

The Herald

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SUBSCRIBERS, ATTENTION—We wish to remind our subscribers, in different parts of the Province, that Exhibition Week will be a most opportune time for them to settle their Subscription Accounts.

The New Cabinet

(Montreal Gazette)
The Prime Minister has concluded a difficult and delicate task in the reconstruction of his Cabinet. The changes made were in not a few cases, long overdue and the delay in affecting them was a source of weakness to the Ministry, but in this respect Mr. Meighen inherited a condition which was not of his making and found himself under the necessity of waiting to some extent at least, upon the progress of events. It may be that he has reaped some advantage by waiting, that the delay served to broaden the field from which he has now been able to draw in the selection of new colleagues. In any event, he has succeeded in materially strengthening his cabinet, by greatly increasing its fighting force without sacrificing its administrative capacity, and he has by the inclusion of additional French-Canadian ministers, rendered the personnel of the Government thoroughly representative. These are important gains and should result in broadening the support which the Ministry will receive throughout the country in the approaching campaign. The new ministers have not been drawn in all cases from Mr. Meighen's parliamentary following but all are men of high standing in their respective communities and of distinction in their vocations. The Cabinet as reconstructed is probably one of the strongest that could be got together in Canada at this time, and is not inferior in point of aggregate administrative ability or in fighting strength to the so-called "cabinet of all the talents" which met around the council table under Laurier in 1896. It is qualified to present the Conservative policy forcefully and fairly to the electors and to administer that policy equitably when called upon to do so.

In the re-arrangement of Quebec portfolios, three new Ministers have been selected. Mr. Rodolphe Monty, K. C., of Montreal, as Secretary of State; Mr. L. G. Belley, K. C., of Quebec, as Postmaster-General, and Dr. Normand of Three Rivers, as President of the Privy Council. These, with Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, who remains as Minister of Marine and Fisheries, will form the Quebec wing of the Government. They are without exception men of high standing, and their election will give to the province of Quebec a worthy and creditable representation in the new administration. They are all men of eminence in their professions and enjoy in the fullest measure the confidence of their associates. Dr. Normand enjoys extraordinary popularity in his district. His professional attainments are of a high order and have been widely recognized by medical associations and institutions not only upon this continent but in Europe. He took part in the Gynecological Congress held at Rome in 1902, was President of the Third Congress des Medecins de Langue Francaise, de l'Amerique du Nord in 1906, and in the following year attained to the highest office in

the gift of his fellow practitioners, that of President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Province of Quebec. Dr. Normand has had repeated successes in municipal contests in three Rivers, is keenly interested in public affairs and possesses unusual platform ability; he should prove a decided acquisition to the Government.

The Nova Scotia personnel remains unchanged, but from New Brunswick Hon. J. B. M. Baxter replaces Hon. Rupert Wigmore as Minister of Customs, a change which should be for the better from an administrative as well as from a political point of view. Mr. Baxter was Attorney-General in the Clark Government, and has held the position of Leader of the Opposition in the Legislature since then.

The new ministers from Ontario, Mr. J. A. Stewart, who takes the railway portfolio, Dr. Edwards, who becomes Minister of Immigration and Colonization, Dr. Manion, who takes charge of Soldiers' Re-establishment, and Mr. Edmund Bristol, are all experienced parliamentarians who already occupy seats in the House. Dr. Manion and Mr. Stewart entered as new members at the beginning of the last Parliament and their early elevation to Cabinet rank testifies to the ability which they have displayed. From the west the private benches have also supplied two new ministers, while the third, Mr. R. B. Bennett, of Calgary, is an old parliamentarian, now returning to public life after a brief absence. Mr. Bennett, who succeeds the Right Hon. C. J. Doherty as Minister of Justice, is an able lawyer, a man of energy, courage and independence, and has, perhaps, no equal in the English provinces as a fluent and eloquent platform speaker. His acceptance of a portfolio will unquestionably strengthen the Government's position in the west. The new Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. H. H. Stevens, of Vancouver, has been in Parliament since 1911, and has been marked for promotion for some time. He is a logical and convincing speaker, a careful student, and an industrious worker, and brings to the administration of the Department of Trade and Commerce an intimate knowledge of business matters in addition to his experience as a parliamentarian. What has been so long and so consciously lacking in the conduct of the Trade and Commerce Department, Mr. Stevens is qualified to give and his selection is a very happy one.

The reorganization may not have gone so far in certain directions as some had been led to expect, while in other respects the result may be regarded as otherwise than perfect. Nevertheless a marked advance has been made. The Prime Minister has acted with energy and, on the whole, with wisdom, and the Cabinet, as now constituted, should commend itself to the public. It stands for the traditional Conservative policy, and may be trusted to apply that policy in the best interests, not of any one section of the country, but of all.

An Australian Scheme That Failed

Australia has made a sorry mess of her scheme to build or buy homes in the towns and cities for returned soldiers. After spending £12,323,499 on 17,000 houses the Commonwealth has discovered that project was accompanied by an orgy of graft and bungling which promises to leave the Government ship stranded high on the rocks.

When the scheme was launched it was announced by the department in charge that £50,000,000 would be expended in the effort

to build cheap and substantial houses. Immediately prices of land and building materials began to soar, so much so that the maximum figure for a house, £700, was quite inadequate and it was raised to £800. But even this sum would not suffice with everybody having land or building materials to sell regarding the government as legitimate prey. Confronted with the impossibility of paying the prices which the dealers in building supplies demanded, the Government went in for buying large timber areas and erecting saw mills. Fabulous prices were paid for these conveniences and everybody who had anything to sell the Government reaped huge returns for their patriotism. The timber taken from the Government areas was found scandalously below the standard required. Paint and other materials were of like quality. After building thousands of houses at prices far in excess of the cost, estimated a halt was made for a survey of the situation.

Owing to the absence of the Prime Minister at the Empire Conference in London and the promise of immunity from criticism during his absence it was not till July that the details of the scandal were brought to light. When Mr. Hughes returned to the commonwealth he found that millions had been wasted on the erection of houses which for the most part were standing empty owing to poor construction and their excessive cost.

In the Senate on July 21st Hon. E. D. Millen, Minister of Repatriation, unfolded the story, showing that incompetence was the least of the charges levelled against the responsible officers. There had been a reckless excess of authority and gross breaches of trust. In one case there had been an expenditure by an official of £2,900,000 when authority was given to spend only £150,000. This was for the purchase of existing houses. In other instances the machinery of the department had been used to advance personal interests.

Under the circumstances the Department is going out of the building business.

The chief reason given by the Government for undertaking this colossal scheme, was that the poor soldiers might not be victimized by unscrupulous builders and real estate agents. They were not to be trusted to make good deals for themselves, and a paternal Government would see to it that they got homes worth living in at low cost. Officialdom was the only authority capable of building houses, the only repository of caution knowledge, and acumen. This was the blessed doctrine of Socialism carried to the nth degree. But it landed the Commonwealth in a mess which has proven exceedingly embarrassing. Late enough the system is to be changed and more houses are to be built by contract. The timber areas and the saw mills of the Government are to be scrapped for what they are worth and the millions of pounds which they cost are to be charged up to lost account.

In bold contrast is the shrewd and business-like attitude of the Canadian Government in dealing with returned soldier problems. Mr. Meighen, who is personally responsible for the admirable soldier land settlement plan, rejected a proposal for the erection of houses for returned soldiers as unworkable and too costly. In outlining his project to assist ex-service men in settling on the land he surrounded it with every safeguard to protect them from the menace of unscrupulous real estate agents and other excesses who might seek to fatten themselves even at the expense of our returned heroes. Land was bought for agricultural purposes at low prices and direct from the owner. It was provided that no

land for this purpose would be bought if it had changed hands within a year. This was to prevent the possibility of speculating in farms desired for soldier settlement. And in other ways ex-soldiers were protected from paying excessively for their needs. Manufacturers of farm implements, wagons, harness and other farm needs as well as lumber dealers were approached and willingly and enthusiastically reduced their prices for soldier settlers to figures close to cost. In some cases there was a difference of 30 per cent. in favor of soldier settlers. No desire there to extort from the soldier because the Government was advancing the money.

In the light of Australia's experience Canada has reason to congratulate herself upon the happy working out of her soldier problems. More than 26,000 returned men are settled on the land with monetary advances exceeding \$84,000,000; 108,000 disabled men were treated by the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment and 50,000 of them fitted by vocational training for new positions in life; 73,000 are in receipt of pensions on a scale more liberal than in any other country in the world; \$164,000,000 was paid in gratuities, while the United States is only "thinking" of doing something by way of bonus. An insurance scheme has been developed by which returned men may protect their families from want irrespective of their present condition of health, and many other benefits have been given by the Government, showing that Canada has not been unmindful of the splendid service of her patriot soldiers and sailors.

These were huge and difficult problems. They required statesmanship of a high order. But they have been promulgated and administered well, and not even a suggestion is made that a dollar has been mis-spent.

The Reconstructed Cabinet.

The Cabinet, as announced by Right Hon. Mr. Meighen, is as follows:—

- Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, Right Hon. Arthur Meighen (no change.)
- Railways and Canals—Hon. J. A. Stewart (new.)
- Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment—R. J. Manion, Fort William (new.)
- Customs and Excise—J. B. M. Baxter, St. John, N. B. (new.)
- Public Works—Hon. F. B. McCurdy (no change.)
- Finance—Sir Henry Drayton (no change.)
- President of the Privy Council Dr. L. P. Normand, Three Rivers (new.)
- Agriculture—Hon. S. F. Tolmie, Victoria, B. C. (no change.)
- Labor—Hon. G. D. Robertson (no change.)
- Marine and Naval—Hon. C. C. Ballantyne (no change.)
- Trade and Commerce—H. H. Stevens, Vancouver, (new.)
- Justice—R. B. Bennett, Calgary (new.)
- Postmaster-General—L. G. Belley, K. C., Quebec (new.)
- Secretary of State—Rodolphe Monty, Montreal (new.)
- Health, Immigration and Colonization—Dr. J. W. Edwards, Frontenac (new.)
- Interior—Sir James Loughheed (no change.)
- Militia and Defence—Hon. Hugh Gotthier (no change.)
- Without portfolio—E. K. Spinney (no change); Sir Edward Kemp (no change); James Wilson, Saskatoon (new.)

The portfolio of Solicitor-General remains to be filled. The Prime Minister stated that Right Hon. C. J. Doherty would probably receive an appointment to some other office.

The Government contains eleven new members; one from the Maritime Provinces, three from Quebec, four from Ontario, one from Alberta, one from Saskatchewan, and one from British Columbia. Taken as a whole, the representation of the provinces is as follows:

Ontario—Six ministers with portfolio and two without portfolio.

Quebec—Four ministers with portfolio and the Solicitor General to be appointed.

Nova Scotia—One minister with portfolio and one without portfolio.

New Brunswick—One minister with portfolio.

Manitoba—The Prime Minister.

Saskatchewan—One minister without portfolio.

Alberta—Two ministers with portfolio.

British Columbia—Two ministers with portfolio.

In the new Cabinet there are nine lawyers, six engaged in commercial life; three doctors, two farmers and a labor repre-

sentative. Presbyterian slightly outnumber others, several being of this faith, including the Prime Minister, and of the remainder five are Anglicans, five Methodists, and four Catholics. Politically, there has been considerable change, and although both parties are represented, they are more proportionately to their strength in the country in this than in the 1917 Cabinet. The Liberals in the Cabinet are Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, Hon. Hugh Guthrie, Hon. R. J. Manion, Hon. Dr. Tolmie, and Hon. E. K. Spinney. The remainder are Conservatives, with the exception of Hon. G. D. Robertson, who represents labor.

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