a very fine calf which he was preparing for the Exhibition, and somehow or other this calf became sick. I do not believe he told us whether or not there was a nurse or a physician in attendance so I will not say that there was; but according to some versions of the story my hon. friend saw the patient, and it finally sickened and died.

Hon. Dr. Grant: I didn't say that. Mr. McLure: At any rate, it died, and I understand there was a sort of post mortem examination held to find out the cause of death of this valuable calf. And it was found that it died from eating a newspaper.

Hon. Dr. Grant: The Guardian. Mr. McLure: But there was a little sequel to that which my hon. friend did not tell. The way I heard it was that after an analysis of the stomach and the cud of that calf, it was found that it died of a new disease called Hypocriticus, caused by the eating of an issue of The Guardian which contained the speech of my hon. friend on Prohibition. (Loud laughter and applause.)

Good at Stories

I do not like going back to ancient history, Mr. Speaker, but if the hon. member from Montague saw fit to do so, I suppose it is in order for me likewise. In his speech today he told us other stories, one of them at my expense. Well, I always enjoy a good story, whether at my own expense or at someone else's. As he told it in a low tone of voice I did not hear it all, but I think it opened with the words "John Haig." If that was the opening, I can understand why he told it so well, because there is no more suitable person to tell a Haig story than the hon. member from Montague! (Increased laughter.)

Hon. Dr. Grant: You are all twisted; you have it wrong. Mr. McLure: I let the hon. member have his full filling today; he told all his stories and jested for an hour or more, and if he will just keep quiet for a little while I can assure him that I will not take up too much time in my remarks. I want first to congratulate him, because I believe that every House should have a jester. In ancient times, in the Courts and Parliaments, they always had a paid jester. He was dressed up in a wonderful uniform, and I think he had a collar around his neck comprising many colored bells and lights. Perhaps this House might adopt some of those ancient customs. I felt, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. member

from Montague saw fit to refer to my speech of a year ago and to criticize it in a humorous vein, I was surely in order in making a few remarks by way of reply. If the hon. gentleman wants to go back further than one year, I might also refer to my reminiscences, because I have known him for a good many years, and I could tell some very interesting stories about him. However, that was not my intention.

I am following this afternoon the hon. member from Rustico (Hon. Mr. LePage), and it is rather an unfortunate position to be in, because he has been termed the Sherridan of this House. (Laughter.) It was this hon. gentleman who commended the leader of the House for his speech of over an hour in which "he never referred to a single note." I for one would say that any man who can make a political speech of an hour, or two hours, or six hours, without referring to notes is a man who has a fairly good grasp of public questions. Unfortunately for the most of us in this Chamber, we are not in that happy position of being able to speak without notes. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, with your permission I shall have to refer to some notes occasionally in making a few observations on the Budget.

The King's Recovery

Not having had an opportunity of speaking in the Draft Address, my first thought is to join in thankfulness and gratitude with other hon. members to Divine Providence that our gracious Majesty, King George, is now rapidly convalescing. "May he live long to reign over us," is a sentiment that we did not expect to put into words at the beginning of his severe illness. During the illness of His Majesty a great deal of love and esteem was shown by all his subjects, which can not but benefit the British Empire as it shows to the world the solidity of that great old Anglo-Saxon institution, Constitutional Monarchy.

I might also mention, Mr. Speaker, that since we last met in this Chamber time has rolled along, and quite a number of men, formerly members of this Legislature, have been taken away. I would like to echo the sentiments so finely expressed by hon. members of the House to the memory of the Hon. John Agnew, the Hon. Alexander Bannerman Warburton, the Hon. John H. Bell and the Hon. Lauchlin MacDonald.

Mr. Agnew was in his time the honored Speaker of this House; a man who, as it has been said, lived a worthy life, who took a great interest in the affairs of his church, in the business interests of his Province and in the political questions of the day; and he leaves a place that will require a real man to fill. In the passing of the Hon. Judge Warburton this Province has lost one of its greatest public men. His public record is one that any man would do well to emulate. He was a jurist, a parliamentarian, a lecturer and a historian; and he leaves behind him the record of a kindly disposition and a wonderful character.

Few men have given the services to this Province that have been rendered by the late Hon. John H. Bell. He was foremost always in the councils of the Liberal party, and he was the leader of a Government in this Legislature for a number of years.

I did not have the pleasure of knowing the late Hon. Lauchlin MacDonald personally, but from what I have heard about him I believe he was respected and admired by all his fellow members in the House. I would join with my hon. friends who have already spoken in extending to the many friends and bereaved relatives of these gentlemen my deepest sympathy.

Congratulations Extended

Now, Sir, as a number of speakers have been passing compliments and

congratulations around to those who have deserved them since we last met here, I do not wish to be remiss in my duty and I shall also offer some congratulatory remarks. At the first session of the 41st Parliament I thought I had covered the situation pretty well by congratulating the incoming Government, also the different members who occupied positions of honor and fame; and perhaps I covered the most of those appointments, because they all seemed to enjoy the positions they occupied and the compliments extended to them. However, since our last session, there have been some who have won fame and glory in the hon. gentleman. There has been a bye-election, for example, in that old, historic district of Belfast. It was rather a peculiar election. I understood that at most of the meetings the local Government celebrities were there in profusion. I attended one of those meetings and I thought the situation, being a triangular affair, was well sized up by a speaker who said it was a three-cornered fight between the "drys," the "wets" and the "tanks!" (Laughter.) Whether this was applicable to the three great political parties that were represented, I am not prepared to substantiate.

However, there were three parties in that contest, as we all know. The first was the Prohibition party, with its standard-bearer Mr. W. E. Bentley, K. C., a man who by his ability to organize a campaign in the year 1927 as the right bower of the Liberal party, brought that party to victory and to the place its members occupy today. However, in 1928, for reasons well known to us, these two parties, the Liberal party and the Prohibition party, were not united. Something had happened in the meantime, and the Liberal party turned and bit the hand that fed them in 1927. (Applause.)

Too Much Manna!

The next party represented was the Conservative party, with their standard bearer Mr. George MacLean, who would have made a worthy representative for that historic district of Belfast. But the hidden manna, lavishly expended, caused his defeat for the time being.

The third party, with their representative Mr. Callum Bruce, was the winner; and I want to congratulate him, as he has been congratulated in this House, because he is a young man of promise, and of a race and name for which I have the greatest admiration. But, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I cannot say the same about his political faith.

In connection with this bye-election there was another post of honor that was made available: that was a seat among the mighty minds of the world, a seat which was a credit to a man who had a magnificent harvest, and a fine crop of potatoes which, however, were unfortunately marketed at considerable loss to the growers owing to the fact that Providence had been kind to other countries as well as our own, and hence there was a surplus of potatoes. We do not blame the Government for this, any more than we can give them credit for bountiful harvest. But what we do blame the Government for—and the hon. member from New Haven made it very plain—is that there was absolutely no attempt to assist the farmer in marketing their surplus product; and this despite the most urgent requests that came from the growers in different sections of the Province. Several opportunities for advertising Island potatoes were lost sight of. For instance the opportunity of advertising them in Central Ontario at the Royal Winter Fair should have been taken advantage of by this Government, as was done by our sister provinces. But this was left slip. Had we advertised at that exhibition what would have been the result? Even through the efforts of our growers and shippers and the Central Canadian buyers a successful

market was found in Ontario for Island potatoes, and it certainly would have been much greater had the Government taken an active interest in the matter. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that when the suggestion was made of exhibiting our potatoes at the Winter Fair, the Gov-



MR. W. CHESTER S. McLURE

But that, of course, matters not. It was evident that other things were more important than knowledge or ability.

We on this side of the house regret that the hon. Minister of Agriculture has been laid aside through severe illness. We are glad to learn that he is now improving, and we hope he will soon be able to take his place in his office, it will be a good thing if he could take his place on the floor of this House and assist the present administration, but we cannot hope for that during the present session.

The Premier's Speech

While the leader of the Government was speaking on the Budget he seemed to have a strong desire to raise a camouflage about the financial condition of the Province, and much time was devoted especially to the agricultural situation. Possibly this was due to the absence of the Minister of Agriculture. It is impossible for me to follow the Premier in all the details of his remarks on this subject, so I shall content myself with a few observations on some of the statements he made.

I was sorry to hear the leader of this House make an attack in his budget speech on the press of this Province; and he did it with considerable venom and spleen. The hon. gentleman is not at present in his seat, and perhaps I had better leave my remarks on this subject until he makes an appearance; because I want to bring this fully to his attention.

Government's Negligence

With the opening remarks of the Premier on agriculture we all agree; that was that we should be grateful to Divine Providence for the beneficent harvest, garnered at a time when the conditions were most favorable to the laborer. And a great satisfaction it is to know that we live in a Province which for fertility and productiveness of the soil has few peers, much less superiors. We had a magnificent harvest; and a fine crop of potatoes which, however, were unfortunately marketed at considerable loss to the growers owing to the fact that Providence had been kind to other countries as well as our own, and hence there was a surplus of potatoes. We do not blame the Government for this, any more than we can give them credit for bountiful harvest. But what we do blame the Government for—and the hon. member from New Haven made it very plain—is that there was absolutely no attempt to assist the farmer in marketing their surplus product; and this despite the most urgent requests that came from the growers in different sections of the Province. Several opportunities for advertising Island potatoes were lost sight of. For instance the opportunity of advertising them in Central Ontario at the Royal Winter Fair should have been taken advantage of by this Government, as was done by our sister provinces. But this was left slip. Had we advertised at that exhibition what would have been the result? Even through the efforts of our growers and shippers and the Central Canadian buyers a successful

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ducts, the Dominion of Canada and Prince Edward Island farmers in particular cannot expect larger and more progressive results and yet continue the present federal tariff policy and the Saunders Government attitude. It is impossible to ride two horses going in opposite directions, and it is equally impossible to have the fullest agricultural prosperity when the Federal tariff and the Provincial taxes are diametrically opposed to the welfare of our agriculturists. (Applause.)

What we should do today to encourage our farmers is to co-operate with them in the marketing of their products. We should also encourage them by every method possible in the reduction of taxation. When the Stewart Government was in power they implemented a pre-election promise they had made, and reduced the taxes on the farmers by about twenty per cent. Besides this they took from the statute books entirely that poll tax which has been referred to, I believe, in almost every speech that has been made on the floor of this House. I shall deal with that matter a little later on.

Fur Farming

There is another item with reference to farming on which I should like to say a few words, and it is a branch that deserves more than a passing glance. In fact it deserves more than it is getting today; it deserves more than the longing eyes of the tax collector. That is the fur farming business of this Province. In fur farming we have the greatest possibilities of any one industry of adding to the success of mixed farming in this Province, and if it had not been for fur farming during the past year, our agricultural conditions would not even be as good as they are today. I understand, from the statistics that are available, that the revenue to this Province in 1928 for foxes and furs amounted to something like four and three quarter million dollars. This is an industry in which our Government should now take part by encouraging in some matter the smaller farmers to add this branch to their mixed farming. I feel sure that if the Government will take the matter in hand it will be of great benefit to many of the farmers throughout this Province. We have here a soil free from alkali and which produces the very finest furs. All we need is some department to encourage many of the smaller farmers to produce a steady commodity for the market. Besides this, the general farmer who is producing beef can find a market for his cheap fed beef—what we call grass finished meat, at the fox ranch. Last year there was imported into this Province something like \$600,000 worth of beef from other Provinces. The farmers here who are not raising foxes can produce meat and can find a market to that extent right at home.

I might mention also, in connection with fur farming, that fur bearing animals and the equivalent of fur bearing animals have played a wonderful part in the life of the people of Canada. If you will read the early history of our country, its colonization and civilization, you will find that the fur industry is closely connected with the social and even the religious life of our people. When you read that history you will read also of the foundation of the fur trade, because Canada was the first to encourage this great industry which is grown to be the sixth greatest in the whole world.

In conservation of fur bearing animals, Prince Edward Island has been the pioneer; and we owe a great deal to the pioneers of this industry, Sir Charles Dalton, the late Robert Outten and some others, through whose efforts such great success has been achieved. From this industry alone there will be greater wealth added to Canada than even the most imaginative mind can conceive of today.

Need of Stable Tariff Policy

In closing my remarks on the fur farming industry, let me say this: When our neighbors to the South of us endeavored to restrict our trade in this business as they have done in many other lines of farming, they placed a tariff wall against us of fifteen percent on live animals. That did not affect our development so much, but we had found in that country a fair market for our fur commodity and they placed, in addition to this restriction, a fifty percent ad valorem duty on our silver fox furs; the only country and the only fur in the world that ever had such a duty placed against it by any Government. When our neighbors were thus endeavoring to restrict our trade we had to look elsewhere and fortunately for us we found a new and greater market in Central Europe at the British Isles. However, Lure said:

Co-Operation Necessary

Continuing the debate on Thursday afternoon, April 11th, Mr. McLure said:

as we developed that market the unfairness of the whole situation was impressed upon us. Last year, in selling our furs in Central Europe at the distributing point, what did we meet? We were confronted with competition from the American producers. The only reasonable way of fighting tariff restrictions, Mr. Speaker, is to place our own tariff wall brick for brick against that of our neighbors, and if we had done this it would have added a great deal to the productiveness and the profit of our own commodity.

Government Should Assist

Fur farming, as I said, adds much to the wealth of this Province. Last year, in direct taxes on foxes, there was added to the revenue of the Province some fifty or sixty thousand dollars—that is, if the taxes were collected, and we were assured today on the floor of the House that they were. Consequently I am safe in making that statement that the Province derived \$50,000 or \$80,000 from the fox industry through direct taxation, and possibly an equal amount from income on foxes, making a total of at least \$100,000. My claim is that the Government of this Province, which gets \$100,000 from this source alone, should at least spend some part of that money in assisting the further development of the industry and in producing a finer product for the market of the world. We find local buyers competing with one another right in the home market. Besides this we have the distributing centres of Montreal and London. Between the local buyers and the distributing centres during the fur season a steady stream of cash is returning to the pockets of the fur farmers, and I would like to urge on this Government that they consider placing a department in their agricultural offices to further develop the fur industry in this Province.

Immigration Department Needed In dealing with agriculture there is another matter that links itself very closely, and that is immigration. I wish to call to the attention of this House the fact that a few months ago a strong delegation of farmers and business men throughout the Province waited on the Government with a resolution urging the establishment of a Provincial Department of Immigration and Colonization. I have before me that resolution, which was passed unanimously at a farmers' convention during Farmers' Week, 1928 and was endorsed by every Board of Trade in the Province. In this resolution it is pointed out that we have no records and no bureau of information for the benefit of settlers who come here. These business men and farmers urged upon the Government the need of having a department to deal with these matters. True, the Department of Agriculture has interested itself in some cases that have been brought directly to its notice, but we have no record of the immigrants who have arrived here, no means of knowing how many of them have stayed with us or of the progress they have made. The Boards of Trade and the farmers assembled at that conference suggested in that resolution that full information should be available concerning farms that were for sale, their location and price, and a full description of them. It was urged that a record should be kept of our immigrants and that they should be given all possible encouragement and assistance. That resolution was presented to the Government over a year ago, and we have had no action yet. The Boards of Trade and the farmers throughout the Province are vitally interested in this matter, and naturally they expected to hear of something having been done to meet their wishes. But there has been no answer, unless their silence is intended to imply that they were not going to take any notice of it or take any interest in the colonization of immigrants. That is a condition that deserves the attention of the Government, because at the present time every province in Canada is holding out welcoming hands to immigrants, and this Province should do likewise. The Federal Government has laid down certain direct proposals of assistance, and I understand they have notified every Provincial Government in Canada to lay before them their desire with reference to getting immigrants. I fear that our Government has been too modest to approach the Federal Government in this matter, and as a result this Province is falling to reap the benefit which the other Provinces are receiving.

When the Government is prepared to take in alternative advantages to prospective immigrants and I again repeat that it is the credit of the Government that it will be of vital interest to settlers who may intend coming to this Province, every Province in Canada is looking for immigrants of a good type and it is entirely the Provincial Government's responsibility to some way of handling them on arrival here, and of assisting them to settle down.

Old Age Pensions Another matter to which I refer might be said to be in evidence both from the debate on the floor of this House and from the platform of the Liberal party in 1927. It was a prominent plank in that platform. I refer to the matter of Old Age Pensions. Last year, when the subject was mentioned on the floor of the House, no mention was forthcoming from the Government with regard to it. It took it for granted, Mr. Speaker, that they had not had time to get to the matter. A year has passed however, and we find their position pledge still in the same place. No information is available, no announcement has been made in House by the leader of the Government, and it is still just a question promise that has not been tried out. I think, Mr. Speaker, we should have a little information on this important subject.

The Rules and Orders of this House, what information he had with reference to Old Age Pensions. We also asked to have table communications between the authorities and this Government on the subject. The only reply received was: "This enquiry was answered by making one general reply, namely, that with our revenue the Government is unable to present to establish Old Age Pensions in the Province." This was said by the leader of the House. Now, in connection with a matter of this kind, do not think that such an answer acceptable in face of the plank that have been made. This plank in their platform that great deal of influence during last election campaign, and on public platforms throughout the province the Conservative members taunted as being heartless with regard to the aged poor in the province, because we had not gone to take this matter up with the Federal Government.

Another Broken Promise We are all agreed, I think there is a certain number of poor throughout the Province should be taken care of. The Government has provided means which we can take care of these people. They have given us the Old Pensions Act, and we have to create with them on the basis of fifty; and it is up to our Government to devise some way by which can put into effect this scheme for the benefit of our people. As this Government should have what it would cost this Province, Mr. Speaker, that in the province of Nova Scotia, where the Government has been investigated through a Commission the Old Pensions Act and how it can be applied to their Province, it has found that it would cost upwards of three-quarters of a million dollars amount the Federal Government would pay fifty per cent. Now, Nova Scotia Government is not any pre-election promise to consider this matter, but they are up the same as all the other Governments have done with the exception of this Government, have reported back to their constituents so that they will be in a position to decide intelligently whether will adopt this measure or not. One side. Contrast that with the action of my hon. friends, they into power on the understanding, pledge that they would consider if possible establish the Old Pensions Act in this Province. (Continued on Page 9.)