

Our Ottawa Letter

Government refuses Investigation of Shell Contract Graft—Dominion Prohibition Proposed

(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, Jan. 21.—Judging by the developments of the opening week the parliamentary session is not going to be entirely devoid of interest. The prospects include debates on Free Wheat, Dominion wide prohibition, with the certainty that the opposition, while agreeing with the government on the necessity of war measures, will insist upon its right to ask questions, to criticize and to investigate. The session was only a few days old when Hon. Wm. Pugsley made a demand for a full inquiry into the operations of the shell committee appointed shortly after the outbreak of war to purchase shells for the Imperial authorities, and doubtless there will be demands for other inquiries which, if gone into, will have a tendency to indefinitely prolong the duration of the session.

The preliminary stages of the debate on the address, including the speeches by Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, did not give much indication that there was trouble in the air, but when Mr. Pugsley, the stormy petrel from New Brunswick, got onto his feet, the session immediately appeared to assume a more beligerent aspect.

Altho the only matter mentioned in the speech from the throne in the way of legislation was the resolution asking the Imperial parliament to extend the life of the Dominion parliament by one year, in order to avoid the necessity of a war-time election, the subject was most carefully avoided both by the prime minister and the leader of the Opposition. Other speakers were also chary in their references to this proposal, which rather strengthens the impression that some friction may arise. The parties may differ as to the immediate necessity of passing the resolution. The government has lost no time in giving notice of its proposal, which already occupies a place on the order paper. This indicates that it will be introduced as soon as the debate on the address is concluded. Not till then is the opposition likely to show its hand. It is believed that Sir Wilfrid will ask that the resolution stand over until later in the session when the war and other estimates and proposed legislation will have been brought down, while the government will urge the immediate urgency of its adoption. Here lies the possibility of a serious divergence of opinion, and the probable threat of a general election. That there will be friction seems to be certain, but the majority of members believe that the point at issue is not serious enough to bring about such a distinct cleavage of opinion that the resolution will not be adopted at some stage of the session.

In their opening speeches the two leaders as a matter of course dealt almost entirely with the war and the issues arising out of the struggle. There were the usual words of praise for the part the Dominion has taken and the determination of the Dominion to do everything in our power to assist the cause of Great Britain and her allies.

No Conscription for Canada

Sir Robert Borden, in giving an account of his mission to England and France last summer, made special reference to the steps which he had taken to secure transports to carry Canadian supplies and grain across the Atlantic. He explained that over a year ago an arrangement had been made with the admiralty for eighteen ships. Within the past seven months the number had been increased to forty. Sir Robert said that representations were still being made to the admiralty. He believed that Canada's needs would be considered, and that the admiralty would spare all the ships not urgently required for the movement of troops and supplies.

The speeches of the two leaders made it clear that there is no possibility of a policy of conscription being adopted, at least not until the war situation becomes more serious than it is. Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed his opposition to the idea of conscription, and Sir

Robert Borden again assured the House, as he did last session, that the government has no intention of departing from the voluntary system, under which approximately one-quarter of a million men have been raised. He was able to state that since the announcement that Canada's aim is to create an army half a million strong, recruiting has picked up with the result that during the first two weeks of January there had been upwards of fifteen thousand enlistments. This is at the rate of about one thousand for every day, Sundays included.

The Commandeered Wheat

Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed his regret that no mention had been made in the speech from the throne of the commandeering of the wheat in the elevators in the East and at the head of the lakes. He recognized the right of a government in times of war to exercise such abnormal authority. But upon every occasion where such power has been used, he said, it was because of the scarcity of some commodity and due to a desire to keep that commodity for the people. The action of the government in commandeering seventeen million bushels of grain had not been due to a shortage and was, in the opinion of Sir Wilfrid, somewhat extraordinary. He believed that the wheat could have been bought without disturbing the market to any serious extent, and asserted that at the present moment representatives of the allied governments are purchasing larger quantities without causing any dislocation of business. Sir Wilfrid, while expressing his dissatisfaction, said he had no charge to make in regard to the matter.

The prime minister in reply said that if the Opposition leader had no charge to make it would have been better had he not referred to a charge at all. If he should ever have a charge to make the government would be glad to have it put forward. Before action was taken the government had sought and secured the best disinterested advice. Sir Robert denied that the commandeering had resulted in any dislocation of business of a serious character, and claimed that the efforts of the government to secure an outlet for the wheat ought to be approved rather than condemned.

Oliver on Ocean Freights

Hon. Frank Oliver in his speech drew attention to the fact that the government had secured the services of forty transports, principally to carry munitions, while all that had been done to relieve the ocean transport problem as it affects grain had been to secure the release of a number of vessels formerly engaged in the North Atlantic trade. This, he said, left the companies free to carry grain at their own figures. Ocean freight rates had advanced by one thousand per cent. since the government appointed a committee to endeavor to secure a reduction in the rates. Hon. Robert Rogers was the head of that committee, and he feared that if he did not soon resign he would be blamed for what had happened.

Dr. Michael Clark had also a few remarks to make about the western situation, but the cure which he advocated lay more in the direction of wider markets than an attempt to solve the present trans-Atlantic rates problem. He pointed out that while there is but little profit in wheat, beef prices still remain at a highly remunerative figure—a figure which has not descended below the mark which it first reached when a wise government to the south gave us free ingress to their markets. It would be the function of a wise government, or a wise opposition, he said, to base their thinking on the probability that there would be a drop in prices of produce when peace is restored. During the recess it had appeared that the government was prepared to give the matter of Free Wheat some consideration. Hon. Robert Rogers had stated

Continued on Page 31



The Requests Received for our "Desch" Series of Tinto-Gravure Calendar Mailing Cards has been larger

than we expected, but we can still send the complete set to 200 more who may desire it. But it will be necessary to send your name at once as we are mailing the first card in the series to reach those now on our list by February 1st.

The cards as shown above are exact reproductions in color of 12 paintings by Frank H. Desch and are sent one each month, to any address on receipt of 10 cents to partly cover the cost of mailing and postal charges.

WRITE FOR YOUR SET NOW

G237—Oddfellow's Emblem Pin, 10K gold \$0.75

D. R. DINGWALL Limited

Jewellers and Silversmiths

WINNIPEG, MAN.

EATON'S
AND THE
WINNIPEG BONSPIEL

Invite you to a gloriously good time.

THERE'S no getting away from the fact that this year's Bonspiel is to be the largest and most attractive in the history of this most popular feature of Western Winter Sports. The extensive preparations that are being made will have it no other way. It will have much of the aspect of a Winter Carnival, providing fun and enjoyment for everyone—big and little.

AT EATON'S A MAGNIFICENT HERD OF OSTRICHES

Will prove a source of great interest to everyone.

To see this exhibit will alone be worth a trip to the Bonspiel, for these birds were a feature at the Panama Exhibition. The exhibit is valued at \$40,000, and includes chicks, the size of an ordinary Spring chicken, and immense birds 8 feet high that can reach to ten and eleven feet. As well, there is a large riding ostrich on which boys and girls can have rides for the asking.

ALSO at Eaton's this will be a season of very remarkable values in new and fine merchandise, which to many will afford the means of paying all the expenses of their trip to the Bonspiel.

You're coming, of course.

T. EATON CO.
WINNIPEG CANADA

WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE