

## The Daily Gleaner



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THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 1921.

## THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

The session of the Legislature which was opened this afternoon is the first since general elections were held in this province. Premier Foster meets the House again as leader of the Government, but with two of his former Cabinet ministers missing, they having been defeated at the polls, and with the seats of some more of his most valued co-workers also filled by others.

Instead of there being forty-eight members seated today there were but forty-six, because the County of Restigouche is without its allotted representation as the result of one of the most disgraceful instances on record of almost criminal neglect and incompetence upon the part of a public official. The gross incompetency, or even worse, which the Sheriff of Restigouche showed in conducting the election in that county resulted in the unseating of Messrs. Stewart and D'Amore, although the vote showed they were candidates of the Opposition party.

There were those who believed Premier Foster would not allow one so thoroughly unfitted for public office as the Sheriff of Restigouche, had proven to be to retain office; but several weeks have passed now since the conditions under which the election in that county took place became public property and no action has yet been taken.

Instead, some of the Government's political manipulators have since been busily engaged in the fruitless field of Northumberland county has offered on similar occasions in the past, with the result that sitting behind the Government today were members whose election in that county was largely because of their apparently sincere condemnation during the campaign last fall of the "wasteful extravagance and unbusinesslike methods of the administration" which they now seem prepared to support.

With what would therefore appear to be a safe working majority thus assured, it is surprising that the Government have not ventured to provide a somewhat more entertaining programme for the session than the Speech from the Throne forecasts. There have been but few occasions in the history of this province when a Government has come to the Legislature with such an empty menu of prospective Government legislation. Here and there are some declarations of policy, such as the oft-expressed determination to do and that our provincial rights be properly safeguarded, but generally speaking the Speech is disappointing. Instead of broad, constructive legislation on important subjects being promised, about all the Government has to offer is an act to provide assistance for students attending the Provincial Normal School, which was announced some months ago, and a bill to aid in the prevention of fires, similar to acts now upon the statute books of other provinces, including the neighboring province of Nova Scotia. Aside from the amendments to and the consolidation of present Acts, that completes the programme, except for the promise of a measure to fund the amounts already advanced to meet the interest upon the bonds issued in connection with the construction of the Valley Railway. Unable to meet the interest charges upon these bonds, even with a revenue far in excess of anything anticipated a few years ago, the Government proposes to fund the interest charges, issue more bonds and drive the province just much closer to direct taxation in order to allow the army of extravagant expenditure which has been going on to be continued.

The Government takes advantage of the Speech from the Throne to refer to what has been accomplished in the development of the water powers by the Hydro-Electric Commission at Musquash, near St. John. More interest in this connection would have been created had Hon. Mr. Foster taken the people into his confidence and told them why the activities in connection with the development of the water powers at Pokok and Shogomoc, on the St. John river between Fredericton and Woodstock, were stopped so suddenly after the election, or if he had stated the elec-

tion of his Government relative to the power rights at Grand Falls. There we have the most potential water power in the Maritime Provinces still undeveloped and in the hands of foreign interests who have not carried out the obligations under which they were permitted to retain their rights. Legislation was passed a year ago, with a considerable bluster of political trumpets, to give to the Government the authority which they said they wanted to deal with just such a situation as has arisen; but nothing has been done and one of the most important questions before the people of the province today is passed over without even a mention in the Speech with which the Legislature is opened. And the Legislature is the body which must settle the Grand Falls problem.

## CANADA'S PROBLEMS.

The financial situation, intensified by railway deficits, holds the centre of the political stage in Canada today. All political parties are agreed that the position is one that calls for careful handling, and no one outside a few extreme partisans attempts to blame the Government for the situation that has developed. The Ministry, so far as has been possible, has practiced economy. It has kept down expenditure on militia and on the navy, reduced capital outlay by many millions and turned off expenditure runs in various other directions. What growth of liability there has been and it is serious enough—is almost wholly traceable to the war, to our enormous national debt, to pensions, to re-establishment plans, and to railways. For this, the Government cannot be blamed. It is expenditure which Canadians as a whole have sanctioned, and any Government withholding the projects responsible for it would be promptly hurled from power. Nor is the railway case much different. The railway problem in Canada today is not of this Government's nor of this Parliament's making. It is a legacy of the railway intoxication of bygone years, the price we are paying for the folly of 1904.

It is futile of course to speculate on what might have been, but, surveying the present situation, it is difficult not to regret that the advice of Sir Robert Borden on transportation in 1904 was reflected by Parliament. Sir Robert, with 4 vision far ahead of his time, recognized that Canada was being over-railwayed. He perceived that the Dominion's development had not reached the stage where three transcontinentals were necessary; and as a substitute policy for Sir Wilfrid Laurier's scheme of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental he proposed that the Intercolonial Railway should be linked up with the Canada Atlantic and the P. & N. E. to form part of a trans-continental line to the Pacific Coast. It was sensible advice, but it was not heeded. Sir Wilfrid's eloquent talk about the 20th century being Canada's century and his "Pray God it may not be too late" speeches carried the day, the country, sanctioned his policies with overwhelming voice, and the National Transcontinental from Winnipeg to Montreal, a road running through a wilderness, was built. That was the genesis of Canada's railway trouble. A country with eight million people found itself saddled with 55,000 miles of railway, with a multiplication of through roads and the consequent maintenance of needless transportation facilities. The result was inevitable; but it was hastened by a period of depression, by the great war; and a situation developed by which the country had no choice but to take over the railways to save transportation from chaos.

Then, to make the problem more difficult, came the totally unforeseen and enormous increases in wages. In 1910 the total annual payment in salaries and wages to railway employees was \$67,167,000; in 1914, \$111,762,000; in 1918, \$152,000,000; and in 1919, \$209,000,000. For 1920 the total was probably \$250,000,000. In 1910 the ratio of salaries and wages to gross earnings was 28.61 per cent, and in 1919, 54.55 per cent. Today, according to official statistics, few railway employees receive less than \$1,000 a year, while for the great bulk of the workers the annual earnings run from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Three awards originating in the United States explain such remarkable increases. In order to avert a strike on the American roads, Congress, under pressure from President Wilson, enacted the Adamson law, establishing an eight-hour day and materially increasing wages. This was followed by a second increase while Mr. McAdoo administered the American railways, and by a third award seven months ago, which gave a further advance of 21 per cent, or a total increase in wages of \$25,000,000 to the employees of American railways.

The Railway Brotherhoods are international organizations, only eight per cent of whose members are employed in Canada; but, not unnaturally perhaps, they insisted that the concessions secured through Washington for American railway workers should apply to the railways of Canada. The result was that, as compared with pre-war scales, wage increases on Canadian railways represent something like 150 millions a year. Then on top of this came an increase in the cost of supplies. They were increases with which "passenger and freight rates could not keep pace;

and the consequence is, and was bound to be, deficits.

Such, in brief compass, is the railway problem. It is a problem the solution of which will not be found in the grotesque proposal of Mr. Crozier to tear up our railway tracks, nor in the mere partisan criticism that aims at nothing but political advantage. It will be found rather in the facing of realities, in the reduction of operating costs, something which can be achieved by co-ordinating fortuitous lines and by bringing wages back to normal. This, there is reason to believe, is the policy of the operators of the roads.

## OIL FIELDS OF WORLD.

That Great Britain's policy in Mesopotamia is controlled by oil interests appears to be a fixed idea in certain quarters. Great Britain has never failed to be able to get all the oil she wanted by the somewhat elementary process of buying and paying for it wherever it happened to be for sale, remarks an exchange.

The idea probably rather arises from the fact that interests engaged in commercial exploitation find it hard to dominate the British government, than from any fear that the British government would attempt to dominate interests engaged in commercial exploitation in their own field. Germany openly boasted that by means of a controlled railway from Berlin to Baghdad she would set a German outpost at the head of the Persian Gulf, and hold a threat over British interests in the Far East.

So little does Great Britain interfere with commercial development that Germany's political intention was not counteracted so long as it was veiled under the pretext of railway development. But Germany having been eliminated, is Great Britain to be blamed for taking a certain number of precautions in the premises, and would not any other country do the same in like circumstances?

## KINGSCLAR LODGE TO HAVE NEW HALL

Orangemen Have Had Land Donated and Building Will Commence at Once

At the regular monthly meeting of Kingscliar Lodge No. 87, held this week in the lodge rooms, a large number of brethren were present and considerable business was transacted. Among other matters discussed was the question of building an Orange Hall. Brother Manley Dunphy generously offered to give free of cost an acre of land, others offered to give lumber and another offered to do the building.

## BRITISH LUMBER MARKET REPORT

The following is a late report as to conditions in the British lumber market: "Things are in a paralyzed condition over here. Trade is absolutely flat and there is no evidence of a chance for the better in any commodity under the sun. Financial stringency is holding up the whole of the trading community in this country; the banks are tight, and prices have fallen away to a tremendous extent. The demand is nonexistent, and we are, I fear, in for a continuance of bad times through the year. As regards the lumber trade, the buyers of the government stock still held in Canada is always hanging over us, and heavy shipments will have to be made to clear off these stocks during the coming year, and not until these heavy stocks are got into consumption will there be a chance for shippers and sawmillers getting back to normal trading. To day it would be impossible to obtain a single inquiry for forward shipment and this, notwithstanding the fact that freight rates are most reasonable when compared with what was paid during the war and since. So until exchange rights are fixed and the government stocks are lifted the outlook for spruce is very poor, and business impossible."

## DEFINITIONS OF MODERN APPAREL

Boston, March 17.—Ironie definitions of articles of feminine apparel now in fashion were given at a conference of the Massachusetts "Parent-Teachers' Association by Mrs. Dallas Laro Sharp, chairman of the social community life department. Some of them were:

"Dress: A way not to cover.

"Hat: A way to amuse the head.

"Blouse: A way to expose, often indecently, the most characteristically feminine portion of woman's anatomy.

"Shoe: A call to make cripples."

"We women," Mrs. Sharp added, "have surely earned the right to the title of the silly sex."

## FORT FAIRFIELD FIRE

Fort Fairfield, Me., March 16.—Geo. McBride and several members of his family, including an infant, are suffering from burns caused by the explosion of gasoline, which was poured on a fire in mistake for kerosene. A boy of five is in a critical condition and his father is also in a serious state.

## ST. PIERRE'S TRIAL TO FINISH TODAY

Boston Motorists Give Interesting Evidence on the Stand Yesterday

Edmundston, March 16.—All the evidence in the case of the King vs. William St. Pierre, charged with the murder of Miss Minnie Stevens, on the night of October 11, 1920, was completed this afternoon, after the crown had placed on the stand in rebuttal the two young men who had arrived in Edmundston and left in an automobile about the time of the murder. Adjournment was made at 3:35 this afternoon and the case will be pleaded by counsel tomorrow morning and the judge's charge made. It is expected that the case will not go to the jury until late in the afternoon. The "automobile men" took a straight-forward story of their movements while in this town the day of the fatal occurrence, and every effort made to shake their testimony proved unavailing.

Counsel Leblanc made a strong and able argument against the two strange men testifying in rebuttal, but the court ruled that they testify, but they would have to keep to the subject of rebuttal. The first young man, T. H. Best, Jr., who helped to Boston, related being here with his friend, W. H. Freeman, also of Boston, last October. He told of driving in from the direction of Grand Falls and gave a description of his car and of the circumstances of the crime. He said that on the afternoon of the day the crime was committed, they passed through the town and when a short distance out toward Riverview, they stopped to fix a leak in the radiator. They went back to J. W. Hall's for gasoline, and when they got about a mile and a half outside the town the shifting fork of the transmission broke and they returned to Freeman's garage. They arrived here about six o'clock and asked if they could work on the car that night.

At this stage Albert Ouellette was brought into court and was identified by the witness as being in the garage. They left the car at the garage and then went to the Royal Hotel and registered. They asked for a double room, were shown to it and watched. They went to supper and back to the room and later went out. They walked down the Canada road and crossed the concrete bridge. They inquired the way to the nearest railway station and were directed to the Temiscouata station. They went along to the station and talked with two men there. They then went over the bridge or iron bridge and walked up towards the pulp mill. When they arrived there they saw it was not the main part of the town so they turned back, went over the bridge again along Victoria street and over the concrete bridge. They went up Canada street and turned down to the pulp mill. They came back down past Vanwart's drug store, over the concrete bridge and past Curzon's restaurant. They came back to Curzon's and went in there and had some ice cream. The garage man came in while they were there. He had something to drink and went out.

They followed, shortly after he left and went back up Canada street, past the St. John's theatre. They found there was no second show. They bought some apples and walked up towards the church. They went back to the hotel and after the witness had written a letter they went to bed. The next day they got up early and worked on their car. They finished the car about 3 o'clock, went back to the hotel, washed up and left town before 4 o'clock. They headed towards Riverview and Loup. They noticed the crowd in the garage and asked Mr. Hall about it. They then got in the car and drove away. They went to Riverview and Loup, Quebec, Montreal and back to Boston.

Lev Gillespie, who testified yesterday, was called. He produced the hotel register and the witness identified the signature in the book. He had written it himself. The register was offered in evidence.

Best was given a severe cross-examination, but was unshaken in his story. He was questioned as to when he had arrived in town the last time and his conversations with the Attorney-General. He said he had tried to pick up Best, but not in Edmundston. He had never been in trouble, but had been arrested once for speeding. He heard no screams that night. He said that his evidence was his own and he had not been primed. He was cross-examined sharply, but his story was unshaken. He denied having asked any girls to have ice cream.

After the recess for lunch the cross-examination was resumed. The witness was questioned as to his movements when he left Boston last fall. He left there September 22 and went to Yarmouth. He was questioned as to the various towns he had visited in Nova Scotia and where they had stopped. They went from Halifax to Moncton and then to St. John, where they stopped at the Clifton House. He then told of going up to Edmundston. The second young man, W. H. Freeman, was called and he gave a minute account of their movements the night of the tragedy. He corroborated the evidence of his friend and related without hesitating all their movements as the previous witness had done. The defence questioned him sharply, but the witness kept himself well in hand and his testimony was not shaken. The evidence of these two men closed the rebuttal for the crown.

## NORTH SHORE FIRE

Chatham, March 16.—J. Gotreau's store and house at Legacyville were destroyed by fire recently. The loss is heavy.

"Outside the Law." Lon Chaney, recognized as the foremost character actor on the screen and whose work in "The Struggle Man" and "The Penalty" has raised him to stellar eminence, plays the principal heavy role in support of Priscilla Dean, in her latest photodrama, "Outside the Law," coming to the Opera House Friday and Saturday. Chaney creates another masterpiece in the role of "Black Mike," the sinister leader of a San Francisco Chinatown gang, a living contradiction of the theory that there is honor among thieves.

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Clark's Chicken Soup.  
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Napha Soap, 2 cakes, 15c.  
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3 tins for \$1.00.

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