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Messenger and Visitor

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER
VOLUME LXVII.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LVI.

Vol. XXI.

ST. JOHN, N. B., Wednesday, July 19, 1905.

No. 29

Parliament The present session of the Dominion Parliament is drawing to a close. It is expected that an end will be reached some time during the present week. The honorable gentlemen who represent the people at Ottawa are finding attendance upon their parliamentary duties in this July weather a weariness to the flesh, and possibly some of them are almost inclined to think that it would have paid to secure a shorter session even at the cost of omitting some of the eloquence for which they have made the House of Commons famous. At all events there appears to be a fairly general agreement that summer sessions are not enjoyable in the latitude of Ottawa, and the leaders seem disposed to think that a more excellent method is practicable. A protest embodied in a resolution, was moved last week by Hon. Mr. Foster against the action of the Government in keeping back until so late in the session supplementary estimates amounting to nearly \$14,000,000, thus precluding any fair and effective criticism of the expenditure. Hon. Mr. Fielding presented reasons why the estimates could not well be brought down at an earlier date. Mr. R. L. Borden complained that the House was weary of the session now, and the estimates could not be properly considered. Something should be done to compel the attendance of the members of the House. He suggested having the fiscal year end March 31, and have Parliament meet early in November and finish by April or May, and thus avoid meeting during a season which for the majority of people is the busiest of the year. Sir Wilfrid Laurier agreed with the leader of the Opposition that Parliament ought to meet in November. They ought to have earlier sessions, Sir Wilfrid said, and they should be short ones. He thought they could devise ways and means to have briefer sessions than now prevailed. If Parliament convened the first week in November there could be an adjournment at Christmas and New Year's and prorogation might be reached by the first week in Easter. Some little work was needed before this idea could be carried out. This suggestion had occupied the attention of the Minister of Finance, and he viewed it favorably. The change, of course, involved altering the financial year. Then the tariff commission was to meet this fall. Nothing could, therefore, be done in the way of having a November session in the immediate future. But they could meet early after the new year in 1906, and then in the following fall they might call Parliament in November. Early after the next meeting of the House they ought to have a committee to revise the rules, which had not undergone revision since 1878. By revising the rules of the House they could do something material towards shortening the session, which certainly ought to close within four months.

Lord Roberts'

Speech.

Field Marshal Lord Roberts created something of a sensation in the House of Lords last week, when in a speech of considerable length he deliberately expressed his opinion as a practical soldier that the military force of Great Britain was inadequate, imperfectly trained and totally unfit to uphold the prestige of the nation as a first class power. Lord Roberts scathingly criticised the people of England who, he said, showed no national feeling toward the military until danger arose. The speech was delivered in connection with a motion introduced by the Earl of Wemyss and March (Conservative,) traversing Premier Balfour's statement regarding the impossibility of the invasion of Great Britain, and urging the necessity of keeping up sufficient land forces to repel any possible invasion. Lord Roberts said the lessons of the South African war had been forgotten, and that the armed forces of Great Britain were now as unprepared for war as when the South African trouble broke out. He declared emphatically that the choice lay between conscription or some practical system of universal training, and that only by such means would it be possible for Great Britain to possess forces organized and trained in the event of war. His Lordship said that any discussion of Great Britain's military position within the limits of the motion proposed by the Earl of Wemyss and March would be entirely unavailing. The country had to deal with a question of infinitely great importance—the question of the life or death of the empire, the issue of which depended upon Great Britain being ready to defend her eastern possessions, and at the same time take part in any affair nearer home, either

of which necessitated the placing in the field of an army as large and efficient as that of any European country, all of which might be regarded as nations in arms. Lord Roberts appealed to the country to awake to its danger and to take hold of the army as a great national issue on which the existence of Great Britain depended.

The Franco-German Agreement

It is gratifying, and not surprising, to learn that as the result of diplomatic conferences the relations of the French and German Governments are assuming a more friendly character. Premier Rouvier submitted to the Chamber of Deputies last week, the notes exchanged between himself and Prince Von Radolin, the German Ambassador at Paris, constituting the French-German agreement relative to Morocco. M. Rouvier declared that the understanding now reached between the two Governments was formed upon essential principles fully recognizing the special interests of France. "The accord thus realized," he said, "leaves intact the arrangements France had previously concluded with other powers. At no moment did the discussion turn upon the Anglo-French agreement or the Franco-Spanish agreement. The declarations made in the notes and the formal assurances from the representatives of the German Government permit me to affirm that Germany does not question our accords with Great Britain and Spain. The Chamber can felicitate itself on the happy result of the negotiations between France and Germany, thanks to the sincere efforts of both Governments." M. Rouvier's statement was enthusiastically applauded on both sides of the Chamber. The agreement brings a deep sense of relief to the entire country after many weeks of tension. Germany's contention for a conference receives the final adherence of France, but Premier Rouvier has secured the safeguards which he insisted at the preliminary conference with Prince Von Radolin were indispensable. The most important of these safeguards is that the conference shall not convey any prejudice to the Anglo-French or Franco-Spanish ententes.

Edison on Wireless Telegraphy

Mr. Thomas A. Edison does not share the belief of Nicola Tesla that the day is shortly coming when by means of the telephone, a man will be able to send his voice around the world. But Mr. Edison looks for important developments in the line of wireless telegraph. "Marconi," he is reported as saying, "is all right. Sooner or later he will perfect his system and we shall have the ocean bridged by wireless telegraphy." He alluded to the fact that the steamship 'Campania' on a recent trip across the Atlantic was never out of communication with one side or other of the ocean, and said, "It shows what we are coming to." The Japanese, Edison says, are making a splendid use of wireless telegraphy, he admires their up-to-date character, their readiness to take advantage of whatever practical science has placed within their reach, and predicts that when the war is over the Japanese will enter upon an industrial campaign, availing themselves of the improved labor-saving machinery, which will make things lively for Americans and other competitors in the world's markets. As to the interception of messages sent by wireless telegraphy, Mr. Edison says that any difficulty on that score can easily be overcome by the adoption of secret codes as is now done in the case of important cable messages.

—An incident which has been commonly alluded to as the 'Acacia outrage' has attracted considerable attention. Captain Simmons of the Ontario schooner 'Acacia' was with his vessel at Charlotte, the port of Rochester, N. Y., on the fourth of July. At the request, as Capt. Simmons says, of a United States citizen, and with the idea of showing respect to the national holiday, the 'Acacia' hoisted the Union Jack. But the collector of Customs at the port, a man named Bump, sent an order to the captain to haul down his flag. This unreasonable demand, Captain Simmons was at first inclined to resist, but as it was threatened that his clearance papers would be refused he finally complied, and on his return to Ontario placed the fact before the Provincial authorities in order that a protest might be presented to the United States Government. It is of course, not pleasant for Canadians to encounter such stupidity

and insolence when they visit Uncle Sam's country for the purpose of friendly trade, but they may comfort themselves with the assurances that the 'Bumps' are far from representing the attitude of the better class of Americans toward this country. The Chicago Tribune, alluding to the Charlotte incident, says:—"The conduct of the Charlotte collector was unspeakably stupid. The Canadian schooner had a right to fly the Union Jack. It is the only flag it has. Presumably the captain hoisted the Union Jack as a mark of respect, not dreaming that it would excite the uneasy and petulant patriotism of anybody. He did not know that Bump was on guard, ready to vindicate the majesty of the republic by forbidding the flying of the 'meteor flag' of Britain in American waters on the fourth of July. Perhaps it is the birthright of an American to make a fool of himself on that day if he pleases. Many exercises the right with cannon crackers and in other noisy ways. But Collector Bump went beyond bounds, and the Secretary of the Treasury should tell him so. Even if the Canadian captain had run up the British flag as a sign that he hated the United States and loathed the fourth of July, no American interest would have been affected. There was no occasion for Bump's intervention."

—Among the indications of coming revolution in Russia is the inability of the authorities to deal effectively with mutinous conditions in the navy and army. The men of the Black Sea fleet could not be trusted to fire upon their fellow sailors of the rebellious 'Kniaz Potemkin,' and if reports are true the Russian soldiers at Libau refused to shoot down their mutinous fellow soldiers and when commanded to do so turned their weapons against the officers in command. According to a report, published by the London 'Morning Post,' after the mutineers who took part in the outbreak at Libau were overpowered, 23 of them were sentenced to be shot. A half dozen had been executed, when an increase in the mutiny induced the commandant to postpone the execution of the remainder, while he telegraphed to St. Petersburg for instructions. He received orders to shoot all the prisoners. Accordingly a shooting party was formed and another batch of mutineers was drawn up, but upon receiving the command to fire the firing squad turned and fired upon their officers, killing a dozen of them. A detachment of Cossacks, who had been held in reserve, were instantly ordered to overpower the firing squad, but they met with resistance, and a fierce fight followed. Twenty or thirty Cossacks were killed. Another incident illustrating the prevailing mutinous spirit occurred at Kronstadt. An officer there shot and killed a naval reservist, whereupon eight of his comrades set upon the officer and stabbed him to death.

—And now the Kaiser is credited with the intention of acquiring two ports on the Morocco coast, by means of which Gibraltar is to be menaced. According to M. Jean Hess, the well-known traveller and author of an important work on Morocco, who is credited with great personal influence over the Sultan, Germany has passed a secret agreement with the Sultan for the construction of two ports on the Mediterranean coast which will directly menace Gibraltar. The international conference, Mr. Hess says, will, by arrangement between the Sultan and Germany, be very brief, and amount to nothing more than a confirmation of the Sultan's political and commercial independence and the integrity of his empire. As soon as this result is achieved the Sultan, in the exercise of his independence, will grant to a German company, subsidized by the German state, a concession for the construction of the two ports in question, and the powers will then be unable to offer any opposition, being bound by acquiescence in the decisions of the conference. M. Hess thinks, however, that the fear of provoking a European war, which inevitably would result in the conquest and partition of his own empire, may in the end prevent the Sultan from striking this dangerous bargain with Germany.

—It is reported that Dr. C. A. Eaton, pastor of the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, Cleveland, O., was recently presented with a basket of potatoes in each of which was found a five dollar gold piece. The editor of 'Zion's Advocate' thinks that such potatoes should make "good eatin'", and he wants to get some of the same kind for seed.