

The Session at Ottawa

THE Session of Parliament which closed last week was a long and in some respects arduous one. At no time was there any lack of work for the members. There was always a programme of Government measures awaiting consideration and most of them were of considerable importance. Owing, however, to the absence of the Prime Minister and several of his colleagues in the first part of the session the most urgent business was not brought forward early. While that which engaged the attention of the two Houses was of considerable interest, much of it could have been postponed or more quickly disposed of if the more urgent business had been ready. Toward the end of the session there was a pressure of affairs which made anything like careful consideration impossible. Millions were voted with little or no inquiry. Measures of the highest importance were brought down and rushed through within a few hours of the close of the session. The members of the Commons, sitting morning, afternoon and late into the night, besides struggling at the same time with duties on committees, were too tired and weary to pay close attention to what was going on. Unfortunately, hurried work at the close of the session has occurred too often in past years. This year the case was rather worse than usual, some measures of the utmost importance being carried without any pretence to the deliberation which Parliamentary rules are supposed to insure. If some of the measures brought forward in the last days of the session and carried in the way we have described turn out well it will be by rare good luck rather than by Parliamentary deliberation.

The volume of legislation will probably be the largest in the history of the Dominion. The bill to consolidate the Railway Act, which, after meeting insuperable difficulties in two previous sessions, got through at last, will be appreciated by all who are interested in railway affairs. In that connection mention should be made of the big experiment in public ownership, in the placing of a vast system of railways in the hands of a practically irresponsible commission, a measure the operation of which will be watched with much interest, and all the more because in the last hours of the session the Minister of Railways stated that the loss of the country this year on the operation of the railways would be nineteen millions of dollars, with a further loss of eight millions on the Grand Trunk Pacific. In the measures respecting technical education, housing, highways and public health there are incursions into the realm of Provincial authority, but there is not much disposition to resent this when the Dominion treasury supplies the money.

The work of the session has thus been very extensive. Let us hope that even though much of it was done so hurriedly in the last days it will prove its adaptability to the condition of the country.

Coming and Going

ALL our Canadian soldiers are on the homeward march now. There has been some disorder in English camps because of delay in transportation. Even a short delay is long in the mind of the soldier who has been three or four years away from home. An assurance that he will sail on a given day fills him with joy. A later announcement, no matter what the cause may be, that the sailing is postponed, brings bitter disappointment, which in a few cases has taken a disorderly form, much to the regret, we are sure, of the troops generally. All disorder must be dealt with under military law, and where the consequences have been serious, punishment must follow. But some allowances must be made for the disappointment of men under such circumstances.

Across the border the soldiers' movements are not all in the homeward direction. While thousands are daily arriving from Europe there is a call for fifty thousand men to go the other way. Uncle Sam feels that he has to do a share in the after-the-war work in Europe, and instead of keeping his men who are over there, he is calling for recruits at home. In a very captivating advertisement he invites those who "would like to see the battlefields of France and the wonderful Rhine valley" to enlist at once. Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest, is the motto now.

Troublesome Questions

TRADE questions are at all times troublesome to public men, but at present they are more than usually so. The war brought about important changes of trade policies for the war period in various countries. Now that the war is over the question arises, how long the measures devised to meet war conditions shall continue? In Canada the recent debates in the House of Commons and the resignation of Mr. Crerar mark a revival of the controversies of former days. In England a remarkable speech was made a few days ago by Mr. W. M. Hughes, the Australian Premier, on the eve of his departure for home. Mr. Hughes gave a gloomy picture of Britain's unpreparedness in commercial affairs and boldly advocated a protectionist policy. Following that we have news of a vigorous movement, in which Mr. Asquith is participating, to uphold Britain's free trade policy. Owing to dissatisfaction with the economic situation one member of the Government, Sir Arthur Steel Maitland, has resigned. At the same time it is announced that the German Minister of Economics, Herr Wissell, is resigning on account of difference with his colleagues. The "unrest" which is so widespread is reaching the field of political economy.

Trade of Canada and Newfoundland

AMONG the papers lately presented to the Imperial Parliament is a very comprehensive report on the trade of Canada and Newfoundland.

Since 1908 the Imperial Government, through its Board of Trade, has maintained Trade Commissioners in the overseas Dominions—Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. The Canadian Commissioner covered also Newfoundland. This service has recently been much extended. In Canada three Commissions are maintained, at Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. The Senior Commissioner for Canada is Mr. G. T. Milne, O.B.E., who has his office at 367 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal. The Toronto Commissioner is Mr. F. W. Field, formerly of the Toronto Monetary Times, and it is Mr. Field who has made the report on the trade of the Dominion and Newfoundland that has now been laid before the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Field's large experience in the study of Canadian trade renders him particularly well qualified for work of this kind, and his report will be very helpful to people in the United Kingdom who wish to be informed respecting Canadian trade.

The Flyers

ONLY a few weeks ago optimistic observers were venturing to predict that the crossing of the Atlantic by the air route would probably be accomplished some time this summer. With only a small part of the summer behind us, the great feat has already been accomplished several times. We now read of the Westward crossing of the ocean by the British dirigible "R. 34," and her return to the United Kingdom, almost as a matter of course, calling for no more than a passing remark. It is a wonderful record of progress since the French aeronaut Bleriot astonished the world ten years ago by flying across the English Channel, a distance of about twenty miles. It is too much to expect at any early day regular crossings of the ocean for commercial purposes. But there is no doubt that for short distances the airplanes can be successfully employed, and a speed reached which will far surpass that of the fastest steamships. For mail service and for passenger service to some extent the flying machine will soon play a large part in the world's transportation.

It is pleasant to think that these remarkable feats have been accomplished in friendly rivalry by the airmen of Great Britain and the United States. The sea-planes of the American navy, the British Vickers machine, and now the big British dirigible, have shared the glory. There is honor enough in these advancements of science and these achievements of courage and skill, to divide between the two nations.