

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

BY

The Monetary Times
Printing Company
of Canada, Limited

Publishers also of

"The Canadian Engineer"

Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle
of Canada

Established 1867

Old as Confederation

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Parliamentary Legislation Was Not Remarkable

Session Just Completed Will Be Notable for Political Developments, However—
Meighen Succeeds Borden As Premier—Franchise Bill Was Most Contentious Measure—Review of Legislation Affecting Industry and Finance

(Special to *The Monetary Times*.)

Ottawa, July 8th, 1920.

THE session of parliament which has just drawn to a close may become memorable for its political developments, but it will not be noted for startling and outstanding legislation. Due doubtless to the absence of Sir Robert Borden, the natural hesitancy of his colleagues to launch out on new lines without a leader and the general air of political uncertainty which pervaded the capital, the government introduced no new, striking or original legislation. The political developments are important, however, as the Unionist party has been reorganized, and it has just been announced that the Hon. Arthur Meighen, M.P., for Portage la Prairie and minister of the interior in the Unionist cabinet, is to succeed Sir Robert Borden as premier.

Budget Was Biggest Change

The one exception might be regarded as the budget. Sir Henry Drayton struck out on new paths for Canada in his endeavor to tap fresh sources of revenue to meet the tremendous Canadian expenditures. For the first time a Dominion government has proceeded to impose direct taxation to secure revenue (aside from the income tax of the past couple of years). To review here the whole budget and the innumerable amendments which were later adopted, would take up too much space. The broad principles of the budget of this year were: (1) The imposition of direct taxes on the purchase of certain goods over a fixed value, called luxury taxes. (2) The imposition of a sales tax on the turnover of manufacturers and wholesalers. (3) The abolition of the 7½ per Customs Duty imposed as a war tax early in the struggle. (4) The renewal with modifications of the Business Profits Tax. (5) The tightening up of the Income Tax and the placing upon the taxpayer the duty of making the return, as to amount and taxation.

However, while the session was not marked by much striking legislation, there were many contentious and many useful measures passed.

Fight Over Franchise Bill

From the standpoint of the politician the one acrimonious bill of the session was the new Franchise Act. The parties fought over this bill for months. It was the first bill introduced and almost the last to be passed. Whenever the commoners ran out of business they turned to the Franchise Act. While it was of vital import to the politician, the ordinary citizen took little interest in the measure. Roughly, the bill provides for suffrage to every man or woman over 21, a British subject, who has resided two months in the riding and a year in Canada. The two chief points of contention were first, who is a British subject and second, who should revise and prepare the lists.

Inspection of Companies

From the standpoint of the business world there were several measures passed which attracted at the time little attention. One was a measure introduced by Sir Henry Drayton, which places loan and trust companies on the same basis as insurance companies as far as inspection is concerned. Under the old law an inquiry could be directed on order of the Treasury Board, but it really amounted to no inspection. Now they will be subject to regular inspection the same as insurance companies.

Despite a certain amount of opposition from the dairy interests the act permitting the importation into and manufacture in Canada of oleomargarine was extended until March 1, 1922. At the same time the penalties for adulteration were made stricter. Another food act was that in regard to maple sugar. A bill was passed making it illegal to sell an article resembling or imitating maple sugar or maple syrup as the genuine article.

Appeals to Supreme Court

Another act which passed without any publicity but is of interest to the legal and business fraternity is a bill amending the Supreme Court Act. The purpose of this amendment was to bring about a simplification and to secure uniformity in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and also to prevent appeals being brought to it in matters of trifling importance on the plea that title to land or future rights are involved. The bill provides that appeals as of right to the Supreme Court should be restricted to cases in which the amount or value of the matter in controversy in the appeal, whatever its nature, exceeds the sum of \$2,000 exclusive of costs and in all other cases an appeal shall lie ordinarily only by special leave of the highest court of last resort in the province.

Civil Service Measures

There were a number of civil service bills, but most of them of a minor nature. Intimation was given that the government has under consideration the whole question of superannuation. There was somewhat of a storm produced by the announcement that a Chicago firm, called Griffenhagen and Co., had been engaged to reclassify all the departments of the civil service along the lines it has already reclassified the printing bureau. The chief question asked was why Canadians could not be found to undertake with efficiency such a work. Incidentally the senate, which showed a tendency to run amuck all session, upset the tranquility of the government employees by rudely lopping off six regulation civil service holidays. It has been the custom in the past to give the civil servants every Quebec Church holiday, making in all fifteen special holidays. The senate inconspicuously reduced this number to nine. The senate also is not enamored with the civil service commission and the