

Prominent Topics.

President Taft and the Insurgents.

President Taft threatens to call an extra session of Congress immediately after March 4th, if the Senate does not vote on the Reciprocity Agreement this session. The insurgents laugh at the threat and declare that they are not going to be throttled by the president into a vote without taking ample time for debate.

Reorganization of Quebec Fire Department.

The Quebec Fire Department is to undergo a radical reorganization. Action is being taken by a special committee of the City Council upon a report by the Canadian Fire Underwriters severely criticising the present fire protection facilities. Among other reforms the purchase of a salvage outfit and other up-to-date appliances is recommended.

Canadian Northern Matrimonial Department.

The immigration staff of the Canadian Northern has undertaken the serious responsibilities of a matrimonial bureau. The announcement that 5,000 English girls are wanted as wives for settlers, has caused the company to be inundated by letters from girls who, like Barkis, are "willin'." The staff is giving all the applications conscientious consideration.

C. P. R. Tax Exemptions.

The Canadian Pacific Railway has won an important victory before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It is finally decided that the provinces have no power to tax the Company's lands until twenty years after the issue of the patents. This means that an immense acreage is exempt from taxation for from fifteen to twenty years from the present time.

Imperial Parliament.

The speech from the Throne at the opening of the Imperial Parliament was principally remarkable for what it did not contain, but it would be a mistake to infer from this that the session will be barren of interest or of important legislation. The Government may not be quite sure of the support of its entire following, upon all the legislative projects that have been rumoured, or it may not be in a hurry to take the opposition into its confidence.

Brantford Train Wreck.

A coroner's jury holds Conductor Meacham and Engineer Earith responsible for the railway accident at Brantford, by which six lives were lost on Saturday night. Earith, who was badly injured, admitted that having had much trouble on the trip, through the cylinders of his

engine blowing open, he forgot all about the passenger train. Meacham neglected to remind him and has since disappeared. It is highly probably that nobody will ever be convicted of manslaughter in connection with this accident and if anybody should be convicted, the labour unions will, no doubt, secure a pardon for him from the Government.

Report of the Parks Commission.

Yesterday Mr. J. L. Perron presented to the Legislature the report of the Metropolitan Parks Commission, with reference to the improvement of the Island of Montreal. The Commission recommends among other things, the establishment of a permanent commission (which means, we presume, the indefinite extension of the present one), the preparation of a complete plan of Montreal and its environs, the establishment of model dwelling districts for the working classes, and the establishment of parks, driveways, boulevards and other thoroughfares.

Ontario's Population.

The Ontario Department of Agriculture estimates the population of the province at 2,289,000 against 2,183,000 in 1901. It will be interesting to see how these figures compare with those of the Dominion Census. The older provinces, of course, cannot hope to keep up with the West in growth of population. Toronto's new directory claims for that city a population of 424,057; the area is now 28 square miles. The Department of Agriculture estimates that the output of the Ontario farms has increased \$50,000,000 in six years.

Close Season for Beavers Shortened.

The Legislative Assembly of Quebec has passed a Bill authorizing the trapping of beavers, which under the existing law were protected until 1912. The reason alleged for shortening the close season, which was adopted when the beavers were threatened with extinction, is that they have become so plentiful that they are doing much damage by stopping the flow of certain streams by their dams, thus causing floods in various parts of the country. It is a question, however, whether the legislation is not prompted by the natural desire of the trappers and farmers to make money out of the skins, rather than by any extensive mischief caused by the beaver dams. Fur bearing animals all over Canada are becoming scarcer and it will be a short-sighted policy which tends, as in the case of the buffalo, to their extinction. The bill, however, is not of universal application throughout the province. It reserves to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council the right to decide where the killing of beavers is necessary and it is to be hoped that the power will be sparingly exercised.