

## THE EDMONTON BULLETIN

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Manager.  
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## ABANDONING THE POSITIONS.

When a general funds it necessary to abandon an untenable position, he usually does so under cover of artillery fire. An undisguised retreat, is humiliating in itself and may easily become a rout. Wherefore the guns are ordered to roar their loudest, and to toss their smokeless shells into the opposing lines, in hope that the enemy's attention may be diverted while the army falls back.

Something similar would seem to be the tactics of the Ottawa Opposition on the Elections Bill. From its introduction the Opposition has been in a position to make a fight, but it has abandoned every position originally taken and destroyed every argument they advanced.

Teaching Manitoba, for example, the Government proposed to provide voters' lists by special agents appointed by themselves. Immediately the Opposition took the ground that this was an iniquitous system of list preparation and should never be resorted to. Then it was demonstrated by statute and order in council that this was precisely the way the Manitoba Government prepared its lists. It was proven to the hilt that while in theory the judges revised the lists so prepared, in reality they were limited as to the time they might occupy in the work so as to make actual revision impossible.

This put the first trench out of business. To condemn the Federal Government's practice was to condemn the Manitoba Government's practice. Premier Roblin was sent for by the Opposition and went to Ottawa. He had an interview with Sir Wilfrid, returned to Manitoba and announced that his practice would be revised. Whereas the judges had been given certain specified days and hours wherein to revise the lists, a provincial proclamation issued empowering them to adjourn their sittings from day to day until the work was completed. This admission of Premier Roblin that his former course had been improper, partisan and enflamed the Opposition and forced them to abandon it—under cover of a fresh outbreak of blank cartridges.

Relying on Premier Roblin's promise that something approximating a respectable revision would be permitted, the Federal Government dropped the proposal to appoint enumerators of their own, relying on the judges to frustrate any unfair work of the enumerators selected by the Provincial Government. They insist, however, that legal means shall be provided for allocating the names on the voters' lists to their proper Federal subdivisions and empower the county judges of Manitoba to do this. Heretofore, the work had to be done or no elections could be held, yet so on was legally authorized to do it, and anyone doing it was unquestionably going outside the law.

Two or three points are worth noting in this connection. First, the principle has been re-affirmed that the Federal Parliament is the sole custodian of the Federal franchise, and the point once more made clear that Provincial lists are used only to avoid expense. This of course has never been questioned by anyone worthy to be considered an authority on either side of the House. But it was none the less denied point-blank by the actions of the Opposition—even when their Parliament's rights of safeguarding the franchise of Parliamentary electors, they demanded that Premier Roblin be left to disfranchise those electors when and how he pleased. In amending the clause affecting Manitoba Sir Wilfrid explicitly declared that unless Premier Roblin's promise is made good in practice, it will be the duty of Parliament to take matters in its own hands and provide means which will secure his vote to every qualified man and to prevent all others from voting in Federal elections.

Second, both the Opposition, and Premier McBride admit that the provincial machinery of Manitoba has been used to the business of disfranchising Federal electors. The Opposition admitted it by declaring they would be outraged if similar machinery were employed by the Federal Government. The rule must hold both ways. If similar laws similarly administered by the Federal Government would be wrong to Manitoba Conservatives, what is this but to say

the existing laws administered by the Roblin Government do wrong to Manitoba Liberals? Premier Roblin admitted it by promising to do better and by implementing his promise with a proclamation empowering the Manitoba judges to enfranchise men whom his enumerators have robbed of their votes, and to disfranchise men upon whom they have wrongfully conferred the privilege of the ballot.

Third, means are provided for doing what heretofore someone had to do in contravention of law if Federal elections were to be held in Manitoba—to allocate the names on the Provincial lists to the Federal polling subdivisions in which they were entitled to vote. At last election this was done by the returning officers. That they went beyond their legal powers no one has denied. But that the elections could have been held had they not done so, the bitterest partisan has not claimed. Nevertheless for doing this necessary work the officers were haled before the courts and lampooned throughout the country as vote destroyers. While the cries could be kept in abeyance, the whole legal machinery of the Provincial Attorney-General was employed to prevent them being tried. When they could no longer be delayed the cases were formally dropped by the explicit admission that no valid evidence could be found that the officials had purposely disfranchised any man. Thus ended the "thin red line" slander. But just because it had been made a slander and the reputations of innocent men mercilessly assailed, it is necessary to provide legal means of doing the work which must be done and which they did not hesitate to do even without the sanction of law.

So far as Manitoba is concerned the three positions abandoned by the Opposition under cover of the newspaper outburst and the oratorical fusillade may therefore be outlined:

1. That the Roblin Government should control the preparation of Federal voters' lists;
2. That the Roblin Government did not disfranchise Federal voters;
3. That men who did fairly and impartially what had to be done were rascals because they were not given explicit legal authority to do it.

## A PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION.

The Dominion Exhibition will probably go to New Brunswick next year, and to Saskatchewan in 1910, and should it be continued it must be held in several other provinces before Alberta would likely get it again, which makes Edmonton's chances for securing it rather remote. An alternative proposition for this city is to hold a Provincial exhibition next year. The Alberta Government gave a grant of \$25,000 to Calgary exhibition this year, and the grant was not only a proper but also a profitable one, as every-thing that helped the Dominion Exhibition assisted in procuring for Alberta the best practical advertisement ever received by the Province.

If Edmonton would seriously undertake the organization of a Provincial exhibition for next year, to be held in the capital city of the Province, we could not doubt secure a grant similar to that given by the Provincial Government to Calgary, and if a Provincial exhibition next year they would expect themselves. When the present crop is harvested it will restore confidence in the West among the most skeptical, and next year thousands of people will be taking a new interest in Western Canada, and they would very readily visit Alberta to see at a Provincial exhibition, what this Province can produce.

Our Fair is fast evolving into a horse race, and it requires some heroic measure to bring the exhibition feature to the front again. If a Fair is to be a success, the horse races must be made an adjunct only of the exhibition, at present the opposite is the case, and the sooner the matter is taken up seriously the better. The organization of a large Provincial exhibition would be a very effective remedy.

It might be well to change the usual dates and hold such an exhibition about the last week in September, thus giving an opportunity for exhibits of roots, vegetables, etc., of the same year's growth. The weather is usually fine about that time of year, and it would make a much more favorable exhibition date than the hot days of July.

The matter should be taken up at once by the Exhibition Board and the City Council.

## PUBLIC PLAYGROUNDS.

The Saturday News makes the very interesting suggestion that the city should secure the ground now occupied by the city hospital for a public play-

ground or park. This city is sadly in need of some open spaces for the children to play in. Even our public schools are very poorly provided with playgrounds, so poorly in fact that in a very few years it will be counted a public disgrace. The site of the present city hospital is the city's last chance to get a whole block of land in a thickly settled part of the city at anything like a reasonable price, and the number of children who play about the streets, in that locality, at the daily risk of their lives, is a stinging evidence of the necessity of a better place for them to enjoy themselves than on the roadway.

The Philadelphia Ledger gives the following as a conversation that took place in court between a judge and a boy who lacked any playground but the public thoroughfare:

"Don't you know who owns the street?" queried the judge.

"Course I do," responded the boy, who was arrested for playing ball on the pavement, "but I thought they'd let me use it awhile."

"Whom do you mean?"

"De guys in automobiles, of course. Why, Judge, eure dey was pinched."

The Mayor and Council that will establish the first public playground for the boys and girls in Edmonton will erect for themselves an enduring monument as public benefactors. In no other way can they confer so great a boon upon the boys and girls in the East End than by taking immediate action to secure this square before it is parcelled up into lots.

Every large city on this continent has spent enormous sums of money, in later years, to make playgrounds in the thickly populated parts of the city. It seems to be the rule to wait until these things are almost out of the work which must be done and which they did not hesitate to do even without the sanction of law.

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deprive travelling of most of its comforts. We have become so accustomed to this kind of treatment that we have ceased to expect a summer excursion east, but most people thought an exception would surely be made for the celebration at Quebec, and the visit at the Prince of Wales. When an event of so much importance is being celebrated and the celebration takes place only once every few hundred years, it can hardly be accounted a favor to expect that the railways would facilitate the gathering of representatives from all parts of Canada. It is not too late yet if the transportation companies desire to do the right thing by the West in this matter.

## GIVE THE INDIAN WHAT HE DESERVES.

The policy of the Opposition is obstruction, opposition which stops at nothing at all to achieve its ends, unscrupulous as the results may be. One day the Opposition complains of the Government in advancing seed grain for Western Canada. On the following day it complains because of the policy of the Government towards the Indians.

The policy of the Government is to do the right thing with the Indian. As Frank Oliver says, the object is not to make the Indian a white man, but it is to make the Indian a good Indian. He takes some pride in the fact that in recent years at least the Dominion Government has always done the right thing to the Indian and acted honestly.

Canada should deal fairly with the Indians. That is the policy of the Government at the present time and it is one which must meet with the approval of the people. The Indians are the wards of the Government. They owned all the land at one time, they do not own it now. They should receive some consideration for the past and should receive proper treatment at the hands of a country which calls itself a Christian country.

Calgary Alberta.

## THE WORK OF SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN.

Toronto Globe.—After a short career of military and maritime achievement, Samuel de Champlain, the first French explorer of Canada, died in 1635. He was a Frenchman, but he was a Canadian. He was a Frenchman, but he was a Canadian. He was a Frenchman, but he was a Canadian.

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## PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATION.

Ottawa Free Press.—One of the chief events in parliament last week was, of course, the compromise agreed to in respect of the Manitoba lists. The federal government appoints the county court judges of the province to place the voters in the Dominion constituencies in the polling subdivisions to which they rightly belong. This provision prevents the Hon. Robert Borden from having another opportunity to "thin red line" shanders, and Attorney General Campbell from again harassing innocent returning officers, prosecuting them, adjourning their trials from court to court and from year to year, and then, finally, after three years, entering no prosecutions.

The compromise is resented by Manitoba Liberals, who consider that, notwithstanding Premier Roblin's concessions, the Dominion government has not done more than to "load" against them to the tune of upwards of 100 votes in each constituency.

Time will prove if this is true; and, if it is, those voters in Manitoba and elsewhere who feel that they have a right to elect a representative to parliament will know how to administer fitting punishment to the Dominion government, knowing what dissatisfaction existed in respect of the Manitoba lists, sought to do so by an impartial and non-partisan representation and revision of those lists; but the opposition took advantage of the opportunities for obstruction, and the government had to try to force the measure through parliament, where a large majority was in favor of it, the harm which would have come to the country has not. On July 1 a portion of the public service will be again without money, and the opposition were well aware of this when they refused to agree to a one-fourth vote on account.

The thirty odd millions covered by the last supply bill is made up mainly of the votes of each large spending department as the post office, railways and customs, and customs—in which the collections of revenue are also very large—and one-eighth vote on account of the other departments where the money has not been already voted.

The supply bill was the second this session; and the total formally appropriated out of this year's estimates, \$47,000,000, out of which some \$20,000,000 has been voted on account and remains to be discussed when the full estimates are under consideration. So that the net total of the estimates actually disposed of is only \$27,000,000.

The estimates for the year, as explained in the budget speech of the minister of finance, are: Consolidated fund expenditure, \$76,571,471; capital account expenditure, including the National Transcontinental railway, \$42,365,620. The House of Commons has yet to discuss over \$30,000,000. And on July 1 the last vote on account— which covered four weeks' arrears and the balance of the estimates—will run out; and several of the departments will be again unable to pay their way. The opposition have recently asserted that they were not obstructing the granting of supplies; and their leader, Mr. R. L. Borden, stated last week that they had been passing supplies at the rate of a million a day. But this condition of affairs is of very recent date, and has not lasted more than two weeks. Behind that there lies a four weeks' stretch of the most improvident waste of the public money.

In fact, it took two whole months to pass the last vote of \$914,890 for the coast and river service. The committee of supply began to consider the first item of the vote on January 10 and it was March 10 before the last item of that \$914,890 was passed.

Next the minister of public works said that he had four weeks' notice after night—often until the small hours of the morning; and only a very small part of his estimates was allowed to pass the committee.

And now, when the full extent of the consequences of this obstructionist policy is being felt, the opposition is beginning to dawn on the country, the oppositionists and blantly deny that it has been obstructing supply. Not only did they obstruct supply, but they degraded parliament to an unexampled degree, calumniating and slandering any one who happened to be sufficiently distinguished to serve the country by holding a ministerial position.

The refusal of a one-fourth vote on account is only an indication that the opposition are reluctant to give up the struggle of obstructing supply, at which they have become so expert; and unless Mr. R. L. Borden can continue to combat successfully the influence of Hon. George E. Foster, there will be another relapse into the old ways before July 1.

The conduct of the opposition is none too business-like even as it is; and if a careful analysis is made of how they spent the week before last, it will be found that they were responsible for wasting no less than 14 hours. On Friday, for instance, the whole morning and afternoon were wasted by fruitless inquiries and discussions; and the House did not get into committee of supply until nine o'clock at night. Much of Wednesday was similarly wasted and there was only one hour of supply before the adjournment at six o'clock. Tuesday hours on both Monday and Tuesday were also needlessly occupied; and the proceedings last week do not show that the opposition have yet got down to a fair conception of how they ought to assist the business of the country.

As to the Land bill, with which progress was made, the idea to be opened to pre-emption has been explained in the House of Commons to the effect that it was to be a pre-emption area, and on January 10 and it was March 10 before the last item of that \$914,890 was passed.

The bill intended to encourage shipbuilding in Canada, and the minister of marine said that it was a very simple one. It provides that repairs and equipment of ships in foreign countries in respect of vessels to be used or being used in the coasting trade of Canada shall be deductible from the tax on such repairs. The tax on such repairs shall be 25 per cent of their value; and the duty on the equipment shall be the same as if the repairs had been made in Canada. The bill will encourage the small yards in the great lakes, and should also give a great impetus to the shipbuilding industry in the Maritime provinces and in British Columbia. In every one of the provinces there would be seen handicapped in competing with rivals across the line; and now, if the Americans get the shipbuilding custom of vessels employed in the Canadian coasting trade, the owners will have to make a substantial contribution to the cost of the repairs. The bill also empowers the board to compel a railway company either to carry its trucks under or over a highway, and further, to make regulations under which a shipper will be able to select tonnage against a railway company, as the railway company does against him when he does not come up to time.

Mr. Borden's resolution to refer the question of a two-cent mile passenger tariff to the railway commission was brought up in connection with this bill and was stoutly opposed by W. F. Macleod, the great advocate of a two-cent rate, who said the establishment of such a rate was a matter of policy and not of statistics. The trouble arose over Mr. Borden's C-section to Lawrence securing his daughter home.

Another measure of importance, on which stress has already been laid, was the amendment to the Railway Act, which makes telegraph and telephone tolls subject to the approval of the board of railway commissioners; and for the first time gives the government effective control over these great public utilities, the managers of which in the future, have to behave themselves or bear the consequences. The bill also empowers the board to compel a railway company either to carry its trucks under or over a highway, and further, to make regulations under which a shipper will be able to select tonnage against a railway company, as the railway company does against him when he does not come up to time.

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## Borden's object to enable the companies to show that the existing passenger rates were not high enough, such an inquiry at the present time would probably be successful. The minister seemed to favor Mr. Macleod's idea as to how the object ought to be achieved; but was not prepared to admit that it should be done if there was any likelihood of an increase in freight rates in consequence. The freight rates were of more vital concern to the producers of the country than were the passenger rates; and if they observed the rule of the greatest good for the greatest number, they certainly ought not to lower the passenger rates; and, if they did, they would be carrying out at the expense of the freight.

Freight already supplies the compensation with the major part of their profits; and, from the figures quoted by the minister, it is patent that no reduction of passenger fares could be carried out at the present time without affecting the freight rates. Perhaps next year, after a bountiful harvest, conditions will be ripe for the enactment of a two-cent passenger tariff; and, if they are, the government will not doubt bring in a measure to that effect. Mr. Borden's was an illusive proposal. It did not substantially pledge him to a two-cent rate, and it only gave it the shadow of support. Mr. Macleod, who has the matter much at heart, saw this and voted against his own leader.

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