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Editor & Proprietor

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Winnipeg advices of the 24th, inst. state that telegraphic reports from ninety points throughout the west had been received up to that date and that these indicated the practical completion of wheat seeding, only about five per cent remained to be sown. The reports state that the acreage in Manitoba will probably be from eight to ten per cent less than last year, while in Saskatchewan there will be an increase, though not so great as was anticipated. Early sown wheat was reported as growing vigorously and was in some places from one to two inches above ground. Warmer weather and rain would ensure an excellent crop. In Manitoba fifty per cent of the coarse grain was in the ground, thirty per cent in Saskatchewan and seventy-five per cent in Alberta. Fall wheat in Alberta was reported in prime condition. The prospects on the whole were considered fifty per cent better than they were ten days previously.

The attitude of the Federal Government towards Mr. W. T. R. Preston is not only unique, but in the highest degree discreditable. This gentleman, familiarly known as "Hugh the Machine" Preston, is employed by the Government and paid a high salary and generous living expenses out of the public revenues of Canada; but is not, so far as can be ascertained, performing any duties. In consideration of his performances as an expert in ballot switching; manipulating voters' lists and all other kinds of election frauds in the Province of Ontario, he was rewarded by the Laurier Government with the office of Inspector of Immigration agencies in London. While in the enjoyment of the emoluments and perquisites of that office Mr. Preston interested himself in the formation of the mysterious North Atlantic Trading Company; the Arundel Printing Company and other fraudulent undertakings. His connection with these institutions was shown to be so reprehensible that the Canadian High Commissioner in London protested to the Government at Ottawa, and as a result, Mr. Preston was removed from the office of Inspector. He returned to Canada; but his past services to the Government and the power of exposure which he possesses render him altogether too dangerous to be set aside; consequently he was reappointed to office with a higher salary and more generous expenses; but without any apparent duties. It was said he was going to Japan to enlighten the Mikado regarding trade questions in Canada. He never went there; but proceeded to South Africa and began writing letters to the London papers extolling Rhodesia at the expense of Canada. It is now stated that he is on his way to Hong Kong. He is wanted in Canada to give evidence regarding corrupt practices in the London election trial; but justice has to suffer because this charlatan is kept out of the country and out of the jurisdiction of the courts, as will be seen by reference to our Ottawa letter. A pretty state of things, surely, when the peoples money is lavishly spent on such a political corruptionist as this to keep him out of the way, and thus delay the unearthing of political rascality at home.

Evidence of a sensational character relating to corruption by the Liberal Government of Quebec, was given under oath in the court in Quebec the other day. During last year Baron L'Epine, representing a Belgian syndicate, entered into negotiations with Hon. Mr. Turgeon, Minister of Lands in the Quebec Government, for the purchase of 500,000 acres of land for mining and colonization purposes. After lengthy negotiations, the Baron and the Minis-

ter of Lands quarrelled. In consequence of this quarrel some correspondence of an interesting character was made public during the last session of the Quebec Legislature. Out of these revelations grew a libel suit brought by Hon. Jean Prevost of the Quebec Government against Oliver Asselin of Montreal. This trial is now, or was a few days ago, going on in Quebec. One of the witnesses summoned to court in this trial was Baron L'Epine, above referred to. On the 23rd inst., he testified that as soon as the negotiations began he was told there were "leaves in Canada" to which his Belgian friends were not accustomed. "I was told," he testified, "that all companies receiving large grants or concessions are supposed to reserve a certain sum for election funds." In virtue of this declaration the Minister of Lands agreed to sell the Public Lands of Quebec to the "Barons' syndicate at \$1.00 an acre; 70 cents an acre to be paid into the Public Treasury and 30 cents an acre to be reserved for the Government's election fund. On this basis \$250,000 was to appear in the public accounts of Quebec for the 1906-07, and \$100,000 was to be handed over on the quiet as the "Barons' contribution to the election fund. In other words the Government gave off or boodle fund on the transaction was to be \$150,000. The Baron explained to his principals in Belgium that, "if you want to do business with the Quebec Government, the only way is to contribute to the election funds." These are the statements to which Baron L'Epine testified on oath in the court. Meantime Premier Guoin of Quebec is enjoying an extensive pleasure trip in Europe. Better for him to come home and explain to the people what he knows about this attempt at graft for election purposes.

Ottawa Weekly Letter.

How The Taxes Climb.

\$3,000,000 Increase in One Year.—166 Percent Increase in Customs Taxes in Eleven Years.

INCREASED COST OF LIVING.

Higher Priced Goods Make Higher Duties.—And These Still Further Raise the Price to the Buyer.

PRESTON IS KEPT AFAR OFF.

That the London Conspiracy Trial Might Be Delayed.—Mr Emmerson Becomes Active.—Finding Premier Pugsley Is After His Job.

FAILURE OF THE LEMIEUX ACT.

To Prevent Strikes in Public Utilities.—Laurier's Subsidized Service of Praise.—Dredging and Ballot Switching.

Ottawa, May 18, 1907.

Trade returns made up to the 10th March and sent out by the Department of Trade and Commerce show that the Customs Taxes collected during the previous twelve months were \$53,006,545. In the previous year the amount was \$45,129,089, which shows an increase of nearly eight million dollars in the year. In the last year of Conservative rule it was \$19,833,279, and that was about the average of the previous five years. Mr. Foster had collected as high as \$24,000,000 in one year during his term of office, but when the taxes reached that amount he straightway reduced the duties and brought down the receipts. The present Government has more than doubled the customs taxation in the last eight years, and last session made the tariff a grade higher.

THE GROWING BURDEN.

The Minister of Customs contends that taxation has not been increased, because the percentage of duty on the total imports is not greater than ten years ago. As a matter of fact there has been no reduction even in the percentage, if account is taken of taxation transferred from customs to excise, and of corn formerly re-shipped in bond but now valued as an import. But the real burden of taxation is not the percentage paid on the cost of the goods. It is the actual sum taken out of the people through the custom house. Mr. Fielding does not pretend to collect the revenue without the people paying it. He has found no outside paymasters who were not there before the change of Government. As a general rule

the customs duty is added to the cost of the goods, and the consumer pays not only the tax itself but the merchant's profit on the tax. Where there is competition between home and foreign producers in manufactured goods the price may not be increased by the full amount of the duty. But the condition has not changed in this respect in the past ten years. So if the customs revenue per head has increased by about 100 per cent, as it has, the burden of taxation has doubled.

DUTY AND PRICES.

There is one obvious fallacy in the claim that taxation is not increased when the percentage of duty on value is the same. That argument takes no account of higher prices. A large part of the gain reported in Canadian imports is not an increase in quantities. Prices are higher and the same quantity imported represents much greater value. The importer may have to pay \$150 for the same supplies that he bought ten or twelve years ago, for \$100. If the duty is 25 per cent he pays in taxes \$37.50 when he formerly paid \$25. The Minister of Customs would say that taxation has not increased. As a matter of fact the consumer is bearing a treble burden, paying not only the extra cost of the goods but the extra taxation on the extra cost and the extra profit on both. A large part of Mr. Fielding's growing revenue is obtained in that way.

LONDON CONSPIRACY TRIAL POSTPONED.

While the postponement of the London election conspiracy trial is alleged to be due to the difficulty of getting Mr. Preston's testimony, the real circumstance seems to be that Mr. Preston has kept out of the way in order to postpone further exposures. Mr. Preston has had no public duties which kept him away. He was not wanted in England, for he has been removed from the London Office. The Department has done much of Mr. Preston's work. It cancelled his North Atlantic contract. It reappointed Mr. Just, whom he dismissed from the Emigration Office after Just had written to the Department showing how the Arundel printing job was given out at three times the right price. It has shown confidence in Mr. Jury, who accused Mr. Preston of corrupt practices in office and declared that he could not be believed on oath. But instead of bringing Mr. Preston home and ordering him to tell the truth about the ballot switching operations described by the witness Pritchett, the Government appointed him at an increase salary on a pretended mission to Japan.

THE WANDERINGS OF PRESTON.

Mr. Preston did not go to Japan but to South Africa. He did nothing there so far as can be learned except advertise Rhodesia at the expense of Canada. Some sort of trumped up mission to Australia was next devised, but the whole thing appears to be a scheme to keep Preston away without giving him any responsible duties. Now the "Hugh-the-Machine" character is on the way to Hong Kong. The one thing which Mr. Preston could do for the public benefit was to lend his efforts to clear up that Angean stable at home. This is the only thing that he has avoided doing, and his name is now used as an excuse to prevent the performance of that wholesale duty by anyone else.

MR. EMMERSON'S RIVAL.

A good deal of interest is felt here over the question of Mr. Emmerson and his successor in office. After resigning his portfolio Mr. Emmerson left the House and was not seen for the remaining four weeks of the Session. He spent some time in Boston, and took no steps towards prosecuting his libel suits for six weeks after giving notice of action. Meanwhile, Mr. Pugsley, Premier and Attorney-General of New Brunswick, had entered the field as candidate for the Commons in the City and Country of St. John. This seat is vacant, and Mr. Pugsley's candidature was promoted on the evident understanding of his friends that he was to succeed Mr. Emmerson in the Cabinet. It was announced that Mr. Emmerson would attend the ratification meeting, but he was not there. Mr. Pugsley has been paying frequent visits to Ottawa during the last two months and is supposed to have an understanding with the party leaders here.

EX-MINISTER GETS BUSY.

All this has stirred Mr. Emmerson to renewed activity. On his return to Ottawa he saw how things were drifting. He hurried to New Brunswick and met his

friends in Westmorland. Then he went to St. John and took pains to announce there that he was about to push forward his libel suits, was certain of vindication on the "wine, women and graft" charges, and would soon resume his position as Minister of Railways. Rushing to Fredericton he had a consultation with counsel. He has called a meeting of his Westmorland supporters, with a view, as it is said, of declaring his innocence and securing from the convention an expression of confidence with further declaration to strengthen him in his claim for the restoration of the portfolio. In this Capital the struggle between Mr. Emmerson and those who desire to succeed him is watched with interest. The Department of Railways is the greatest spending portfolio in the Government. It has the most patronage both in the way of contracts and appointments. Favorable dealers are anxiously awaiting the turn of events. At present they do not know whom to cultivate.

A PROHIBITION THAT DOES NOT PROHIBIT.

Labour strikes on works of public utility have been following each other rapidly since the enactment of the Lemieux Bill making such strikes illegal. First the coal miners in the Crow's Nest country quit work without regard to the Act. Now it is the longshoremen in Montreal and some of the teamster's organizations there and elsewhere, who disregard the measure. In vain does the Minister of Labor explain that strikes are prohibited. The men simply quit work and ask the Minister what he can do about it. Strikers contemptuously say that they are not on strike, but are simply not working. For practical purposes it does not seem to matter what the thing is called. Labor Unions pass an order and the men go out simultaneously. They act as a body under their leaders in the same way that men do who go on strike. The consequences are the same. Coal is not mined, ships are not discharged, goods are not delivered, and all the disasters occur, which the Conciliation Act is supposed to prevent.

WON'T ENFORCE ITSELF.

The trouble is that the law contains no means of enforcement. When the bill was before the House opposition members pointed out that it was useless to create an offence by law without also providing some method of preventing or punishing the wrong. But there is no public officer of the Dominion with authority to act. Consequently the parties who decide to strike are in a position to laugh at the law and the Department of Labour. The whole matter stands as it did before the Act was passed.

A SERVICE OF PRAISE.

A good many newspaper men and some other taxpayers have been curious to know what value the country gets for the subsidy paid by the Government to the Canadian Associated Press organization supposed to cable news from England to Canada. A majority of the Canadian papers refuse to take this service, and those which do use it have made a good deal of complaint. But the subsidized Association has during the last few weeks made good its claim for the continued payment of the Government allowance. Its despatches have given glowing accounts of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's performances. They have told us that he was the central figure of the Imperial Council. The longest despatch of the season was the one which pictured in glowing terms the wonderful prestige of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and told how he exercised a controlling and restraining influence over Imperial agitators on one side and Little Englanders on the other. Canada is also indebted to this subsidized service for the information by cable that a Tailor's trades paper has pronounced Sir Wilfrid the best dressed man in the Conference. This alone is worth the \$70,000 to \$120,000 subsidy.

THE COLD FACT.

The truth appears to be that Sir Wilfrid has looked wise and spoken gracefully, but that in the Council itself he has been a negative quantity. Following, as his custom is, the lines of least resistance he supported all the compromises which have made the meeting ineffectual. Finding the existing Imperial Ministry opposed to preferential trade, Sir Wilfrid took back water on the preferential trade resolution which he himself moved four years ago under the sympathetic influence of Mr. Chamberlain. The Australian leader, who took up the preferential trade idea after Canada, and who has energetically supported it against the recent hostile influences of Downing street, found the Canadian representative an impediment instead of an assistance.

BALLOT SWITCHING AND GOVERNMENT DREDGING.

Dredging contracts for the coming season have been given out, the old favorites receiving their share. Among these is the Marston Dredging Company which operated at Goderich last year. Mr. Bennett brought out an interesting circumstance in the committee of Supply

relating to this concern. He was informed by the Minister that W. L. Horton who figured as a contractor was the Marston Dredge Company. Mr. Horton was identified by Mr. Bennett, M. P., as the gentleman described by Pritchett in the course of his evidence of ballot-switching operation in West Huron. Pritchett spoke of Horton acting as cashier in connection with this campaign.

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By order of Department.

J. A. MATHESON,

Inspector of Fisheries.

Ch'town, April 27th 1907.

may 1, 1907-21

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