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THE RECENT ELEVATION OF DR. SEATH,
A "MON FRAE FIFESHIRE."

The appointment of Dr. Seath as Superintendent of Education for Ontario is another indication of the ability of the Caledonian to get on in the world. The new official was born in Auchtermuchty, in Fifeshire, and that very fact ought to be a proof of his ability. They are very intelligent people in Fife, as anyone will say who comes from there. Fortunately, however, there are other proofs besides these mere statements of interested persons. There is in the window of Messrs. Gourlay, Winter & Leeming, Toronto, a fine Gourlay piano, which in a few days is to be sent to Fifeshire as a wedding present. This is the first Gourlay to be sent to the British Isles, and there is particular interest in the shipment for the reason that the senior member of the firm manufacturing the piano is a Scotchman. Fife is his native shire. The fame of the "Gourlay" as a real high-grade piano and one of the finest art products of Canadian industry is rapidly spreading throughout the world. It is made by expert workmen, many of them from European countries and the materials used are the best that money can procure. The resultant instrument is a marvel in piano-building.

A NOTEWORTHY SPEECH ON THE INDEMNITY OF M. P.'S.

The following fair discussion of the indemnity bill providing \$2,500 a year to M. P.'s and pensions to ex-ministers, was set forth by that brilliant, it occasionally erratic French-Canadian, M. Bourassa, who is a credit to Canada, even if he is not intallible in his ideas or opinions. We believe this excerpt from his speech in Hansard will be read with interest by our readers.

Mr. H. Bourassa said: "I am going to state my position, and I think I might sum it up by saying that the chief objection that has been raised in the country in reference to this measure although it is not as strong as the *Montreal Star* would make it appear, is not so much to the idemnity itself, as to the manner in which it was dealt with by parliament last year. I must say that I felt myself rather surprised at the way the question was introduced and carried, with almost no discussion, and with sweeping changes in what had been considered during most of the session as the probable decision of the government and of parliament upon this question. But I differ with the hon. member for East Grey in his effort to hold the government solely responsible for this measure. I think, if he will pardon me for saying it, that this is an argument of small politics, it is, as an hon. gentleman has suggested, a pettifying argument that is not worthy of the hon. gentleman and of the rest of his speech, with which I concur almost from beginning to end. Practically and morally speaking, the hon. gentleman must know that this measure was prepared and discussed by members of both parties, and that almost every member in the House signed the round robin. I may say to the hon. gentleman that I am in exactly the same position as he is in, that I refused to sign the round robin, and always shall refuse to sign anything of that kind.

I know because I saw it myself. But as to this phase of the matter, I leave every one of my fellow members to judge for himself what he thinks is consonant with his dignity as a member of parliament in dealing with it. I think every fair-minded member of this House will endorse me in saying that this measure was the expression of both parties in the House, and both parties must accept the responsibility for it. I have just said the chief objection to this measure among the electors was on account of the manner in which it was introduced. No doubt that objection was strengthened in the eyes of many people by the fact that five years ago this parliament adopted a measure practically saying that the indemnity of \$1,500 was sufficient. I have never concealed my opinion on that point. I think it was a mistake on the part of this House at that time not to have raised the indemnity to \$2,000 and keep it there. If parliament had then been courageous enough to fix the indemnity at that sum, I do not think there would have been any fault found. However, that is a matter of minor importance. The question we are considering is this: Is the present indemnity of \$2,500 a proper one or not? I think much of the criticism which has been made in the country would have been avoided if we had been frank enough to admit that this is not an indemnity but a salary. Sir, we are living in a democratic country, every man is entitled to a salary for the work he is doing. Therefore the old word 'indemnity' should be discarded, and we should frankly say to the people that we are working to the best of our ability, and we think we are entitled to a salary proportionate to our work and to the functions with which we have been invested by the people.

SESSIONS ARE TOO LONG.

Now, I think that the argument as to the length of the sessions is a mistaken one. I do not agree with the majority of the hon. gentlemen who have spoken in that sense, I think their argument is weak. The increase in length of the sessions is not a sufficient reason for raising our salary, in view of the amount of work we perform. If we make up our minds that our services are worth \$2,500 a year, we should also make up our minds that if we want to earn that salary we must expedite

the business of this country more than we have been doing, not by curtailing the discussion of important subjects, but by performing our business in as prompt a manner as is consistent with the proper discussion of public questions. Consider what the parliament of Great Britain does. That is the only representative body in the three kingdoms, and legislates for 40,000,000 people. It is the governing body of an empire of 400,000,000 of people, dealing with vast military, diplomatic and naval interests, with all the local affairs of the three kingdoms, and doing it all in a session of about nine months of the year. But here in this country, with a population of 5,000,000, with eight local legislatures charged with some very important legislative duties, relieving the federal parliament to that extent, we are sitting from six to eight months in the year. We have no military service to speak of to require our attention, in spite of the efforts of the hon. the Minister of Militia and Defence to build up a military force in this country. We have no large navy, no diplomatic service, no foreign relations; we are still, however humbling it may be to our pride, but a small colony. Therefore the argument as to the increased length of the sessions is not a good one.

The argument that the indemnity is for the purpose of meeting our expenses, is also a weak one, because, if the indemnity is merely for the purpose of meeting our expenses, it would be quite large enough at \$1,500. But if we put it on the ground that it is a salary paid to members of parliament for their services, then \$2,500 is not too high. I heard an hon. member say the other day that it would be lowering our dignity and the dignity of our functions to call this a salary. To my mind it would be lowering the dignity of the members of this House if we were to fail to accomplish fully, and to the best of our ability, the duties we are set here to perform; and the moment we do that, the moment every one of us, tries to perform his duty effectually, I think the people are fair-minded and democratic enough to agree that we should be paid salary proportionate to the dignity of our functions, as well as to the amount of work we have to perform.

Before passing from this point I might recall to the memory of the House the fact that the view has been expressed by several members who have taken part in this debate that the reduction of our salary to a lower figure than the one which is proper would tend to bring into this parliament men of wealth. I am not a socialist but I may say frankly that I do not think that it would be a good thing for this country to induce the wealthy class to control the parliament of Canada. Partly owing to the state of our education and to our kind of civilization we may say that in Canada wealth and learning and the sense of duty do not generally go together in the same men. We have examples of that in the House, and this brings me to the suggestion that I want to make in reference to this question. We have men of great wealth in both branches of this parliament. Statistics were prepared by the *Toronto News* last fall as to the way in which the indemnity was drawn by some members of this House and some members of the Senate and we find that a man like Senator Cox who was present either three or seven days—I do not remember which—drew something like \$1,700 from the treasury of this country for three or seven days of attendance; which certainly proves that wealth is not accompanied by lofty ideas or a high sense of duty. In this House we have several members like the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Forget) who, although he was not present for more than eight or ten days of last session, drew almost the whole amount of his indemnity which proves that men of great wealth and especially of quickly acquired wealth are not proper men to be representatives of the people of Canada.

The suggestion I would make in reference to this would be to amend the Bill in such a way as to provide that members of the Senate and House of Commons who do not attend at least two-thirds of the days of the session should be given a very small indemnity

and no more. In the way it stands now a member will receive, it is true, at the end of each month only \$10 a day for those days during which he has been present, but at the end of the session he will draw the balance of his indemnity, with an allowance of fifteen days for absence, so that he may be absent for four days out of five of the session and draw an amount entirely out of proportion to the service he will have rendered to the country. I think the same principle that is adopted in reference to sessions lasting less than thirty

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J. R. C. HONEYMAN,

Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture,
Provincial Government Offices,
Regina, Sask. June 1st, 1906.

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