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Victoria Report

by J. K. Nesbitt

Getting Nancy Ready—Hershey Resignation Rocks Parliament Buildings

VICTORIA—Speaker-elect Nancy Hodges has brought a lot of publicity to this province. News of her appointment made the front pages in London, New York, Montreal and many other cities. It was featured by international news services, highlighted on Canadian and American radio programs.

Mrs. Hodges promptly got busy on her costume. She will wear the regulation Speaker's robe and tricorne hat. But the robe has no sleeves so Mrs. Hodges will have to fashion herself a long-sleeve blouse with some kind of neck ruffle to take the place of the wing collar, a male Speaker wears. The Government pays for the robe and hat—nearly \$300. When the Speaker leaves office he takes his robes with him. Speaker's robes have been an expensive item in recent years. In three sessions there have been three Speakers.

The Speaker may also take home the oak chair in which he presides over the Legislative assembly. This is a massive, throne-like affair, more than six-feet high, its straight back and seat of dark blue leather. The last three speakers haven't taken their chairs so carpenters in the Legislative Buildings are making replicas for Mr. Justice Norman Whittaker, R. H. Carson of Kamloops and John Hart of Victoria.

The Legislature will see many new faces when the session opens February 14. There will be 17 new members—elected last June 15. There will be two new faces in the cabinet benches—Hon. John Cates of Labor and Hon. Harry Bowman of Agriculture. There will be an Indian in the House for the first time—Frank Calder of Atlin. The C.C.F. will have its slimmest group in years—only seven members, compared with 11 last session. The cabinet will be the largest in history—11 members. It will be Premier Johnson's third session as head of the government. There will be a new-found sureness about him.

The Legislative Buildings were rocked the day Dr. J. M. Hershey resigned as commissioner of B.C.'s hospital insurance plan. He walked into the Press Gallery one morning and handed out a statement to say that, since the Minister of Health and Welfare had ignored his recommendations, he had no alternative but to resign. The internal administration of the hospital insur-

ance plan has been rumbling for some months. There, no doubt, has been inefficiency. It was bound to happen in the early stages of so gigantic a scheme. In time the wrinkles will be ironed out. There has been criticism of the scheme from some of the public. No one, however, who has been to a hospital has any cause for complaint when he leaves without a bill.

Dr. Hershey has given his very best. He has broken his health to some extent.

There is excitement, too, in the Legislative Buildings over the possibilities of oil in the Peace River district and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Sandstone, with oil showings, has been found in both places.

"We're going to strike oil and plenty of it," says Lands and Forests Minister E. T. Kenney. Answering those who say B.C.'s oil regulations are so

tough they discourage companies coming in and drilling, Mr. Kenney says: "The government wants to find oil as much as anyone else—but we're not giving away half the province to do it. The people have a share in their own natural resources and we're going to see they share in anything that's found."

If oil should be found, it would be a great bonanza for the government, which would take in millions a year in the 12 and a half per cent royalty.

Happiest man in B.C. about possible discovery of oil is former Premier T. D. Pattullo. When he was head of the government he spent more than \$600,000 drilling for oil in the Peace. He was strongly criticized and when he left the premiership drilling stopped.

"I'd have spent \$10,000,000 if necessary and we'd have had oil today," he says. "I'm as certain as I'm sitting here that there's oil in B.C. and lots of it."

St. Nick Visits Legion Children

Three hundred children were treated to presents, candies, soft drink, ice cream and nuts from the hands of Santa Claus himself Sunday at the Canadian Legion Christmas Tree in the Naval Drill hall.

Commencing the program with a movie, shown by Rowland Miles from the civic centre, the children had just witnessed the conclusion of the reels, when old Kris Kringle appeared and began distributing gifts of tree and bags of delicacies

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children love. Responsible for all other arrangements was the Canadian Legion Christmas Tree committee consisting of chair Rose Morrow (acted as convener Charles Anderson, Douglas of a committee responsible for Gillivray, Douglas E. Guya buying toys, collecting names Anderson, Bob Montgoy wrapping parcels, etc. Others Len J. Hitchens, Peter L were Mrs. J. S. Black, Mrs. J. A. Holbrook and Mrs. Mar Wallace, Mrs. H. Killin, Mrs. J. Smith. Christmas tree was Crossford and Mrs. M. J. Keays. vided by Arthur King.

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Moose Hold Xmas Tree
At the Moose Temple Saturday afternoon about 150 young children were treated with gifts, candy, nuts and soft drinks by Santa Claus. The event was the annual Moose Christmas tree. Assisting St. Nicholas in distribution of gifts was Mrs. H. Muncey, Mrs. C. Collins and Mrs. P. Brown. Bags of candies were given to the young tots by Mrs. R. B. Skinner.
In the kitchen dishing out soft drinks and ice cream was Percy Bond assisted by J. Holliston and Malcolm Blair.
The event was successful and the children enjoyed the hospitality of the members and Kris Kringle.
you saw it in the News!

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Tickets will be given to parents ONLY upon request.
(297)