

# Our Ottawa Letter

Conscription Bill in the Senate—The C.N.R.—Hughes Charges Overseas Extravagance  
By The Guide's Special Correspondent

Ottawa, July 9.—While parliament has this week in a sense been marking time, pending the return of western members from the Winnipeg convention, there have been some interesting discussions and likewise some progress has been made with the business before the house. The railway legislation has been advanced a stage, as had also other government legislation. On the senate side of parliament most of the week was spent on the details of the military service bill, which at the time of writing has been practically disposed of. Numerous amendments, mostly of a minor character, were heard in the upper house and rejected by varying majorities. An amendment moved by the government after some discussion provides that prosecutions under the act shall not be proceeded with except with the consent of the Minister of Justice. This is to meet the charge made by opposition members on both sides of the house that the act would be used to intimidate the opposition during the course of the general election.

The despatches from Winnipeg were eagerly read during the week. The story as it was unfolded from day to day was received with mixed feelings. Conservatives who had been led to hope that the Western Liberals would repudiate Sir Wilfrid Laurier and declare in favor of supporting a union government with Sir Robert Borden at the head were disappointed. Liberals who feared that this might happen were pleased with what happened. The result of the deliberations at Winnipeg confirm the opinion which has been held by many here that a coalition made up of the existing party elements is impossible this side of an election, and that a contest is necessary to clear the atmosphere. "Observer," writing in the Ottawa Morning Citizen today, tells Sir Robert Borden that he could not expect Western Liberals to act differently than they have in view of his determination to keep "the other Robert" (Mr. Rogers) in the cabinet. "Observer" says that the Prime Minister must petition the Minister of Public Works before he can hope to carry out successfully the hope expressed by him to the Ontario war delegation to form a union government inclusive of all parties as well as representatives of agriculture and labor.

An interesting development of the week has been the decision of the Food Controller, Hon. W. J. Hanna, to prohibit the use of beef, bacon, etc., in public eating places on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week, and to stop the conversion of wheat into spirits except such as are used in connection with the making of munitions. Substitutes for white bread must also be served when this staple article is served. It is hoped in this way to materially lessen the consumption of meats and fat.

### Mackenzie and Mann Lauded

Much diversity of opinion was expressed when the resolution providing for the purchase of the sixty millions of C.N.R. stock but now owned by the government was under consideration at the Wednesday sitting of the house. F. B. Carvell, who in most respects is one of the most radical members of the house, does not believe in government ownership of railways. He stated that he was absolutely opposed to government ownership and said he preferred to extend further financial aid to the C.N.R., taking stock as security. He objected to the government going so far as proposed along the line of government ownership.

### Expropriation of C.N.R. Advocated

Mr. German of Welland and Hon. William Fugatey advocated expropriation of the C.N.R. lines. Mr. German wanted to see the government take over the whole system and pay what it was worth. Such a course would be preferable, he said, to buying stock. The Drayton-Asworth report had declared to be of no value. Mr. German asserted that Sir Thomas White and Hon. Robert Rogers have been closely

identified with the C.N.R. The Minister of Finance, he said, was in close touch with many persons who would benefit by the money to be paid for the C.N.R. stock. The influence of these men, he said, had been great in putting Sir Thomas into the cabinet. Mr. German declared that he would not be satisfied with any court of arbitration appointed by the government. He believed the government should formulate a policy embracing the I.C.R., N.T.R., C.N.R. and Hudson Bay railway, putting all under one management.

E. M. Macdonald said that the government was going to saddle the country with further liabilities amounting to six hundred million dollars. The whole thing, in his opinion, was a hybrid arrangement by which the government was to own the road, assume its liabilities and leave Mackenzie and Mann to continue its management.

Sir Thomas White warmly asserted that there was nothing whatever in this statement. The government, he said, would take full responsibility for the operation of the C.N.R. lines. There were a number of excellent C.N.R. officials, however, whose services would be utilized in this connection.

Replying to the criticisms advanced by Mr. Carvell, the minister of finance said: "We believe the time has come when the government must lay down the principle that if it is to finance the railways the people must own them. That is the step the people demand if these roads are to be kept by them as running concerns." Sir Thomas also stated that the real position with regard to the C.N.R. was that all the provinces were so involved that default could not be allowed. No one could yet say how these systems would be operated but he absolutely agreed to the principle that they must be kept free from political influence. Sir Thomas stated that the C.N.R. had made no formal written request for assistance but that officials of the company had produced figures showing that a minimum of twenty million dollars would be required to keep the company solvent.

Hon. Geo. F. Graham objected to arbitration as implying that there was a value in the stock. "Let the government put the amount in their legislation and then let us fight it out," he said.

### New Appointments

There was a warm debate at the Tuesday sitting of the house over the resolutions authorizing the appointment of Sir George Perley as overseas minister of militia at \$7,000 per annum, of a parliamentary secretary of external affairs and a parliamentary secretary for the militia department at \$5,000 each. These two positions have been filled by Col. Hugh Clark, member for North Bruce and F. B. McCurdy, member for Queens-Sheffburne, respectively and the resolution provided that the salaries should be retroactive from the dates of the appointments. Sir Robert Borden stated that although the salaries were being provided Sir George Perley and F. B. McCurdy did not propose to draw theirs. Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux objected to the appointment of millionaires to so many positions. The government, he hinted, intended to bring the Dominion under the control of a group of millionaires. Sir Sam Hughes, ex-minister of militia was understood to support this viewpoint. He declared that if such positions were needed they should be paid for. The holders should draw their salaries and do what they like with them afterwards.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier questioned the wisdom of having an overseas minister of militia. He thought it would be far better to have an official in England directly responsible to the minister of militia, who was responsible to parliament. Sir Robert Borden defending the appointments said that in England some of the big departments had been divided. The operation of military affairs under the two ministers he declared as being "quite harmonious."

### Extravagance Overseas

Sir Sam Hughes then took a hand in the discussion remarking that "He felt sorry for the humiliating position occupied by the minister of militia." He freely criticized Sir George Perley's administration of affairs overseas, charging extravagance. Where formerly 50 men had been sufficient for administrative purposes the present overseas minister now has a staff of over 1,000 men occupying six buildings, he declared.

Mr. Lemieux strongly objected to "London control" of Canadian affairs. He did not want the time to come when Canadian ministers would sit in London instead of at Ottawa. Mr. Morphy, Conservative member for North Perth, also objected to positions going to men in the millionaire class who could afford to take them without drawing their salaries. He thought that in a democracy like Canada positions should not be created which could be taken only by men of great wealth.

### Ontario's Organized Progress

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Tuesday night's meeting was at Thamesford, 13 miles out of London. Here upwards of 300 men were present. Many drove in from a distance and no less than six clubs were represented. The enthusiasm of the visitors from the different clubs in the district prolonged the meeting until after midnight.

### Down in Oxford County

The next night found us at Springford, in the southern part of the County of Oxford, where upwards of 100 attended.

This part of Ontario is the home of the Holsteins, and noted for its fruit production. Dairying is the chief industry, and notwithstanding the excessive prices the dairymen have to pay for feed, the present high price of milk makes the business profitable. Lack of labor, is, however, making the work a burden on all the members of the farmers' family. Mr. Free, secretary of the Thamesford Club, and who entertained us the night of the Thamesford meeting, works a 130 acre farm, keeps a dairy herd, which on account of lack of labor he has reduced to ten cows, attends to all the duties of the farm, as well as the milking of the cows himself, his wife and his children, (two boys and a girl, all under thirteen years of age) and sends his milk to a condenser.

Mr. Waring, who entertained us at Springfield, works a 225 acre farm, milks 30 cows. Himself, his wife and son, nineteen years of age, and a nephew thirteen years of age, do all the work. They cannot get a man. Mr. Waring uses a milking machine, lights his house and barn, and operates his milking machine and all his dairying machinery with hydro-electric power. Lack of labor compelled him to purchase a gasoline engine last summer with which he does his plowing. He also uses the engine for seeding, cultivating and harrowing his land. Niagara power is largely used by the farmers in this district as substitute for manual labor. The use of electric light in the homes and barns is a great convenience and saver of labor. If city enthusiasts for increased production on mixed farming could see the pressure under which the farmer and his family are to maintain the present output, they would be more considerate. But they do not seem able to understand.

The concluding meeting of the series and the most successful was held in Newmarket in York County, on the evening of Saturday, June 2. This was a union meeting between the Workers' Union of Newmarket and the Farmers' Club, and was attended by upwards of 600. In addition to Mr. Morrison and myself, Mr. E. C. Drury, Director of The United Farmers of Ontario, and Hon. Mr. Davis addressed the meeting. There is an inclination on the part of the "Workers' Union" of Newmarket and the Farmers' Club to cooperate in the matter of purchasing supplies.

### Club Development in Ontario

As an indication of the development of the Farmers' Club movement in Ontario, I was given the following list of clubs that have been organized in the Newmarket district since the new year:

Queensville	with 200 members
Newmarket	" 175 "
Richmond Hill	" 100 "
Unionville	" 100 "
Stouffville	" 200 "

Mt. Albert	with 200 members
Pine Orchard	" 100 "
Vendorf	" 33 "
Maples	" 75 "
Woodbridge	" 100 "

All these clubs are in close proximity to one another. Mr. Morrison informs me that they have 280 clubs in 43 Counties of Ontario with a total membership of upwards of 10,000. An outstanding feature of their activities is the purchasing of supplies co-operatively, some of the clubs going into this feature with much energy. The club at Thamesford had distributed among its members over \$40,000 worth of supplies since it was organized fourteen months ago, and clubs handling from \$10,000, \$15,000 to \$20,000 worth are common. This, of course, is largely confined to feed stuffs and other goods that admit of bulk handling.

A marked feature of the clubs is the changed attitude towards the importance of farmers making a study of their economic needs. The fetish that it is no part of the farmers' business to study questions affecting public affairs, is being largely discounted. The teaching of the clubs of Ontario, the same as the Grain Growers' Associations of the prairies, is that the time has arrived for farmers to take their proper place in the public business of the nation, and that the business of the farmer is not confined to production, but involves the marketing of his products, and the purchasing of his supplies as well, and that the time has arrived for the farmer to attend to all his business.

Considering that unusually bad weather prevailed during nearly all the time I was on this trip, the evidence of growing organized interest in rural Ontario was very satisfactory indeed.

### Mr. Morrison's Letter

Since the above was written a letter on the work has been received from J. J. Morrison, part of which is as follows:

"Ontario farmers at first slow to move are now making substantial progress in organization. Forty-five counties have now in some part of them United Farmers' Organizations. Three hundred of those U.F.O. clubs with 10,000 members mark the progress of three years' work. Out of them will come young men of vision and strength who will enthuse the rural mind with class consciousness, self respect and unity of purpose. Already may be seen the development of intelligent thought untrammelled by prejudice or partisan bias.

"Last year a series of local conventions were held at 10 places where interest was most strongly developed for the purpose of discussing problems affecting agriculture at a time when the rural mind was not disturbed or biased by elections or issues that inflame or warp calm consideration and common sense. Marked interest was everywhere evident, eagerness to hear of Western doings at first hand gave zest to all these meetings.

"Many readers of The Guide will doubtless be interested in the places at which Mr. Kennedy spoke this year. West from Toronto to Burlington, Halton County, Brantford and Burford in Brant County; Ingersoll and Tillsonburg, Oxford County; Tillbury, Kent County; Essex, Essex County; Forest, Lambton County; Exeter, Seabrook, Gorrie, Huron County; Listowel, Perth County; Varney and Dromore, Grey County; Markham, Uxbridge, North York, Ontario County; Orillia, Simcoe County; Peterboro, Peterboro County; Perth and Middleville, Lanark County; Chesterville, Dundas County; Glennevis and Blairville, Glengarry; Spencerville, Grenville County; Korah, Georgian Bay and Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma.

"Those who fear a division of our Dominion into halves by conflicting interests between East and West would change their mind if they witnessed the unanimity of opinion that greeted Mr. Kennedy in his survey of rural conditions and the needed remedy. That no cleavage exists in the minds of farmers was very evident and no better way can be devised to unify and consolidate Eastern and Western purpose than by these meetings.

"To this end I would solicit the cooperation of Western Grain Growers intending to come East this winter to notify The Guide or the writer, so that arrangements may be made for addressing meetings in the locality in which they intend to visit. Much valuable talent may thus be used in a noble and truly patriotic cause."

Mr. Morrison's address is J. J. Morrison, Secretary, the United Farmers of Ontario, 2 Francis St., Toronto.

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