

Haultain on Reciprocity

(Special correspondence to The Guide)
 Regina, March 11.—On Tuesday next, March 14, the Saskatchewan legislature will begin the ninth week of its session since 3 p.m. on Thursday last a blockade of business by the opposition has been in progress. It will be suspended to-night at midnight until 11 a.m. on Monday morning, when the house will re-assemble after the week-end recess. To-night at midnight the blockade will have lasted 72 hours. It has included two all-night sessions. This political warfare has arisen over the question of voters' lists. The opposition has asked the government for an undertaking that another general election shall not take place until a voters' list has been drawn up under the Election Act of 1908. In reply the government has promised that a voters' list shall be compiled as rapidly as possible, but has point blank refused to undertake that another general election shall not take place until the list is completed. Mr. Scott contends that constitutionally the government cannot give a guarantee with regard to the holding or non-holding of an election. Undesired events, it holds, might compel the holding of an election at any time. Carrying the war into the opposition's camp, the premier maintains that they (the opposition) are not concerned for the improvement of the lists as such. He contends that the present ones are fair to both sides and are good enough for Dominion elections. The opposition he says, are desirous of securing some party advantage. What they want, he contends, is a guarantee that a general election shall not take place this year. The result is the present blockade, which the opposition threaten to prolong indefinitely unless the government comes down with the required guarantee. As there is very little likelihood of the government doing anything of the kind the situation is interesting. Mr. Scott has already hinted to the opposition that the lieutenant-governor may come down and dismiss the house, which means that a general election would take place at once. There is a tenseness in the atmosphere which may lead to some important development at any moment.

Elevator Bill

No progress has been made this week with the Elevator bill. It has passed its second reading and is before the committee of the whole. When it will be taken up again no one knows. Very few bills have actually passed the House. Most of those that have received the royal assent are private bills to which little or no opposition has been offered. A bill to amend the Dairymen's Act has passed. This increases the amount which the government may loan to a creamery from \$1,200 to \$3,000. Further the bill gives the minister of agriculture discretion in the matter of the amount of capital authorized, subscribed and paid-up, which must be on hand before a creamery may be organized.

A bill respecting the restraining of animals running at large is at present in committee. There is little new in the bill, its principal object being to consolidate and codify several conflicting statutes respecting herd laws.

In connection with a bill to amend the Rural Municipalities Act the question of the passing of the free range in Saskatchewan came up. Hon. W. R. Motherwell was in charge of different amendments. One of these, asked for by the stockmen of the province, was to the effect that a minimum should be placed on the area of herd districts. This proposal was warmly discussed, but on the whole it did not find favor with the agricultural members of the House. When, however, members from free range municipalities asked for protection from invading herds from other municipalities they found more favor with the House. It was decided that if stock-owners wished to have their own districts protected by law they must also keep their own cattle at home.

During the passing of the agricultural estimates some interesting announcements were made by the government. The new position of provincial live stock commissioner, for which a salary of \$1,800 is provided, it was practically stated would be filled by Paul Brett, Edenwald and Regina. The amount placed in the estimates for travelling dairies and general services is raised from \$5,000 to \$8,000. The amount provided for advances on butter and eggs is raised from \$135,000 to \$160,000. It was

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announced that a survey would be made throughout the province with regard to the question of noxious weeds, with a view to taking the problem firmly in hand and compelling the municipalities councils to do their part in it. The joint branding office now being maintained at Medicine Hat by the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments is to be given up. In future the Saskatchewan branding office will be in Regina. It was mentioned that as many brands are now issued annually as formerly and that in the near future a stockmen's conference will be held in the province. All provincial brands are shortly to be called in and re-issued.

Undoubtedly the event of the past week has been the reciprocity debate and the unanimous vote in the Saskatchewan legislature in favor of the proposed agreement. Some uncertainty was entertained as to what stand the conservative opposition would take on the question. All doubt as to this was removed by the remarkable speech of Mr. Haultain, leader of the opposition, delivered on Wednesday, March 8. Mr. Haultain spoke for an hour declaring himself a whole-hogger in the matter of reciprocity.

He saw no reason why eastern Canada, itself taking a selfish position, should ask the West to take an unselfish one. He professed himself wholly a Western man in the matter of the tariff. It was not a matter of loyalty, maintained Mr. Haultain. He would himself sacrifice a good deal for his British birthright and connection. The West was loyal and would remain loyal to the British crown. He had no fears for the American settlers who were coming into the West. The West would never prove another Texas. He thought, on the other hand, that the proposed arrangement would promote kindly feelings and a spirit of neighborliness between Canada and her great neighbor. "I am not prepared," said Mr. Haultain, "to sit at the feet of any of these Eastern gamaliels and study loyalty."

D. M. Finlayson, North Battleford, and T. H. Garry, Yorkton, mover and seconder, respectively, of the reciprocity motion, expressed the view that the agreement would probably make barley-growing in the province as profitable as wheat-growing. That would be beneficial as the present continuous growing of wheat

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was impoverishing the soil. Barley would provide an earlier maturing crop and one which would help in the noxious weeds problem.

The resolution moved by Mr. Finlayson, a government supporter, was amended by the opposition and made even stronger by the inclusion in it of the endorsement of an increase of the British preference with the ultimate establishment of free trade within the Empire in view.

Important Bills Left

Before the committee of the whole house are still many important bills as, for instance, the workmen's compensation bill. A bill to amend the School Ordinance, providing for important decentralizing features in connection with the formation of school districts, is also in committee. Other bills still in committee are those to amend the Town Act, the City Act and one to amend the Devolution of Estates Act. Into the first two has been put a provision under which city and town councils may bring about the single tax status in four years by four annual and equal reductions in the assessment on buildings. A bill to amend the Village Act, still in committee, provides that a population of 100 instead of 50 must exist before a village can be organized. The main object of this is to prevent the undue obtaining of liquor licenses. The bill to amend the Devolution of Estates Act contains the important provision that a man cannot in any circumstances leave his widow with less than one-third of his estate. Hitherto the widow has been liable to be left absolutely penniless and often has been.

Apart from government business there is now little before the house. One important resolution remains, however, on the order paper. It is that relating to the natural resources of the province. The government announced its intention early in the session to ask the Federal government for the transference to the province of the control of all its natural resources and further to vest in the provincial government all the lands not considered suitable for homestead or colonization purposes. Homestead and colonization lands the Saskatchewan government still desires to see administered by the Federal authorities. The opposition's position is that the province should have the administration of all provincial lands, but it would still maintain the homestead policy.