

Prominent Topics

Dominion Session.

The revision of the tariff and the passing of the labour disputes bill were undoubtedly the most notable legislative features of the session just closed. In its immediate bearings the tariff has not been materially changed. Extended investigations and prolonged hearings evidently resulted in the general decision to let well enough alone. The details of applying the preference to British goods were varied somewhat, but with little change to the net result. The novel feature of the revision was, of course, the providing an intermediate tariff of which the trading nations of the world may avail themselves upon granting corresponding benefits to Canada.

The labour disputes bill is an earnest experiment at rescuing the public from the evils of ill-considered strikes and lock-outs. Already the bill has been tried and not found wanting in beneficial results. That it will become even more efficacious as laborers and employers alike become more familiar with its purpose and methods, there is little reason to doubt. Certain flaws may be discovered in details of procedure—but the act marks a long step in the right direction.

While it would have been a relief both to insurance companies and to the public to have had the Royal Commission's report disposed of, it is well that it should be postponed rather than acted upon hastily during the dying hours of a long-drawn-out session. Opportunity is given for careful presentation of the case by the companies, and for educating the public to see the unwisdom of certain radical features of the draft bill.

The decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in favour of the Toronto Street Railway.

Railway Company, and against the city, is in accord with British reluctance to interfere with the express stipulations of public franchises. So conservative an attitude may not please Torontonians in this instance, but a departure from the recognized principle of taking contracts as they read—and not as, under changed conditions, it may seem that they should read—would involve unlooked for troubles. That municipalities should obtain the most favourable terms possible in granting franchises is commendable civic policy. But let it be understood—and the Privy Council certainly aids to such understanding—that what is written is written. The fact that a mistake may sometimes be made is not sufficient justification for doing away with the contractual rights upon which the economic stability of society is based.

The May Day Demonstrations.

The Socialist Demonstration on May Day in Montreal, did not attain very great dimensions.

The Socialists neither did nor said anything very startling. Whatever importance or interest there was to the event came wholly from the attempts to suppress the movement. Evidently socialistic teachings do not appeal very strongly to the people of Montreal. It will not, however, be surprising if the fuss made over the affair leads to very exaggerated representations being made in the press of London, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Paris, and St. Petersburg; where by this time Montreal is probably represented as seething with socialism. Throughout Canada May Day seems to have passed off pretty quietly. A few bricklayers and stone-masons in Ottawa, a few lathers in Toronto, a few painters in Hamilton, and the carpenters in St. Catherines and Brantford went on strike. Otherwise the great boom in the building trade stands practically unchecked, which is matter for congratulation to both employers and employed. In Europe, Paris did not get off so easily, both in that city and in Rome blood-shed on a serious scale appears to have been averted only by the very stringent precautions taken by the civil and military authorities.

Technical Education.

The prospects are bright for the holding, next autumn, of regular night classes under the auspices of the Montreal Technical Institute in the new Commercial and Technical High School on Sherbrooke St. A meeting recently held in the Technical School was largely attended by leading educationalists, members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and of the Mechanics' Institute. Major G. W. Stephens made the practical proposition that twenty of the leading manufacturing firms in the city should each contribute \$500, and pledged the company with which he is connected, to subscribe that amount. He suggested that the Mechanics Institute sell its property at the corner of St. James' and St. Peter streets, which he considered would bring about \$125,000. Providing that the \$200,000 mark were reached, he himself would subscribe \$5,000. Montreal, in his opinion, should have a technical school second to none in the world. Mr. C. C. Ballantyne also pledged \$500 on behalf of his firm and stated that he felt sure the Manufacturers' Association as a body would take action favouring the plan of thus supplying technical training to artisans.

C. F. U. A.'s New Montreal Premises.

The offices of the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association, Montreal, have been removed from the Royal Building to No. 11 St. Sacrament Street.