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DOMINION LEGISLATION.

THE members of the Dominion Parliament have been "hard at it," to use a vulgarism, for a whole month. It can hardly be claimed that they have yet given the country anything startling, much less useful, in the shape of legislation. The Speech from the Throne foreshadowed nothing remarkable in this direction, and whatever may be forthcoming will have to be the outgrowth of the work of the session.

As is the case usually in the first session after an election and particularly when the contest was as bitter as that of March 5th, and the majority for the "Ins" somewhat slender, the major portion of the time of the House is taken up with motions and movements having a tendency to compromise and affect the position of the majority aiming at its abolition. The Tarte-McGreevy scandal, concerning as it does the character of a minister of the crown, Hon. Hector Langevin, is in this instance proving just the nicest morsel that the opposition could have hoped to taste. The case is still *sub judice*, and we have no desire to prejudge, but there is no question, that surrounded by various peculiar circumstances and relations, it is proving an annoying and worrisome matter to the Government—and especially to the First Minister.

'Tis pity that the trend of politics in this age is so completely partizan that the important function of Government to create and enact wise measures for the betterment of the condition of the people and the advancement of the country's commerce must be given a subordinate place, whilst the unsavory occupation of washing the legislators' dirty linen is proceeded with.

THE LUMBERMAN refers to the matter with no party bias whatever; this is not its vocation; simply to regret that these things exist. Important questions bearing an intimate relation to the financial welfare of the Dominion are pressing for a solution, and as a commercial journal, it is these we should hope to see engaging the attention of the Commons.

When the debate on the Budget takes place, we may expect that some of these matters will be discussed, but it is measurably certain that so high will party feeling run, that no equitable and common ground will be reached.

In the opinion of those who are watching closely the throbbing of the political pulse we are hardly likely to have many, if indeed any, tariff changes of importance this session. Various deputations of manufacturers and commercial men have interviewed the Government, and others are to follow, their wishes will be courteously considered by the Cabinet, but some other day, not to-day, they may receive practical demonstration.

Only one question of direct interest to lumbermen might find a place on the papers of the House, and that is the possible re-imposition of the duty on logs. We have no reason to suppose that it will obtain precedence of other questions, concerning other interests, that to those concerned, are of equal importance with this. A quiet agitation is going on in different portions of the press for a change in the duty. And it is noticeable that the severest criticisms on the action of the government in abolishing the duty is coming from the government organs. The contention is that the step is one directly in opposition to the spirit of the

National Policy; and the *Shareholder* of Montreal, and the *Canadian Manufacturer* of this city arraign the government in vigorous terms for what they have done; to quote the classical language of the latter journal, the organ of the Red Parlor, "the Canadian government ought to put a stop to the depletion of Canadian forests p. d. q." THE LUMBERMAN is desirous to get at—not what political view any particular individual may hold on the question, but what is best, taking the whole problem in a broad and liberal light, for the general interests of the entire country. As a means to this end we publish again this month the opinions of lumbermen engaged in business in different sections of the Dominion, and shall be pleased to hear from others.

RAILWAY BONUSES.

WITH the story of the iron horse is written the progress and development of every country, and individual sections of country. What Toronto owes to her splendid railway connections will perhaps never be fully realized by the great body of her citizens. What would come of our immense shipments of lumber, grain and general merchandise, were it not for the trundling freight train travelling the country from end to end?

No other explanation can be given of the liberality—sometimes prodigal in extent—of municipalities and governments in bonusing railways in all parts of this Dominion. We have no carping criticism to heap upon the railway corporations of the country. We owe them much, even though we have sometimes paid dearly for it.

But it is not all gold that glitters and there is another side to the shield. A large and influential deputation of municipal magnates, representing 22 counties and five cities in Ontario, waited on Sir John Macdonald and the Minister of Finance, Mr. Foster, on 21st ult., to ask for a recoupment from the government for bonuses granted in years gone by. It has been part of the policy of the government to assist in the construction of railways in Canada by granting subsidies of \$3,200 per mile. The claim of the delegation here referred to, is that they as municipalities had taxed themselves to construct railways, without any government aid and at a time when railways were more a matter of necessity than they are to-day. Why should they not be placed in the same position as those municipalities which are now being aided, and as they would likely have been aided if the railways in their respective counties were under construction at the present time, instead of having been built many years ago. The general reply of the First Minister to this plea is, that whilst it is true that municipalities in Ontario have paid out of their own pockets to this purpose, at same time Provincial Governments, for example Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where the municipal system is not so perfect as in Ontario, have from the provincial funds built railways and as a consequence taxed the people for this thing—"we cannot consider the claims of any one province without considering all." There is no difficulty in reading between the lines, in the speeches of both Sir John and Mr. Foster, and coming to the conclusion that the visit of the deputation to Ottawa, whilst doubtless exceedingly enjoyable, will not be productive of any practical results.

The spokesmen of the deputation were, Mayor Walsh of Orangeville, Mr. S. J. Parker, treasurer of the County of Grey, Mayor Porter, of Belleville; Mayor Taylor, of London; and Jonathan Sissons, warden of the County of Simcoe, and it is from the speeches of these gentlemen, that some interesting inside figures are obtained showing the amount given to railways by various municipalities, the conditions under which these bonuses were granted, and how nicely the railway corporations adhered to their agreements, after they had made sure of the collection of their money.

The city of Belleville had bonused the Midland railway in a large amount. By the by-laws raising the bonuses, certain rights were guaranteed the municipalities. Some of these were embodied in the act of incorporation of the Grand Junction railway, but in the amalgamation which afterwards took place with the Midland, these rights were entirely wiped out. The

city of London had granted \$100,000 to the London, Huron and Bruce, and the county of Middlesex had contributed largely to its aid, but "the promises solemnly made had not been carried out to the satisfaction of the people." Simcoe county paid in the neighborhood of nearly \$1,000,000 for railways. Part had gone with the purpose of erecting a competing line with the old Northern, but it was not long before the North-western found it to their advantage to unite with the Northern and the competition for which the people had paid no longer existed.

These few cases are typical of scores of others that could be cited, and that are confined to no one section of country, or any one railway corporation. Many of the municipalities which voted large sums of money to certain railways are to-day worse off locally than if no railway whatever had been built, because of their trade being diverted afterwards in other directions, where for the time it was found more desirable to grant railway facilities, practically by the same promoters, who had held out to the first municipality the Eldorado that was before them if they would only vote right on the bonus.

This may be all explained away as justifiable commercial methods—on the principle of "get there" anyhow—and corporations being soul-less such a code of morals may be good enough for them, but in private and ordinary business transactions rather more honor would be exacted.

Still the bonusing business continues and it would not be surprising to learn that the municipalities that have suffered and lost most in this way, are ready to go over the same ground again, go another \$10,000, if only the lyre of railway orator is tuned to play in sufficiently sweet and silver-tongued tones.

IN FAVOR OF CANADA.

AMERICAN lumber dealers, who are interested in finding a market for Michigan and Wisconsin rather than Canadian lumber are incensed at the action of certain American railways in entering into arrangements with the Canadian Pacific discriminating against American shippers of lumber to the advantage of Canada. The case is put thus by the *North Western Lumberman*:

"The rate on lumber from Chicago to New York is 25 cents a hundred; to Boston, 30 cents. The rate from Buffalo and Tonawanda to New York is 13 cents a hundred, and to Boston 15 cents. Last winter the New York Central made a traffic arrangement with the Canadian Pacific, by which a pro rata rate was established, so that when lumber is shipped to the eastern points named, the cost, east of Niagara river to New York, is but 9½ cents a hundred, or 3½ cents a hundred, below the Buffalo and Tonawanda rate to New York. Thus, though the duty on Canadian lumber is \$1 a thousand, it is nearly offset by the discrimination in rates against American dealers shipping from Tonawanda, Buffalo or any other point west of those markets, effected by the combination between the great Canadian railway and the American roads named. This is in keeping with the general complaint that has been made by American shippers, that the Canadian Pacific has for some time made rates on traffic entering United States territory that resulted in diverting shipments from American roads, as well as operating adversely to dealers and shippers on this side the international boundary. It has been charged by the railroad companies, whose lines are exclusively in the states, that the Canadian Pacific makes rates on traffic between Pacific coast points and the east that cannot possibly be met by the complaining roads, owing to the restrictions of the national commerce law. It has also been charged that much traffic has been diverted to the Grand Trunk road by the advantage that it possesses in the respect named over the American lines."

The result of this discrimination we are told is to operate specially against the sale of lumber manufactured in Michigan or Wisconsin, and distributed by Tonawanda and Buffalo dealers. Boston and New York dealers state that with the \$1.00 duty added they can lay down Canadian lumber in their yards cheaper than from points east of Niagara Falls.

All this is making our good friends around Tonawanda feel very sore. We can understand that it is very naughty for railroads like the New York Central for example to enter into these combines with sister roads, and especially with Canadian roads. But we cannot do anything on this side of the border to remove the trouble. We can hardly regret that our own roads are considerate enough of our own interests to deal with us generously in the matter. We are not to be expected to shed tears over the fact that their influence with American roads is of that calibre to imbue them with a like kindly regard for us. After all, is not somebody in the American republic a gainer by this railroad combine? Michigan and Wisconsin lumber may be at a discount in the eyes of New York and Boston, but then they get good Canadian stuffs, and evidently at a better price, or they would not buy it. It's not all loss to our American friends.