

The Toronto World

A Morning Newspaper published every day in the year.

Telephone—private exchange connecting all departments—Main 100.

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One year, Daily, Sunday included \$5.00	
Six months " " " " " " " " 3.00	
Three months " " " " " " " " 1.50	
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One year, without Sunday " " " " " " " " 4.00	
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Special terms to agents and wholesale rates to newspapers on application. Advertising rates on application. Address: THE TORONTO WORLD, Toronto, Canada.

Hamilton Office, Royal Corner, James Street North, Telephone No. 898.

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LET LOCAL ISSUES CREATE THE PARTY LINES.

Mr. Haultain has made a strong appeal in behalf of independent government for the new provinces. His record gives the strongest kind of support to his arguments and supplies proof of his sincerity. But the task which he is attempting is a very delicate one. Both parties have declared in favor of introducing federal politics into provincial affairs, and the nature of the redistribution goes all too plainly to show that the government at Ottawa proposes to do its utmost to lay upon the new provinces the curse of the old.

Mr. Haultain goes into the fight for independent government with his hands tied behind his back, but his message is one which will appeal to the honest, intelligent electorate, and it may be cordially received. As a logical proposition, Mr. Haultain's idea of government for Alberta and Saskatchewan does not admit of argument. The west is not a part of the government of the east. Can this be best secured by judging its administrators in the light of their friendship for either political party at Ottawa? Will good government be best promoted by submitting to the electoral issues developed in the provinces or issues imported from Ottawa. The answers to these questions are obvious, yet every trick and device that can be thought of is being used to make the provincial government of Alberta and Saskatchewan a mere echo of the government of one or other of the party organizations at Ottawa.

The west is at present comparatively free from partisan bitterness, and it has a great opportunity for making the administration at Regina and Edmonton reflect strong independent thought. If there are no issues now, they will soon arise. They must inevitably follow mistakes of administration. What more could a province desire than a chance to pronounce on issues turning on the plain rights and wrongs of government, and free from the traditional defects and virtues of the federal parties. It is little short of a crime to complicate what should be a simple question of business administration by the introduction of federal politics. Yet this crime the clique cheerfully advises the Liberal party to perpetrate on the flimsy pretext that since Mr. Haultain embarrassed Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the latter's friends will naturally feel like embarrassing Mr. Haultain. This is a truly astonishing principle, justifying as it does party exploitation of two new provinces as a necessary measure of spiteful vengeance on a single individual.

BRITISH TELEPHONE AGREEMENT

In February last the British postmaster-general entered into an agreement with the National Telephone Company—the Bell Telephone Company of the United Kingdom—to provide for the situation arising at the end of 1911, when the company's license expires. Generally speaking, the agreement proceeded on the same lines as that adopted in 1899, when the postmaster-general undertook to purchase the plant of the company within the London area at its value in situ and without making any payment in respect of compulsory purchase, goodwill or past or future profits. What that arrangement did for London, the new agreement provided for the rest of the country.

Before approving of the new agreement, the house of commons appointed a select committee to consider it and to report whether or not it should be confirmed. The report of the committee has now been issued and is generally favorable, but two modifications of considerable importance are recommended. One of these applies to the terms of purchase of the company's undertaking, and is intended to secure that the "value" on Dec. 31, 1911, "shall be the then value (exclusive of any allowance for past or future profits of the undertaking, or any compensation for compulsory purchase or other consideration whatever) of such plant, land, buildings, stores and furniture, having regard to its suitability for the purposes of the postmaster-general's telephone service."

What seems to have chiefly concerned the committee was the protection of the various municipal telephone services which have been established and the provision of facilities for the establishment of others, without conferring any additional or higher rights or privileges on the National Telephone Company. In order to make it perfectly clear that municipal licenses can be granted between now and 1911 without entitling the company to claim compensation under the Telegraph Act of 1899, the committee says:

"While, therefore, we recommend that, in the general public interest, the house of commons should not disapprove of the agreement, we think that the agreement, with the modifications that we have proposed, should not be allowed to become operative until a pledge has been

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier says Maclean should have attacked the proposals in the house before they became law. That is what The Tribune said the day after the bill was passed—and that is what we still believe.

But because Mr. Maclean failed to take advantage of his opportunity at that time, he is to be punished by the party press.

The party press would deprive him of the opportunity to retrieve his error—for the party press feels so long as the members are huddled together the same loss.

Let the party press exhaust itself in attempting to cast suspicion on the motives that induced Maclean to dissent. The practical result—the fact that he did abandon it remains clearly in the minds of the people.

That fact is the only helpful sign furnished by the whole disgraceful business.

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS

A. McTAGGART, M.D. C. M.

75 Yonge-st., Toronto.

References as to Dr. McTaggart's professional standing and personal integrity are given by Sir W. Meredith, Chief Justice, Hon. G. W. Ross, ex-Prime Minister of Ontario, Rev. Father D. J. O'Connell, President of the Catholic College, Toronto.

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