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THE Policy of the Imperial Government regarding the Chinese question was to have been announced in the House of Commons yesterday, by Mr. Balfour first Lord of the Treasury and Government Leader in the Commons. It was awaited with much interest.

THE situation between Spain and the United States seems very critical. All kinds of rumors are in the air regarding the mediation of European powers, and the reference of the matter to the Pope as arbitrator; but nothing definite is known. It is announced that President McKinley will send a message on the question to Congress today. This will probably bring matters to a point. Preparations for war seem to be unabated in both countries.

ON Friday last, the Postmaster General of Canada introduced a bill into the House of Commons relative to postage. One of of its provisions imposes a half cent per pound on newspapers. This will be a serious handicap to all newspapers not backed up by lots of money. As Sir Charles Tupper pointed out, the Postmaster General seems to be frightened that the people through the newspapers, are becoming too well acquainted with the scandalous conduct of the Government, in the matter of Yukon and Drummond county railway deals and other shady transactions, and he takes this method of trying to curtail the amount of information they may obtain about public questions. One effect of this bill, should it become law, will be to increase the circulation of newspapers, many of them worse than useless, from the United States and some parts of Canada, that are backed by wealthy companies, to the detriment of honest journals struggling for existence. It appears the present Ottawa Government are bound to favor monopoly in every way possible. What a hypocritical crew!

ELSEWHERE we publish the speech with which the Legislative session was opened yesterday. We have hitherto had occosion to remark on the meagreness of legislation foreshadowed in like documents; but this one caps the climax. It does not contain one positive statement regarding prospective legislation, and after persusing the famous document one is at a loss to understand what the session is called for; why members are brought in to lose their time at this important season of the year, or why the Province should be put to the expense which the session necessarily involves. It is true it makes a lengthy reference to the celebration of her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee; but the people knew all about that celebration long ago, it is a matter of ancient history now. It contains the stereotyped paragraph relative to the bountiful harvest. Little thanks to the Government for that. It says that the public accounts for the past year will be laid before us. That is something to be thankful for. They should have been laid before us long ago. It is altogether likely that if the Government could have their way that paragraph would not be in the speech, as it is quite probable they do not wish the state of the Provincial finances to become even approximately known to the public. A report of the delegation to Ottawa is to be submitted. Will it contain any information about that million dollars, of which we heard so much during the elections?

IN making the usual appointment of officers of the Legislative Assembly yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition called the attention of the House to the fact that no mention of an assistant Clerk had been made. The Premier said the Government were going to see whether or not they could save expenses by doing without such an officer. This explanation was regarded as rather gauzy by the opposition and Mr. Shaw wanted to know how long it would probably take the Government to discover whether or not this expense could be saved the country. This prying into ministerial secrets was not relished by the members of the Government and attempts were made to shut off Mr. Shaw on the ground that he was not in order. He, however, removed all doubts on that point by moving the adjournment of the House. He then proceeded to enquire whether or not the Government would know by the 13th. inst. if this expense could be saved the country. On the evening of that date Mr. B. D. McLellan, the late assistant clerk and present candidate for the House of Commons in West Prince, would be defeated at the polls, and then it would probably dawn upon the Government that this expense could not be saved and Mr. McLellan would be reappointed. Surely this is tantamount to a confession on the part of the Government that Mr. McLellan will be snowed under on the 13th. It is not likely that the Grit candidate in West Prince expected that those who placed him in the breach would thus give his case away and indirectly inform the opposition that they had no hope of his election.

As will be seen elsewhere in this issue, the Yukon railway bill was defeated in the Senate on Wednesday evening last, by a majority of 38, the vote standing; 14 for the bill and 52 against it. The majority against the bill was larger than the Government had anticipated. This is accounted for on the ground that some members of the Senate, who had at first perhaps mildly declared themselves in favor of the principle of the bill, or had been noncommittal, found it impossible, when they discovered the rascally nature of the measure, to give it conscientious assent. In its action in this matter the Senate has deserved well of the country, and has saved millions to the people. The bill, without doubt, was one of the most outrageous ever introduced in a British Legislature; it was simply an agreement to hand over to McKenzie and Mann four million acres of our richest gold lands, in return for building about 175 miles of a tramway. Prior to the vote in the Senate, the Grit press tried every means to induce the Senators to pass the bill. First threats were indulged in; when it was found that these failed to have any effect, then flattery was dealt out. Nor was this all, we are told that lobbying on a most gigantic scale was inaugurated; that large amounts of money were promised to members of the upper house for their support to this measure. But the Senators scorned these corrupt inducements, and showed themselves to be men of honor and independence. Since the vote was taken the Grit press has devoted itself to abusing the Senators for their manly course. It is the most natural thing in the world that this should be so. The bill contemplated a big public steal, the benefits of which would be far reaching among the Grit fraternity and chagrin at the disappointment is not to be wondered at. This is not the first time the Senate has put itself on record against the House of Commons. The Harvey-Salisbury railway bill, carried through the Commons by the Government of Sir John A. McDonald, was defeated in the Senate, although largely of the political complexion of the Government. On many previous occasions the Senate endeavored to defeat measures passed by a Conservative Government in the Commons, and took a division with that intention. That is just what the Senate is expected to do; it is a distinct and independent branch of the Parliament of Canada, and if it would not defeat such outrageous and scandalous measures as the Yukon railway bill, it would be difficult to understand what it existed for, The Senate has the country at its back in its action on this bill, and this is well known to members and supporters of the Government, many of whom rejoice at the defeat of the Yukon railway bill.

THIS is nomination day for the Federal bye election in West Prince, and this day week the electors of that riding will, by their votes, decide who shall be their representative in the House of Commons. Consequently this is the last opportunity we shall have, prior to the election, of discussing the issues before the people. We have already pointed out the scandalous manner in which the Government engineered to squander the public money in connection with the Drummond County railway deal; we have laid before our readers the particulars of the infamous contract, by which the gold lands of the Yukon district were to be handed over to favorites, for constructing a tramway. Fortunately the Government's designs in this disgraceful affair have been frustrated by the wisdom of the Senate. The record of the Government, in connection with these matters, as well as everything else they have done since their advent to power, is most unsavory; indeed it has not a redeeming feature. The Government themselves are fully aware of this; they know they have forfeited the confidence of the people; they see the handwriting on the wall. The tactics pursued by the Government candidate in West Prince and those assisting him in the campaign, bear ample testimony to the rottenness of their cause and the untenableness of the Government's position. They dare not appeal to the electors on the record of the Government; because they know that is a record of broken promises, unfulfilled pledges and repudiation of principles formerly professed. Surely, the Government campaigners in West Prince exercise a wise discretion in avoiding allusion to such a record. What then is their shibboleth? They appeal to the cupidity of the electors, they constantly impress upon them the advantage it is to the people of the riding to have the Government spending money among them with a lavish hand; they endeavor to terrorize the electors by intimating that the election of Mr. Hackett will mean the deprivation of all this public expenditure. Now, admitting that this plea of the lavish expenditure of public money were true, what is to be said of it? Can it be looked upon in any other light than that of a bribe to the electors? According to this doctrine, no matter how lamentably a government may have failed in carrying out its pre-election promises; no matter how it may have squandered the peoples' money; no matter what political crimes it may be guilty of, it should be sustained at the polls, because on the eve of an election it is willing to put its hands deep into the public treasury to bribe the electorate. Here is a sample of Grit political morality. But what of this expenditure of public money by which the Government campaigners set so much store? The estimates for the year ending June 30., 1899 are before us and they show that the estimated expenditure for harbors and rivers in this Province is $40,650 as against $92,893, last year. Not less than $14,000 of this amount is revoted; consequently only about $26,650 are apppropriated for these services in this Province for the year ending June 30th. of next year. West Prince where the fight is going on is only receiving $6,400 in new appropriations; viz. $4,400 for West Point Wharf and $2,000 for Tignish Breakwater; the revotes for these services being respectively $3,000 and $5,000. The estimates contain no mention of the second winter steamer, direct steam communication with the old country and the numerous other public services of which we hear so much. By means of these inflated stories of public expenditure, in conjunction with the insidious operations of the boodle brigade, Mr. John Yeo, Dr. Delaney and the Private Secretary, the Government hopes to obscure the real issues before the electorate. Once more, electors of West Prince, are you willing to be thus deceived? If not send Mr. Hackett to Parliament by a sweeping majority.

DOMINION PARLIAMENT.

On Monday, the 28th. ult. the House of Commons devoted the afternoon to a discussion of a private bill for the incorporation of the Rainy river railway. Mr. McLean and some of the western members wanted a clause inserted restricting the powers of the road as to freight and passenger charges. The bill was reported from the committee at six o'clock. The discussion of the Rainy river bill was continued in the evening on a motion for the third reading. Mr. McLean's amendment was lost, 16 members voting for it. The bill then passed.

On the same day, the Senate discussed the Yukon railway, Senator Power following McCallum. Mr. Power said that the government had made its plans to assist the Yukon region in this way and that if the senate took the responsibility of defeating the measure, the government would have no further obligation to do anything, and the senate would have to take the blame. Mr. Lougheed spoke against the Yukon bill and Dandurand in favor of it. Hon. Mr. Bellerose followed Mr, Dandurand, and spoke until after one in the morning, an unusually late hour for the senate to sit.

The Drummond county committee met the same forenoon. Mr. Powell examined Mr. Schrieber in respect to the latter's estimate, made last year, of the increased Intercolonial traffic by reason of the extension to Montreal. The deputy minister was not able to recall the data on which this estimate was made. Mr. Powell questioned him closely as to whether he could expect to get increased traffic in competition with the shorter lines without doing business at a loss. Mr. Schrieber said that the freight naturally took the cheapest route and admitted that it would be difficult to capture the traffic from the C. P. R. He said the department expected the increased export traffic would be mainly at Halifax, and in consequence of the establishment of the fast steamship line. On the suggestion of Hon. Mr. Blair, Mr. Schrieber said that the shorter distance from Liverpool to Halifax than to St. John was in favor of the Intercolonial to Halifax. P. S. Archibald testified as to the standard of the Intercolonial line as compared with the Drummond railway, as far as he knew the latter line. The Drummond line was inferior in several respects. It was narrower, the road bed was not as high, the ballasting was inferior, the sleepers of lower grade, the stations on wooden posts and culverts of wood. Hon. Mr. Blair cross-examined Mr. Archibald, but was not able to make him modify his testimony. Mr. Archibald thought it would cost fifteen hundred dollars a mile to complete the ballasting up to the Intercolonial standard.

The estimates were laid on the table by Mr. Fielding at midnight on the 28th. They call for an expenditure in the fiscal year of 1898-99 of $39,125,879 on account of consolidated fund, against a total vote on this account for the current year of $158,000 less. The decrease is of course only apparent, as the supplementary estimates will bring up the figures far beyond those of the current year. The capital expenditure calls for $5,786,691, but this is no guide, as many of these estimates are always supplementary. The estimate for interest charge shows a reduction of $251,000, or nearly the whole, is effected by another cut in the savings bank interest from three per cent to two and a half. The civil government is about the same as last year. The administration of justice is increased by the salary of additional judges in Ontario and Quebec. Arts, agriculture and statistics is reduced by $25,500; by less cold storage and creamery expenditure the superannuation is increased by $19,000; militia principal charges reduction of $11,850 in warlike stores; increase of $80,000 in clothing necessaries; decrease of $5,000 to military college; increase of $6,000 to cartridge factory; decrease of $27,940 in gratuities to offices. Intercolonial capital account includes $135,000 for accommodation at Halifax, $2,000 of land damages at Oxford, $30,100 extension to deep water at North Sydney, $20,000 Moncton station, $50,000 to strengthen iron bridges, $6,000 for snow fences, $4,000 for dredging at Pictou, $4,600 for works at Mulgrave and $20,000 for accommodation at points not mentioned. The sum of $15,000 is asked to straighten the P. E. Island railway. The total sum to be expended on capital account on the government railway is $310,000. For canals $4,660,000 is asked, the largest items being $1,610,000 for Soulanges and $1,225,000 for Galops, with $600,000 for Trent. On current account the vote of $210,806 is asked for the rental of the Grand Trunk and Drummond county. For exploratory survey to ascertain the most practicable route for an all Canadian railway to the Yukon, $40,000, and $20,000 to explore the route from the Stickeen to the ocean port in British Columbia; $35,000 for public buildings; Halifax drill hall, $18,000; Kentville, $5,000; Liverpool, $5,000; Maryaville public building, $30,000. Harbors and rivers in New Brunswick—Negro point breakwater, $5 000; River St. John, including tributaries, $16,000; St. John harbor protection at Fort Dufferin, $1,400; dredging between St. John river and Grand Lake, $15,000: Two Rivers wharf, $3,000; Dalhousie ballast wharf, $3,800; Shippegan harbor protection works, $4,000; Clifton breakwater, $500; Cape Tormentine breakwater, $8,000. Prince Edward Island — General repairs to piers and breakwater, $6,000; Souris breakwater, $15,000; New London repairs, $750; West Point wharf, $7,400; Tignish breakwater, $7,000; Belfast pier, $500; Brae breakwater, $1,000; for purchase of creosoted piles for general repairs to wharf, piers and breakwaters, $2,000; Red point wharf repairs, $1,000. Last year the unexpended vote for the statue of Alexander Mackenzie is raised from $5,000 to $7,000 and that of Queen Victoria statue the same. No change is made in the steamship subsidy list except a reduction of the Halifax, Newfoundland and Liverpool for $25,000 to $20,000. The salaries and disbursements of fishery officers are increased from $91 000 to $95 000. The Northwest mounted police expenditure is decreased $31,250 and the government of the Northwest is increased half that amount. While the new vote of $396,450 is asked for the Yukon government. The outside customs service is increased to $10,765, mostly on account of the Yukon, and reduced $16,600. The estimated cost of operating the Intercolonial is placed at $3 650,000, or $550,000 more than last year's appropriation. The post office department promises to reduce the outlay by forty-one thousand, leaving it $2,596,311. For the Paris exhibition $20,000 is asked.

In the House of Commons, on the 29th. Mr. Davin moved the adjournment of the house to show how Hon. Mr. Blair had changed his ground since last year. He obtained a vote of nearly four million dollars for the Crow's Nest railway by affirming that this road was necessary in order to capture for Canada the exclusive control of the Kootenay. Hon. Mr. Blair made no reply. The franchise bill was then taken up and discussed by Messrs. Bourassa, Clancey and Casey. Messrs. Stenson, McLean, Hughes, Henderson and Gillies continued the debate during the afternoon and evening. Mr. Gillies argued for federal control, but was willing, as a matter of compromise, to accept the same qualification for voters as provincial legislatures adopted, though he declined to accept the disqualifications. Mr, Powell proposed an amendment that the bill be not now read the second time, but that it be resolved that this house, while desirous of reducing the expense of the preparation of the lists, as far as may be practicable, considers that no system of franchise will be satisfactory which does not preserve federal control over both basis of suffrage and voters' lists. Mr. Powell pointed out that Sir Wilfrid was mistaken when he said that the United States constitution gave the whole control of the federal franchise to state legislatures. On the contrary, congress kept the power to revise of change the state regulations respecting the federal legislature. Davin, Moore and Clarke Wallace spoke against the proposed measure. The other speakers were Messrs. Fielding, Martin, McIsaac, McNeill and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. Mr. Fielding defended the course of his friends in disfranchising the federal employes, but said that the disfranchising clause was no longer applicable to the federal election before the Dominion Franchise Act of 1885 was passed. In 1882 the Canadian parliament had taken action to relieve the employes of the disabilities. Mr. McNeill found in this statement an illustration in need of federal control. Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper had some controversy with the finance minister in regard to the latter's account of the Nova Scotia officers. The vote was called shortly after midnight, resulting in the defeat of Mr. Powell's amendment by a majority of 97 to 48, and the second reading passed by the same vote, Messrs. Robertson of Toronto and Bourpore voted against the amendment. The former said he did not like either the old bill or the new one.

On the same date Sir Mackenzie Bowell addressed the senate during a part of the afternoon and an hour in the evening against the Yukon bill. He showed by the record that the senators of the government party, and especially the secretary of state, were not in a position to condemn the course of any of their associates who might take the responsibility of voting against a government measure. He reviewed the history of the negotiations leading up to the contract and gave a rigid analysis of the bargain itself, condemning the scheme both on principle and in detail. Senator Templeman, the last appointment to the upper house, followed. The debate was continued by Mr. Poirier, Templeman and Clemond. It was discovered that several members were still desirous of speaking and the vote was not taken. The senate adjourned at midnight.

After about thirty unopposed orders for returns were voted in the House of Commons on the 30th, Mr. Davin proposed his motion. That good faith on the part of the present government with the farmers of the Northwest should compel them to place agricultural implements on the free list. In an able speech Mr. Davin showed that the government was pledged to free farm machinery. Sir Charles Hibber' Tupper introduced a bill amending the Coasting act. This bill is intended to meet a recent United States decision as to coasting on the Pacific coast. By a United States interpretation a British ship cannot carry goods from San Francisco or another American port to a port in Alaska, even though the ship should enter at a British Columbia port as Victoria between. This interpretation was doubtful, but an amendment of the United States statute makes it good law hereafter, Sir Charles Hibbert wants to reciprocate by a similar enactment.

The senators listened gravely when the minister of justice expounded on Wednesday evening the awful consequences of their refusal to endorse the government's Yukon policy. They

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