

# Our Ottawa Letter

Vote Half-billion for War—Federal Franchise for Women—Abolition Hereditary Titles

Special Correspondence of The Grain Growers' Guide

Ottawa, April 12.—Canada's half a billion vote to defray war expenditures for the current fiscal year, Hon. J. D. Reid's bill to provide for the purchase of rolling stock for Canadian Railways, the bill extending the franchise to all the women of Canada, and other important government measures have engaged the attention of the House of Commons this week. Over in the Senate, good progress has been made with the bill to consolidate the Railway Act, while the Daylight Saving Bill has been put through its various stages and been assented to in order that the clocks throughout the Dominion might be advanced an hour on Sunday. All these matters are such as might have been expected to engage the attention of Parliament during the present week. They are business items on the parliamentary programme.

Another matter which was not anticipated but which will have a far reaching effect, culminated during the early part of the week, when, much to the joy of all radical members of the House, it developed that the Government has taken steps which will probably result in the reduction of the evils arising out of the granting of titles in Canada to a minimum. This development came

in connection with a debate on a resolution standing in the name of W. F. Nickle, calling for the abolition of hereditary titles.

The surprise came when, during the course of the debate, Sir Robert Borden produced an order-in-council passed by the government on March 25, and requesting the Imperial authorities to consider the following suggestions:—

1. No honor or titular distinction (saving those granted in recognition of Military service during the present war or ordinarily bestowed by the Sovereign) shall be conferred upon a subject of His Majesty ordinarily resident in Canada except with the approval or upon the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada.

2. The government of the United Kingdom shall exercise the same authority as heretofore in determining the character and number of titles or honors to be allowed to Canada from time to time.

3. No hereditary title of honor shall hereafter be conferred upon a subject of His Majesty ordinarily resident in Canada.

4. Appropriate action shall be taken, whether by legislation or otherwise, to provide that after a prescribed period

no title of honor held by a subject of His Majesty now or hereafter ordinarily resident in Canada shall be recognized as having hereditary effect.

## R. L. Richardson's Amendment

The debate was after a time adjourned because R. L. Richardson, Springfield, Man., had moved an amendment to Mr. Nickle's resolution the effect of which would be the abolition of all titles in Canada. In view of this suggestion, Sir Robert Borden, thought the debate should be adjourned in order that the motion might be framed in different language. He pointed out that an improperly expressed resolution might be taken to include military titles. Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed the hope that further opportunity would be given for the discussion of the matter, and the Prime Minister promised that it would be taken up at a later date in the session. The general impression here is that the "demand" of the Canadian government and parliament will be acceded to insofar at least as the first three suggestions are concerned. It is recognized that the proposal to define a period during which hereditary titles already granted shall be effective is a matter of considerable difficulty. It is apparent, however, that insofar as the granting of additional hereditary titles is concerned this evil will not be perpetuated in Canada. The limitation of titles which do not descend to people recommended by the Prime Minister of the country will doubtless have the effect of reducing

their number almost to the vanishing point, because, no prime minister in the future would dare to incur the risk of arousing public opinion against himself by recommending men for titles for political services, or for other causes which have been prevalent in the past.

## Mr. Nickle's Speech

The democrats of the house certainly had a field day on Monday, when Mr. Nickle's resolution was discussed. The remarkable feature of the debate was that the members were all democrats. Even those, like Sir Robert Borden, Sir Sam Hughes and Hon. W. S. Fielding, who were disposed to admit that there might be some merit in the system were inclined to agree that it does not fit in well with the institutions of a democratic country like Canada.

Mr. Nickle in introducing the subject made a particularly effective speech which was greeted with applause from all parts of the house. He expressed the fear that after the war Canada might be afflicted with a great shower of titles. It was desirable that this should be avoided. "Men went to the war," he said "from a sense of duty and we learned that in the humblest clay a hero might be hidden and there was no monopoly of virtue. Occasion showed who were brave and who were cowards, who were saints and who were sinners."

A. R. MacMaster, Liberal member for Bromes, who seconded the resolution, stated bluntly that the great mass of the people of Canada were opposed to titles. He suggested that the Prime Minister make a tour of the country and learn the facts. He advised Sir Robert to take with him the Sergeant-at-Arms of the house of commons and the mace to protect him from possible violence in putting the question to Canadians more particularly in the west.

## Government is Awake

It was quite apparent, before Sir Robert Borden got through with his speech, however, that there was no reason why he should adopt the suggestion made by the member for Bromes. It was plain that the government has had its ear to the ground and has taken heed of the grumbings which has reached its ears from all parts of Canada. In regard to hereditary titles the order-in-council which the Prime Minister read and which was based upon a report made to cabinet council by himself said: "The Prime Minister is firmly convinced of opinion that the creation or continuance of hereditary titles in Canada is entirely incompatible with the ideals of democracy as they have developed in this country, and that the time has arrived when their hereditary quality or effect should be abolished in this Dominion. The hereditary peerage as an institution can find neither historic justification nor scope for usefulness in a state structure and social conditions such as that which now exist in Canada. Consequently the effect of such an institution in this country is merely, on the one hand, to confer and to perpetuate arbitrarily for some members of the community a titular distinction or status of honor, and on the other hand to imply a position of special though ill defined privilege to which there is not and cannot be assigned any obligation or function in the activities of Canadian national life."

## Sir Wilfrid's Offer

In the subsequent discussion the members vied with one another in seeing who could say the hardest thing about the whole system of titles. "I have accepted a title," said Sir Wilfrid Laurier. "Why I accepted it with the views I hold now will be going into a matter of personal history which I do not care to bring forward. But, at all events, I may say this: I see here a little class of titled people, knight commanders of this order or that order. If they will make a bargain with me, I am quite prepared, if we can do it without any respect to the crown of England, to bring our titles to the market place and make a bonfire of them. I have no doubt at all that, whether my suggestion is accepted or is not accepted, the time will come, and perhaps soon, rather than late, when all

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The advertisement features a central graphic with two Dunlop tires on either side of a central emblem. The emblem consists of two hands clasped together, with the words "DUNLOP" and "TIRES" on banners above and below them. Below the hands is a circular seal that reads "SEAL OF QUALITY" and "AUTOMOBILE". The entire graphic is enclosed in a decorative border.

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