

## Prominent Topics.

**Opening of Parliament.** The Dominion Parliament was opened yesterday by His Excellency the Governor-General. The speech from the Throne was reminiscent rather than prophetic and foreshadows no important legislation with which the public are not already familiar.

**Mr. James Gillespie.** Mr. James Alexander Gillespie, head of the firm of Gillespies & Co., general merchants, 12 St. Sacrament street, died at his residence, 307 Stanley street, on Saturday. Mr. Gillespie was 73 years of age, and was born in London, England, coming to Canada in 1869. He founded the firm of Gillespie, Moffat & Co., which later became Gillespie, Patterson & Co., succeeded again by the present firm. He is survived by his widow, two sons and three daughters. Mr. Gillespie was for many years a member of the local board of the Standard Life Assurance.

**House of Lords Reform.** Yesterday the House of Lords without a division adopted a motion by Lord Rosebery, to the effect that in future the Upper House shall consist of Lords of Parliament, partly chosen by the hereditary peers from among themselves, like the Scotch and Irish peers, some nominated by the Crown and other sitting by virtue of their official positions. In principle the reform is very much on the lines suggested two or three years ago by the Lords Committee. The change will have a tendency to weaken whatever argument there is in favor of the abolition of the veto power.

**Great Britain and the Opium Trade.** There is something highly suggestive of vassalage in the fact that the people of China should have to petition the British Government to abrogate the treaties, which give our people the legal right to impose the opium trade on China in the interests of British India. Of moral right there is none. The demoralizing nature of the opium traffic is recognised by much British domestic legislation. To impose that trade upon a foreign people peculiarly susceptible to its influence, is to give colour to the theory freely advanced by foreign critics, that there is a good deal of hypocrisy in John Bull's religion and a good deal of humbug in his assumption of superior morality. To compound for the enforced degradation of the Chinese people, by stringent laws to prevent the similar degradation of our own people, it to say the least inconsistent. The first advances for the abrogation of the treaties ought to come from Great Britain, coupled

possibly with demands for conditions, which would facilitate the reforms in China for which the sacrifices of British interests are to be made.

**Price of Food.** The high price of meat in Germany has led the German Government to admit foreign live stock into the Empire. The demand of a hungry nation for food is one to which no Government can afford to be deaf; and it is a cry that is being heard just now all over the world. If Socialism ever gets the upper hand in countries like Germany, England and the United States, it will be because of dear food. The poorer classes are not permanently worried about political theories, but they fully appreciate the significance of high prices for the necessities of life. One of the most legitimate and important functions of Government is to promote a fair adjustment of wages to the cost of food or *vice versa*. The starvation of a nation brought about the French Revolution, the downfall of the old regime, and the Reign of Terror. The earth is still bringing forth its increase liberally; the anomaly is that we find hunger coincident with plenty, and grinding poverty side by side with luxury. The adjustment may come quietly through wise legislation and far-sighted business policy, or it may come violently, but it will come.

**Dinner to Mr. B. Hal Brown.** The regard and esteem in which the staff in Montreal of the London & Lancashire Life and General Assurance Association hold the late Canadian manager of the office, Mr. B. Hal Brown, was shown on Monday evening when a dinner was tendered to Mr. Brown at the St. James Club. Those attending were: Dr. James Bell, who occupied the chair; Mr. Alex. Bissett, as vice-chairman; Messrs. A. H. Plimsoll, Herbert Marler, Hugh Walkem, Dr. C. J. Alloway, Major Ostell, and Messrs. L. G. Atkins, C. Cornell and Gerald O. Every. Dr. Girdwood, one of the company's medical advisers was unfortunately unable to be present owing to illness. The post-prandial speeches signified hearty respect and regard for the guest of honor, as well as regret that a business connection of twenty-eight years standing should have been dissolved. The sentiments of good-will to Mr. Brown were further indicated by a gift of a handsome piece of ornamental silver, presented by Mr. Alex. Bissett in the name of the London & Lancashire Life staff.

SUB-BRANCHES OF THE BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA have been opened at Haymarket Square, St. John, N.B., and Boyce Avenue, Toronto.