

THE HAMILTON TIMES

SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 1909.

SHAMEFUL WORK.

It has always hitherto been the rule that when a government invades a man's private property and seeks to possess itself of rights therein, it shall make full and ample compensation for what it takes or uses. This obligation is as binding in honor on its part as its power is sufficient.

With the present Provincial Government, however, that obligation does not seem to be felt. We have the Premier forcing through an act which not only denies the rights of private property and disregards the sacredness of contracts, even when entered into by itself, but takes away from the citizen his right of appeal for justice to the courts.

The same high-handed disregard of private rights that was shown in passing an act to declare legal municipal by-laws that the courts had held to be illegal, and in staying the courts from adjudicating on cases brought before them, is being exhibited toward the farmers through whose properties the Hydro-Electric transmission line is to run.

Here is a high-tension electric transmission line to operate at 110,000 volts, to run across and along highways, through farms and orchards, without even the protection of being within fences! By this precious act the Government takes the power to enter on a man's property and take possession of whatever "easements"—rights of use—as it or its Hydro-Electric agents may choose to take. Legal authorities say no provision is made for fixing the price to be paid for the same, and the farmer cannot sue unless the Attorney-General consents. Flats asked for to bring the commission into court have been refused heretofore.

And does the Hydro agents' course indicate a desire on the part of the Government to treat the despoiled farmers decently? Is it fair for Whitney's agents to try to screw or scare a farmer into giving up for, say, \$60 what those agents afterward admit (by agreeing to pay it) is worth \$850? We learn of one man who refused the paltry \$60 offered for these rights (for thirty years!), and the agents afterwards raised the offer to \$200, \$300, \$600 and then \$850! The owner felt that even at that he was being wronged, but fearing the bogey of "fighting against the Government in a lawsuit," he accepted. Now had Whitney's agents taken that man's property or rights for \$60, to what account would they have credited the \$700 out of which the farmer was "done"? Is that the way an honorable scheme is operated, or the way an honorable government operates? Is it a wonder the farmers are aroused, or that those who have been by one means and another induced or scared into accepting a trifle for the privileges asked are filled with righteous indignation?

The clerk of Gainsborough was offered \$200 for these thirty-year privileges on his property. Of this sum \$15 each was the price of ten fine apple trees, and \$25 each was rental for two tower sites for thirty years. Generous, wasn't it? Then the agents offered \$10 more per tree, and talked of serving arbitration notices, although the act makes no provision whatever for arbitrating "easements"! This man will not be despoiled without trying what the law will do to protect him.

The farmer is awakening to the fact that the nuisance while building the line and the invasion of the property in patrolling it is not all that he has to reckon upon. He takes all the great risk of such a prolific source of danger to himself and his, for he cannot sue the commission! Where the line runs all large trees must be cut down for 65 feet on each side of the wires, and all fruit trees or shrubs of any kind for a lesser distance—about 40 feet. This is a very serious matter to the farmers; and when the effort is made to squeeze the remuneration down to such figures as have been mentioned by some of the farmers complaining, scandal seems to be the fitting word to describe it.

Is it not possible for the Government to take one step in this ill-starred scheme without wronging the private citizens and shocking the public sense of right?

ANOTHER FORTRESS.

Victoria papers chronicle the return of General Otter, Inspector-General of the Canadian military forces, and a party of military and naval officers from Prince Rupert, whither they had gone to look over the town and harbor with a view to laying out a scheme of defence works. The party brought back maps, field notes and reports, which will be forwarded to the Militia Council. Prince Rupert people say that the military authorities contemplate the establishment of a chain of forts, a series of batteries linked at either side of the outer channels leading to Prince Rupert, equipped with modern six-inch disappearing guns, in distinction to the ancient ordnance of the Esquimaux defences, and will also establish a subsidiary series of forts equipped with anti-torpedo batteries of twelve-pounder quick-firing guns. The batteries would be connected and barracks and buildings for the garrison base will be built at a spot yet to be selected. Of course, General Otter and the officers accompanying him will make no statement, it being given out that their visit was for pleasure only. Prince Rupert people, however, look for some action toward

making this important harbor at least as strong a station as Esquimaux. A Prince Rupert enthusiast says:

That the Prince Rupert harbor is a great asset in national defence cannot be gained. To establish a base of supplies here that would be easily reached by a squadron manoeuvring in the North Pacific is of inestimable value from an imperial point of view. Not only this, but an all Canadian route would be at the disposal of the authorities in case of necessity to ship in these supplies. Canada is quite capable of producing the food stuff required, whereas the other necessities, by being landed in Quebec, would eliminate any danger of interception except from our neighbors to the south, who would have to make great incursion to reach the new transcontinental route. Should it be necessary to seek a good anchorage, Prince Rupert offers the finest harbor in the world. No boat is too big nor is any too small to find ample protection in this land-locked harbor of ours.

The shortest route to the Orient is from Prince Rupert and not from Esquimaux, hence the superior advantages of Prince Rupert in rushing supplies to the seat of action in what is most likely to prove the scene of activities.

That such an important strategic point as Prince Rupert is should not be left unprotected is without doubt the object which has occasioned the visit of these military experts. In order to establish this as a base of supplies ample land protection would be necessary. Here is where the hills surrounding the town would be most useful. Modern military engineering would only reveal in the pleasure of turning the now waste hills of rock into anthills of destruction for any foreign fleet which should have the audacity to disturb the peace of Canada. Just what part the Canadian Government would play in this new situation will be anxiously awaited by all.

It would be unwise to jump at the conclusion that the Canadian Government has determined to at once proceed to turn Prince Rupert into a Gibraltar of the north. British Columbians have been affected not a little by the British naval scare; and as a coast people they count much upon fortifications and naval expenditure as political factors. But it is quite probable that the militia and naval department is even this early in the lay-out of Prince Rupert keeping in view the requirements of harbor defence. In the fulness of time that will become a live question; and it is gratifying to learn that the new town and harbor are capable of being so easily rendered impregnable.

NO FAMINE OUTLOOK.

September wheat has declined on the Chicago market to \$1, and December wheat to 98½c. That will probably help the perturbed bakers to a decision about the price of cakes. Incidentally, too, it may lead them to a consideration of the weight and price of the loaf of bread. Wheat futures do not present an appearance of famine, and the pinch prices of a short time ago are not likely to prevail with a bumper harvest at hand. Wheat on the farmers' market, Toronto, sold at \$1.10 to \$1.20, with a downward tendency. New wheat flour sold down to \$4.10. This is a very pronounced difference in favor of the consumer from the figures of the past few weeks. The consumer's turn appears to be coming.

Indeed, the actual advantage of the recent high prices of wheat did not, to any great extent, accrue to the farmer. He had but little in hand when the prices were forced up, and the speculator pocketed most of the profits. The householder who pays 5 cents for a pound "bun," and who shells out at the rate of something over \$7 a barrel for what flour is used, is not reconciled to the high figures by the knowledge that the farmer producer is not the man to profit by the rise. The consumer of the bread will be a great deal better satisfied to see the farmer in receipt of reasonably good prices throughout the year than to find that he has been obliged to sell at low figures and that the public has been held up by speculators for very high figures.

But let us hope that with a bountiful harvest and lower prices of grain there will be such an enlargement of the loaf of our daily bread as will make it less easily lost in the housekeeper's hurry of setting the table, and help us to realize that this is indeed a land of plenty.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Too many bicycles being stolen. Is there no way of catching some of the thieves?

The United States appraisers at New York have decided that personal effects, in order to enter free, must accompany the owner.

The United States tariff on salt has been reduced one cent on a hundred pounds. Now you can afford salt in your porridge when you breakfast with Uncle Sam.

Perhaps it will be wise for the city to supply itself with parks before setting out to buy up playgrounds for the Beach residents. The territory of the Two Kings should not be paid for at the expense of Hamilton people.

The playgrounds experiment seems to be amply justified. What is needed is more money to finance more playgrounds. Supervised playgrounds tend to the safety of the boys and girls and to the prevention of crime. It is worth while.

If the addition to the North End Park can be secured without straining the Board's finances, and at reasonable cost, now is the time to move. The city should let no park land bargains slip through its fingers. And what about Lansdowne Park? Is it available?

The British divorce law is much complained against in that it required a suitor to have £100. The Lord Chancellor views it as a matter of selling jus-

tie. Recent Ontario legislation similarly makes the execution of justice contingent upon the wronged party advancing a large sum of money to pay the expenses of extraditing a fugitive criminal. This is really a breach of Magna Charta, which says that justice shall not be sold. But what does Whitney care for Magna Charta?

Kitchener has been made a Field Marshal, and to him will probably be entrusted important work intended to bring about the co-ordination of the defence forces of the empire. He will probably visit and familiarize himself with the defence forces of the various British nations.

The story goes that a Paris school teacher has been dismissed because he offended the dignity of the trustees by putting his feet on the desk in school hours. Must deal severely with these laches, or one of these days teachers may be found using toothpicks within the sacred school walls.

The chances are that when Trustee Charlie Booker presents Strathcona with that big photo of the Hamilton school which has been named after him, and expatiates on the High Commissioner's popularity in the city, His Lordship will blushing make acknowledgment in the shape of an autograph on the lower right hand corner of a cheque for something at least pretty well up in the five figures. Just watch, now.

One of the big life insurance companies of the United States is planning to buy 3,000 acres of land and establish a sanitarium for the treatment of its policy-holders affected with tuberculosis. The company is willing to spend \$100,000 a year in this manner. It asserts that one of its policy-holders dies every 32 minutes because of tuberculosis. Another company says it pays out more than \$800,000 a year in death claims on account of the same disease.

The Whitney Government has issued a statement in defence of its proposed sales of timber limits. In the course of it, it alleged that "the Liberal Government never gave eight months to examine berths offered for sale; it never gave six months." When a Government, in giving out, a statement of defence of its policy conceives it to be necessary to resort to such a falsehood as this, the public is justified in being suspicious of the purpose it has to serve. Better that it had kept silent.

The Asquith Ministry is the youngest that has ever conducted the affairs of Great Britain. The ages of its members are given as follows: Mr. Churchill, 35; Mr. Runciman, 39; Mr. Samuel, 39; Mr. Harcourt, 46; Mr. McKenna, 46; Mr. Lloyd-George, 46; Sir Edward Grey, 47; Lord Pentland, 49; Lord Crewe, 51; Mr. Burns, 51; Mr. Haldane, 53; Mr. Gladstone, 55; Mr. Buxton, 56; Mr. Asquith, 57; Mr. Birrell, 59; Lord Carrington, 60; Lord Lansdowne, 66; Lord Morley, 71; and Lord Wolverhampton, 79. The average age of the members of the Cabinet is just under 57, while eight out of the nineteen are under 50. It has the happy combination of "old men for counsel and young men for war."

If the striking moulders wish to open up a shop and begin business on their own account, the Council should see that they are furnished with water and sewerage facilities on the most favorable terms. No help should be refused them that would be given to any established concern or any concern coming from outside. The moulders in venturing their own money show confidence that there is profit to be made at their terms. That is the proper way to act when wage terms cannot be agreed upon. Go into the business and beat the wage system. That is legal, and it beats striking and picketing and all the tactics of ordinary labor wars. The moulders who adopt this plan of bettering themselves deserve to be encouraged.

Writing in Popular Science Monthly for August, Professor Slocum, of the University of Cincinnati, calls attention to what he regards as a great error in the educational methods of the modern schools. He says: "A radical change in the usual methods of presenting the mathematical branches must be made."

Instead of taking them tandem fashion, the subjects of arithmetic, geometry and algebra must go hand in hand. The child solves the question for himself by introducing them all at once even before he enters school. It becomes then simply a question of assisting the pupil in the further development of the mathematical powers which he began to employ spontaneously before he came to school at all.

The Canadian Trade Commissioner at Birmingham reports some experiments made there to keep the roads free from dust. Various solutions have been tried, with more or less indifferent success. He reports that a new test is now being made with chloride of calcium in the form of granulated powder. A half mile stretch of virgin road has been devoted to this purpose. The powder, which costs about 50s. (\$12.16) a ton, is applied at the rate of 34 lb. to the square yard of surface as a first application, a similar quantity being spread two days later to complete the treatment. The theory is that the calcium chloride will absorb sufficient moisture from the atmosphere to keep the road damp and prevent the formation of dust. The tests made in Cheshire are said to support this theory, and the question of cost is now to be considered.

The old system cost about £60 per mile per annum for a 40-foot roadway, but the new is expected to be cheaper. It would need to be cheaper to become popular in Hamilton.

GOVERNMENT POWER SCHEME.

Critic Points Out the Danger to the Province.

Claim That Canadians Have Lost Through It.

The Question of Disallowance as It is Viewed in England.

The Financial Times, London, one of the best-known of English papers, in its issue of July 26 has the following article by Mr. W. R. Lawson, a financial writer of recognized standing:

Fully two months have passed since The Financial Times published the last of a series of articles describing the extraordinary proceedings of the Ontario Legislature in connection with its municipal power scheme. I purposely allowed the question to rest there for a time in the hope that the Ontario Government might realize the danger of the course it was pursuing and gracefully recede of its own accord. A second reason for suspending criticism was that there was good ground to hope for the intervention of the Dominion Government. Although the wide latitude which the Provincial Legislature gave to the intervention difficult, the Ontario case was so flagrant that even the greatest stickler for provincial rights could hardly pass it over.

Still another reason counselled a temporary respite. Several important Canadian issues were known to be impending, which might seriously prejudice by keeping the Ontario affair before the public. The last thing in my mind was to question the credit of Canada as a whole, or even that of Ontario itself. It was only certain administrative and legislative acts that were challenged. Outside of these the credit of Ontario is as good as any Government in the world could wish to have. Soon or later the wrong in question will have to be undone for no statute book of British origin could possibly retain such acts permanently, and then Ontario will resume the high rank it has always held among investors.

A LOSS TO CANADA.

Meanwhile no little harm has been done to Canadian interests in London through this ill-starred episode. Its effect was seen in every new issue made during the past half-year. The Dominion Government, the Provincial Governments, the municipalities, the railway companies and all Canadian borrowers, public or private, have had to pay a substantial penalty for Sir James Whitney's action. Every single loan—and they number at least a dozen—would have realized 2 or 3 per cent. more but for the Ontario bogey. On an aggregate of twenty millions sterling, which is within the mark, that represents a loss of \$600,000 to Canada.

Every succeeding issue suffers more and more severely through Ontario's attempt to side-track Magna Charta. Take as a special example the very latest issue—the Grand Trunk Pacific two millions sterling with a 3 per cent. Dominion guarantee. That was a second instalment of the Government's quota of the bonds for the Prairie and Mountain sections of the main line. The first instalment—\$3,200,000—was offered four years ago at 85, and well taken. This time the price had to be reduced to 82½—2½ per cent. less than the 1-2 per cent. loss to the Grand Trunk Pacific Company of 12 1-2 points—equal to 2 per cent. of a million sterling. Nor can the drop be explained away by reference to external causes such as different conditions of the money market, or, strangely enough, the bank rate was the same on both occasions—namely, 2 1-2 per cent.

Canadians might do well to reflect on the instructive, if unpleasant, fact that though they are now at a great height of credit and prosperity, they are having to pay for borrowed money quite as high rates as they did a quarter of a century ago. That is, no doubt, chiefly due to their being such lavish borrowers, but recently there have been aggravating causes as well, and the Ontario bogey has been one of them. They can hardly feel flattered as a nation when a 3 per cent. Dominion guarantee is not valued in London higher than 82½. Even the Ontario Ministers must see something wrong in that.

THE ONTARIO BOGEY.

In the two months' interval since our last reference to the Ontario bogey it has undergone some important developments, both here and in Canada. A number of strong protests against the Stoppage of Justice Act were sent from London to the Dominion Government, which still has them under consideration. They begged the Government to exercise its right to veto on the ground that such legislation is bound to prejudice the general interests of the Dominion. This, it may be explained, is practically the only ground which the law officers of the Dominion nowadays recognize as sufficient justification for disallowance. The passage quoted in a previous article from Hon. Mr. Aylesworth's decision in a similar case—that of the Florence Mining Company—shows how clearly the Dominion authorities are of exercising their undoubted prerogative in this respect. A very strong case, and some strong pressure as well, may be needed to screw them up to the point of disallowance. It is hardly conceivable, however, that such a freak of legislation should be ignored at Ottawa, for that would be to condone it, and accept a joint share for responsibility for it.

In a recent interview I had with the Canadian Minister of Finance, Mr. Fielding, this question turned up among others. He spoke quite frankly, and I may even say, strongly about it, but he was equally frank as to the legal difficulties in the way of intervention by the Dominion Government. His experiences in connection with the two loans he has had to launch during his present visit to London may considerably modify his constitutional scruples. They have furnished him with abundant proof that the Ontario business is being taken seriously in financial circles here and that it has, in fact, proved prejudicial to the general interests of the Dominion. It is sufficiently serious for him to bring it under the notice of his colleagues and have it fully considered in view of all the now notorious facts.

LOANS FOR POWER SCHEME.

There are two possible ways out of

the impasse, and one or other of them will, I have no doubt, be ultimately taken. The simpler course, and the best for all parties concerned, would be for the Ontario Government to recede from a false position and have the obvious act repealed at the earliest opportunity. In doing this they would be making the only amends to their power for the harm they have done to large. At the same time they would be moving gracefully to the inevitable. It is evident to the business men of Ontario, if not to the politicians, that the municipal power scheme cannot be carried out as originally planned. The Government did not venture to ask money for it in London. They made a virtue of necessity and tried to raise it at home. They proposed to give London an object lesson with regard to the financial resources of Ontario, and they did.

But now a loan was first offered "to the people," who, strange to say, did not rush for it. The banks were called upon for patriotic subscriptions, which were not forthcoming either. Now the Government have on their hands three and a half million dollars more or less of Hydro-Electric bonds which have missed fire. The dilemma is awkward, and no means dignified, but there have been many similar fiascos since the days of Rumpo-medea. As a rule there has been only one way out of them—a crash-like movement backward. The Ontario people may pardon and even applaud bargain-breaking when it pays, as it did in the Florence Mining Company's case, but they will be less indulgent when they find that it is a losing game, as in this latest example.

QUESTION OF DISALLOWANCE.

Should the Ontario Government spurn the easiest and most natural escape from the pit they have dug for themselves—namely, voluntary retreat—the other alternative will be to press the question of disallowance on the Dominion Government. This is, in fact, being done. Influential memorials have been sent to Ottawa by a number of public bodies, whose opinions should have weight financially and politically. Among them is the Montreal Stock Exchange, a very capable and important authority on questions of this sort. Quite a host of British capitalists and investors have taken part in the protest against the Stoppage of Justice Act—Lord Ridley, Sir Seymour King, Mr. J. W. Palmer, who is one of the ex-officers of the late Duchess of Marlborough, Messrs. Evans, Gordon & Company, Mr. Mainwaring, etc.

Finally, the Canadian press—which, with one or two honorable exceptions, like the Financial Post, of Toronto, was at first rather lukewarm on the subject—is now waking up to its importance. Sir James Whitney is being gravely admonished by the organs of his own party, including the oldest of them and the most esteemed—the Montreal Gazette. It tells him straight that "legislation to take away from a man his right to have his grievance actually before the courts adjudicated on is rare and liable to be dangerous whenever it is used." If the moral feeling of a community ever showed itself outraged by legislation, this is a case. And however reluctant the Dominion Government may be to exercise its indisputable right in this case, it is indisputable that it is being gravely admonished by the organs of his own party, including the oldest of them and the most esteemed—the Montreal Gazette. 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