

News from Ottawa

The New Government at Work

By The Guide Special Correspondent

Ottawa, October 20.

The most important news development of the week has been the decision reached by the cabinet to call Parliament for the dispatch of business on Wednesday, November 15. The first session of a new Parliament always meets on a Wednesday; the remaining sittings of the term on Thursdays. The reason is that new presiding officers must be chosen both for the house of commons and the Senate and one sitting is given over to this business. If there was a contest over the election of a speaker it might delay the ceremonies in connection with the formal opening and the reading of the speech from the Throne. This is avoided by having the ceremonies on the second day. Not until the third day of the session is it customary to go on with the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the Throne. This debate should be of particular interest this year on account of the change of government and the inauguration of a new political era and because Sir Wilfrid Laurier in his speech will probably give the first public intimation as to the line of policy the Liberal opposition will pursue in reference to the tariff, naval and other questions.

One Session or Two

A great many people, the members-elect more particularly, are speculating as to whether there will be two sessions or only one. To the members of course it means the difference between one and or two sessional indemnities and that is the difference between \$5000 and \$2,500. A second session within a few months would enable many of them to pay off their election debts and would no doubt be welcome; but there are reasons for believing that instead of proroguing Parliament will simply adjourn over the Christmas holidays and the members will have to be satisfied with but a single indemnity. In 1896 when the Liberals came into office the two houses met in September for organization and to pass estimates for the current year which had not been voted. During the late winter months the house met again to deal with a fairly heavy program of business. The situation which exists to-day to a certain degree parallels that of 1896; but there is this rather important difference: Of late the regular sessions of the house have commenced in November and to have two sessions within the period usually allotted to one might not be satisfactory to the people who pay the bills.

Big Program Ahead

The question is one which will of course be settled by Parliament itself and if there is a second session Conservatives and Liberals will be jointly responsible because it is a matter which will be mutually agreed upon after the house meets. Much will depend upon the progress made with business and the preparedness, or otherwise, of the new government to submit a program of legislation which would necessitate remaining in session for several months. If it were decided to press through the Redistribution bill and the Bank Act within the next six months; or to draft legislation to give effect to the promises made by Premier Borden to the western grain growers, prorogation with a second session in February or March would be necessary, because the government would require at least a couple of months to outline its policy and prepare its legislation. If it is decided to leave over all heavy legislation until next Autumn Parliament will probably sit a month before Christmas, one or two months after the holidays, and then prorogue until November, 1912.

The New Speakers

The decision of the government, which has just been announced, to nominate Mr. T. S. Sproule, member for East Grey, as the Speaker of the house of commons was not unexpected. His name has been prominently mentioned from the first. Dr. Sproule has sat continuously in the

house since 1878. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Hon. John Haggart, ex-minister of Railways, are the only members who have sat continuously for a longer time. Dr. Sproule is well versed in the rules and procedure of Parliament and should make an ideal presiding officer. Although a strong Conservative he has never allowed his views to interfere with his personal friendships and many Liberals from Sir Wilfrid Laurier down hold him in high regard. As a senior member of the Conservative party he frequently led the opposition in past sessions in the absence of Mr. Borden and did it well. Dr. Sproule succeeded the late Hon. N. Clark Wallace as Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Association of British North America and held the office until two years ago. It is practically settled that the post of deputy speaker, which must go to a French-Canadian when the speaker is English, will be assigned to Mr. P. E. Blondin, Nationalist member for Champlain, who achieved some prominence last session by making charges of graft against Mr. Lanctot, the member for Richelieu. He is a graduate in law of McGill university and a fluent speaker in both languages. The speakership of the Upper House will in all probability be assigned to Senator Landry, one of the most aggressive of the small Conservative minority in the red chamber.

Seats for Ministers

The cabinet council has been sitting with regularity all week but not a great deal has been given out as to its deliberations. Consideration of the difficulty arising out of the necessity of providing seats for the members of the cabinet who were not elected as members of Parliament on Sept. 21 no doubt occupied much of the time of the ministers. The announcement that Hon. Robt. Rogers would contest Winnipeg and not a Saskatchewan constituency did not cause much surprise. Neither did Hon. J. D. Hazen's decision to represent St. John city and county, Dr. Daniels retiring in his favor. In the case of Hon. Frank Cochrane it was only a matter of arrangement between himself and one of the members-elect for the northern Ontario district because his return by any one of these seats was a certainty. Care had to be exercised in finding a constituency for Hon. W. T. White, minister of finance, and a former Liberal, because of the opposition to his inclusion in the cabinet from the rank and file of the Conservative party as well as from such a powerful party organ as the Toronto Telegram. Several seats were considered but at the time of writing no definite decision had been reached.

Investigating Departments

The members of the cabinet who have not returned to their constituencies pending their re-election have been busy getting acquainted with their departments. As is the habit of members of a new government they have also been taking a lively interest in the doings of their predecessors in office. Hon. F. D. Monk, it is asserted, has discovered that certain transactions in the Public Works Department, which was presided over by Hon. Wm. Pugsley, are not above suspicion. An announcement in the press to the effect that he had asked his colleagues to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the department is, however, denied by the minister. Hon. Frank Cochrane, minister of railways, sent out an order stopping work on certain National Transcontinental Railway contracts let subsequent to the dissolution of Parliament. In the course of a few days the order was countermanded on the recommendation of the chief engineer of the commission, who pointed out that the stopping of work on contracts for stations, roundhouses, etc., at this time of the year would entail a heavy loss, as much of the work, such as foundations, would have to be done over again in the spring. Having satisfied himself that the contract in every case had been let to the firm which had put in the lowest tender the minister countermanded his

previous order. He made an exception in the case of the contract for the N. T. R. terminals at Quebec entailing an expenditure of nearly one million dollars and which he says he proposes to look into. No work had been done at Quebec which would entail heavy loss because of delay. To what extent the new ministers will be able to blacken the reputation of the men who presided over the departments previous to October 6 time alone will show. While the bringing to light of any possible wrongdoing will doubtless be in the public interest there are those who express the hope that energy will not be unnecessarily wasted which might better be devoted to the framing of legislation and the solution of the important problems which confront the new ministry.

The Census Figures

That some kind of an inquiry will be instituted in regard to the taking of the census is certain, more particularly as the figures which give the Dominion of Canada a population of approximately 7,100,000 are disappointing. During the decade since the last census was taken 1,705,375 immigrants have arrived in Canada and this number just about represents the increase in the population. It would appear that either the immigration figures are wrong or that tens of thousands of Canadians have been missed by the census enumerators. As every immigrant coming into Canada has to pass a medical examination it is not likely that the count has been wrong. No account is kept of departures from the country and the disappearance of the whole of the natural increase of population must be put down to the outward flow and carelessness on the part of the enumerators. There is not much disposition to blame Mr. Archibald Blue, the Chief Census Commissioner, who is a capable and painstaking official. Owing to the good times which prevail and the fact that the majority of the enumerators were named because of their political leanings rather than for their ability to do the work, they were in many cases men poorly equipped for the task. The schedules, too, were the most difficult enumerators were ever asked to have filled in. The natural result in many cases was that they became discouraged and did their work in a slovenly manner. The United States immigration figures show that in the course of the past ten years 250,000 Canadians have entered that country. We on this side of the line have been disposed to discredit the American figures, but, in view of our own returns, will not be so critical in the future. The people who have been over-looked, particularly ignorant foreigners who are disinclined to give information to census takers, added to the departures make up for a large share of the missing natural increase. But more will be known about it when the inquiry has been held by Parliamentary committee, or otherwise.

Arrival of the Duke

The capital's reception to His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, who will be Governor-General for the next two years, was quite as warm as had been anticipated. Weather conditions were ideal and fully half the population lined the route of march or crowded on to Parliament hill where the presentation of addresses took place. The Duke and Duchess were heartily cheered all along the line but the reception which they got from the people was no more hearty than that given to Premier R. L. Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier who followed immediately behind in carriages. Which goes to show that we as Canadians are just as proud of our own great men as of those sent to us as governors-general from the Motherland. The Duke is of a most democratic disposition and both he and the Duchess created a favorable impression by their affable manner. It has been said of him that though born to the purple he has little taste for the formalities and ceremonies which, of necessity, have attended him throughout

his life. Once upon a time he is reported to have remarked to a soldier that "a little more pipe clay and a little less 'Royal Highness' would be better." The Duchess of Connaught, as many are no doubt aware, is the daughter of the celebrated "Red Prince" of Prussia, the great cavalry leader, who was a prominent figure in the Franco-Prussian war. Princess Victoria Patricia, who will join her parents in Ottawa in the course of a couple of months, is a young lady of very democratic tastes. It is said that she is the possessor of a very sunny disposition, and a frank manner, which makes her a favorite immediately wherever she goes. Apart from the \$50,000 a year which the Duke will draw as Governor-General he receives \$125,000 from the British exchequer. In addition he has large private means.

The first official act of the new Governor-General was to swear in Hon. Martin Burrell as minister of agriculture. He comes down to the Governor-General's office in the East Block almost every day to sign orders in council and has already commenced to take an active part in the social life of the capital. The week's program included visits to the Ottawa golf and hunt clubs and attendance at the theatre a couple of times.

THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY

The ghost of Sir John A. Macdonald was evoked by some of Mr. Borden's campaigners in the reciprocity election with telling effect. Mr. Borden is now reverently referred to as "wearing the mantle of Sir John." So persistent have been some of the party in holding up the example of the great Canadian statesman to the Premier-elect, that they have recently presented him with the old arm chair, in which Sir John A., during the party's dark years between 1874 and 1878, sat up nights, studying his National policy. This chair stood in the law office of Macdonald & Marsh, 25 Toronto Street, Toronto.

When Sir John resigned from his firm, Mr. William Lount, K.C., his successor, also succeeded to the chair. He moved on to the Bench in 1900, and the chair passed to Mr. George A. Kingston, secretary of the Borden Club, of Toronto. Mr. Kingston's club, a few years ago, banquetted Mr. Borden, and afterwards Mr. Kingston asked Mr. Borden to accept the chair as a present when he should become Premier of Canada.

The following telegrams recently passed between Premier Borden and Mr. Kingston:

"Toronto, Sept. 21, 1911.

"R. L. Borden,

"Halifax, N.S.:

"Heartiest congratulations. Will have Sir John's old chair shipped to you at Ottawa at an early date.

"GEORGE A. KINGSTON."

Ottawa, Ont., Sept. 29, 1911.

"George A. Kingston,

"Temple Building,

Toronto, Ont.:

"Warm thanks for congratulations. I shall expect the old arm chair without fail.

"R. L. BORDEN."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

The Cranbrook (B.C.) Herald, a Liberal paper, applauds Mr. Borden's choice of British Columbia's representative in the government. It says he picked the one man in the parliamentary delegation qualified for cabinet rank. Of the new minister of agriculture, the Herald says:

"Mr. Burrell is a very fine type of citizen, a man of the strictest probity, in many respects much the same type of man as his immediate predecessor in the agricultural department. Hon. Sydney Fisher brought special knowledge to bear upon his work as minister of agriculture, and devoted himself unsparingly and with pre-eminent success to the advancement of agricultural interests throughout the Dominion. Mr. Martin Burrell, we firmly believe, will make for himself an equally honorable record."