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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Terre- Neuve et Labrador | 34e | 3e | Discours du Trône | 24 février 1969 | Fabian O’Dea | Lieutenant Gouverneur | Liberal |

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

Thirty-six days from today, just before the stroke of midnight on that day, Newfoundland will have been a Province of Canada for precisely twenty years. I am sure that it will be with heart-felt feelings of gratitude and gladness that our people will mark that anniversary. No man will deny that these have been the most wonderful twenty years in our nearly five cen­turies of history as a people. The progress achieved by our people in that short span has been quite astonishing. The stand­ards of public service have risen remarkably, and our people are enjoying a standard of living which, though it still leaves much room for improvement, is higher than anything we have ever known in our long history. There is health and strength in Newfoundland as a Province of Canada that was never known before. My Ministers and I, and all the people of our beloved Province join, I am sure, in the fervent hope and con­fident belief that the years ahead will be even greater than those we have known.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

The Government of this Province was represented at the Federal-Provincial Conference held in Ottawa a forthnight ago. Newfoundland realized the grave importance of the Conference, and the people of this Province were deeply anxious that the Conference should succeed in the two great purposes for which it was called. The first of these purposes was to consider changes and reforms in the Constitution, the principal features of which would be the establishing of a Bill of Rights for all Canadians, and of linguistic rights for Canadians whose mother tongue is French. The other great purpose of the Conference was to consider the problem of economic and financial disparity between the Provinces of Canada, and between the regions of Canada, and even between various parts of the same Province. It is the firm belief of my Government that this is the paramount question before the people of Canada today. My Government believe that there does not as yet exist in this Province sufficient taxable capacity to enable the public needs of the people to be served by tax revenue gathered within the boundaries of the Province. My Ministers are very much disinclined to have New­foundland become a permanent suppliant at the door of the Government of the nation, for in common with all Newfound­landers their ambition is to have Newfoundland quickly become independently self-supporting in this respect. This desirable objective can be reached only if the economy of the Province is strongly developed. Elimination or reduction of regional disparity means for Newfoundland the development of her own resources, and when my Government advocate the policy of regional development, and the reduction of regional disparity, what they intend is that the Government of the nation should assist the Government of the Province to bring about such devel­opment within the boundaries of the Province. The last thing desired by Newfoundlanders is to be dependent on what are popularly called hand-outs from the Government of the nation. The financial assistance desired from Ottawa is assistance in the development of the resources of this Province so that by the strengthening of the Province's own economy the Government may be enabled to do those things necessary to the raising of Newfoundland's standards to a level at least equal to the Cana­dian average. It is principally for these reasons that my Gov­ernment welcome cordially the recent introduction into the Parliament of Canada of legislation to authorize the establishing of a new Department of Regional Economic Expansion. New­foundland looks hopefully to this new Department of the Gov­ernment of Canada as the principal federal instrument for the reduction of that regional economic disparity that is the great­est single obstacle still standing in the way of Canadian national unity.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

My Ministers have had much reason to be pleased with their decision made a few years ago to appoint a Royal Com­mission on Education and Youth. That Royal Commission con­ducted one of the most exhaustive studies ever made of any matter in our Newfoundland history, and their report and recommendations may truly be said to constitute a chapter in the history of Newfoundland. The report and recommendations received wide-spread publicity and profound consideration by all the education authorities and the public. My Ministers have been deeply appreciative in particular of the high-minded and patriotic attitude taken by the leaders of the religious denomin­ations, and by the teaching profession. As a result of all these activities my Ministers have been able to prepare a thoroughgoing reorganization of the education system, and legislation authorizing these changes will be aid before you in the present Session. It may not be too much to say that this is the most far-reaching legislation in the field of education ever to be laid before the Legislature of Newfoundland. I believe that you will give it the close attention that its fundamental importance demands. The House will not have forgotten that in your last Session you considered and adopted legislation laid before you by my Government to lay the main foundations of educational reform.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

A development of possibly great importance is taking place in our Province. I refer to the discovery of a large deposit of salt in the western part of the Island and the discovery of a deposit of silica on the same coast. Both salt and silica are very important raw materials used in the production of certain in­dustrial chemicals.

The oil refinery being built at Come-by-Chance will produce another raw material that can be used in a chemical industry, as will also the anhydrous ammonia plant to be established in the same place. The blending of the products that may be made from salt, from silica, from ammonia and from petroleum could lead in Newfoundland, as it has done in so many other parts of the world, to the establishing of an industry for the production of important petro-chemical and other chemical products. The chemical industry is one of the most sophisticated to be found anywhere in the modern world, and it is not without significance that this development appears to have some pos­sibility in our own Province. My Ministers believe that consider­able results could follow rapidly from the founding of one or two such chemical establishments in our Province. At Long Harbour, where the production of industrial phosphorous has commenced, another important chemical industry is underway, and it is not impossible that the product of this new plant would be added to the raw materials of a diversified chemical indus­try in the Province. My Ministers are in touch with important industrial concerns in the United Kingdom, on the Continent of Europe and in the United States with a view to interesting them in establishing in this Province, and I am confident that they will have the good wishes of the Newfoundland people in their efforts.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

Thoughtful people throughout the whole of Canada have been deeply concerned about the somewhat alarming amount and degree of monetary inflation now prevailing in this country, in the United States, and indeed throughout most of the coun­tries of Europe. We are told by well informed bankers, finan­ciers and economists on both sides of the Atlantic that the trouble is not caused by an absolute shortage of money, for indeed there is probably more money in the world than ever before. The trouble is caused by the ratio of the amount of money in existence to the amount of demand for it. It is the quite extraordinary demand for money that has caused the shortage, and it is of course the shortage that has caused the high interest rates and inflation. Interest rates are now higher in the United States than they have been for over a century, and this is true of Canada as well. Money is in greater demand than ever before in history, and is costing more to borrow and use than ever before. It is a fact that there has been altogether too much spending of money. This is true of the Government of the United States and of the Government of Canada. It is also true of every State Government of the United States, and every Provincial Government of Canada. The municipalities have not been behind in their spending, and indeed the spend­ing by Government at all levels is more than matched by the spending of large corporations, of many thousands of business firms, and many millions of individuals. The amount of spend­ing that has gone on for more than a dozen years on this Continent is extraordinary in the extreme, and it has now become abundantly clear that the level of spending has gone far be­yond the strength and ability of the economy to sustain it. It has become quite clear that governments throughout the world have no choice before them but to cut back drastically on their spending, and to hold the line against increases in their spend­ing, at least until the economy of each country catches up with the degree of spending. Here in our own Province, from the moment we became a part of Canada nearly twenty years ago, we have striven mightily to meet the growing demands of the people for more and better public services, and for more economic development. More has been done in these twenty years to meet the people's demand for these improvements than perhaps in any hundred years before. This drive has given the people more roads and schools and hospitals and other conveniences than most of us dreamed of in the past, put the cost of operating and maintaining these services at their new high levels has risen to unheard of heights. It would be far from true to say that our people by now have received the quantity and quality of public services that they want and need, for of course much yet remains to be done before Newfoundlanders can be said to enjoy an average Canadian standard of public services. Much indeed remains to be done, but it has become quite clear, not in Newfoundland alone but throughout the whole of Canada, that a short period of marking time, a kind of breathing spell, is the greatest need of the moment. The forward march of Newfoundland will be resumed, but not until there is a brief pause of a year or more to enable the economy of Newfoundland to catch up with the level of public spending. This is the part of wisdom for Newfoundland, and I believe that all thoughtful people will agree and approve.

My Government are awaiting the receipt of reports and recommendations of four Royal Commissions. These are Commissions appointed by my Ministers to enquire into the problem of taxation in the City of St. John's, desirable amendments to the City Charter, cost of housing in this Province, and the prob­lem of harmful radiation in the fluorspar mines at St. Lawrence. My Ministers hope that these reports and recommendations may be received in time to permit of careful consideration and the preparation of legislation that would be laid before you in the present Session.

It is the intention of my Government to lay a Bill of Rights before you for your consideration in the present Session of your House.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

The people of our Province are deeply pleased to have learned in recent days of the plans formulated by the Govern­ment of Canada, and to be formulated, for strengthening the fishing economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. These plans must provide for price stability in both the frozen fish industry, as well as that of salt codfish. My Government are in constant touch with the Government of Canada, and there is the closest possible understanding and collaboration in the interest of the fishermen and the fishing trade of the Province. My Ministers are not without confidence that substantial improvement will be seen in the conditions of the fishing industry in the present year, and there would seem to be good reason for confidence that the improvement to be experienced in the present year would be extended to the year to come. In short, it may well be that the worst is behind us and that we may look forward with hope and confidence to the coming season and the season to follow next year and thereafter. The fishermen have suffer­er harsh setbacks in recent months, due entirely to the consider­able deterioration of the markets. There are strong indications that these conditions have taken a turn for the better, and the future may be brighter than it has been for some time past. There is universal agreement in this Province that the policy of my Ministers with regard to the need for a salt codfish market­ing board is sound and ought to be implemented with the least possible delay. Your House has, at the request of my Ministers, passed legislation enabling my Government to set up a salt codfish marketing board as soon as there can be the necessary agreement on the practical details between Ottawa and St. John's.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

For many months past my Ministers have been greatly pre­occupied with the task of bringing about substantial industrial development in this Province. They engaged in very many meetings and conferences, and it is therefore a matter of keen­est possible pleasure to them, as it must be to all our people, to find their efforts culminating this year in the launching of very substantial construction activities in the three main centres of industrial development in Newfoundland and Labrador. In Stephenville the dwelling-house construction factory is getting well into its stride, and the aluminum cable and wire plant is close to the point where it will begin production, and large scale construction work will begin in the present year for the great new linerboard paper mill that is to operate there; while in Lake Melville the first steps will be taken in the Labrador part of the project. At Long Harbour the new phosphorous plant should be in full production, while at Come-by-Chance construction on the newsprint paper mill should proceed with full force, and construction of the great oil refinery, which it is intended shall be the largest of its kind in Canada, will proceed at all possible speed. My Ministers are negotiating for the construction of two other industries that may locate at Come-by-Chance, and it would appear to be the case that Come-by-Chance will be an outstanding centre of industrial work in the present year. The expansion of the hydro-electric development of Bay d’Espoir goes on at full speed, as does also the construction of the 300,000 horsepower thermal plant at Holyrood in Conception Bay. At Churchill Falls, which is the greatest single industrial enterprise so far produced by my Government rapid progress is being made in the construction of the facilities, and many thousands of men will be employed there from now until the completion of construction some years hence. My Ministers have made strong attempts to make sure that every possible job is filled by a Newfoundlander, in conformity with the terms under which the concession was given to the British Newfoundland Corporation in the first place. The Premier has already announced the welcome news that British Newfoundland Corporation are going ahead this year with an intensive programme of drilling and survey on the Lower Churchill with a view to getting ready for the second great phase in hydro-electric development in Labrador. The Corporation plan to expend two million dollars on this work in the present year.

All of these industrial activities, together with renewed fishery economy, should add up to a marked improvement in our Province’s economy over last year. It would appear that we are embarking upon a great forward step in the economic development of Newfoundland and Labrador, and my Ministers will spare no effort to maintain the impetus already achieved, and indeed to add to it in the coming months. It is the firm conviction of my Government that Newfoundland, whether by her own unaided efforts or with the help of the Government of the nation, must broaden and strengthen our economy, out of which must come the means of meeting the expenses of Government as Government endeavours to provide the public services and conveniences demanded by the people.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

Legislation will be introduced to amend The Adoption of Children Act and The Child Welfare Act which will facilitate the administration of these Acts. Legislation will also be intro­duced to amend The Social Assistance Act with the same object in view. Legislation will be presented to you providing for a weekly day of rest, and vacations with pay; and amendments are being drafted to improve The Workmen's Compensation Act. The introduction of this legislation will, I am sure, be welcomed generally.

My Ministers feel that the time has come when the buyers of consumer goods and those who seek credit should have greater protection than has hitherto been afforded. Legislation will therefore be submitted to you providing for the appointment of a Registrar of Consumer Protection and prescribing his powers, functions and duties. Heavy penalties will be provided for those extending credit who have not furnished the buyer full particulars of the cost of credit; and the liability of the bor­rower will be strictly limited to the particulars of the cost of such credit furnished by the party extending it. My Ministers hope that this legislation will receive the approval of the whole House.

Much legislation, largely in the nature of amending exist­ing laws and consolidating them will also be submitted for your consideration.

You will he asked to vote Supply unto Her Majesty.

I invoke Divine blessing upon your labours.