

## THE EDMONTON BULLETIN

(SEMI-WEEKLY.)  
DAILY—Delivered in City, \$4 per year. By mail, per year, \$3.50. By mail to United States per year \$5. SEMI-WEEKLY—Subscriptions per year \$1. Subscribers in the United States \$2. All subscriptions strictly in advance.

BULLETIN CO., Ltd.,  
DUNCAN MARSHALL,  
Manager.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1908.

## A STRONG GOVERNMENT.

The recent session of the Saskatchewan Legislature has added very materially to the strength of the Scott Government. They had a rather heavy programme for one session, but so well prepared were most of their important measures that they aroused little or no controversy. Their redistribution bill was prepared and dealt with in orthodox liberal fashion. A committee of both sides of the Legislature prepared the boundaries and arranged them to the satisfaction of both Government and Opposition. This method bears a very favorable contrast to that of the good old-fashioned Tory gerrymander of the Whitney Government in Ontario, where they took from the smaller constituencies and added to the greater, their highest ambition being to steal seats in the Legislature.

The Saskatchewan Legislature passed city, town and village legislation to provide for a uniform plan upon which these municipalities should be organized. Their election legislation called forth enormous from even Mr. Haultain. They also passed a telephone act, which will complete the chain of similar provinces operating their own telephone lines.

The only legislation that was opposed in any measure was the free text books bill, and to this Mr. Haultain offered some Opposition. No sooner had he expressed his disagreement with this legislation than some of the Tory papers began to talk about the thing with which they are most familiar, "graft." In a few days the leader of the Saskatchewan Opposition found himself so compromised by his friends that he took the precaution, on the floor of the Legislature, to disavow having ever made any statement to warrant any such interpretation as the Tory papers were placing upon his speech. Well might he ask to be saved from such friends.

The result of the legislation just passed is to show that the Saskatchewan Government is composed of strong capable men who are endeavoring to give our neighboring provinces the very best administration possible. During the last session, the debating strength of the Government showed to the best advantage, while that of the Opposition was scarcely better than the so-called Opposition in the Alberta Legislature. The Scott Government has gained in strength and in public confidence every year since its election, and in more in the last session than in any preceding one.

## THE LEADERS.

When Mr. Foster offered his factious opposition in the House of Commons, to the government assistance to the banks in the movement of the wheat crop last fall, Mr. Borden called a halt to the operations of the ex-Finance Minister, and allowed public business to proceed. If instead of making episodic efforts to assert his leadership, Mr. Borden would keep his hand upon the reins of his party all the time, the Opposition would gain something in moderation and might also rise some in public opinion. The present leader, however, does not seem to have very much control over his party, and is evidently afraid to cross words too often with the member for North Toronto.

When the insurance investigation took place, and Mr. Foster's method of transacting business were exposed, a certain section of the Conservative party and press demanded that the ex-Finance Minister should cease to take a leading part in their party. Some of them went so far as to call upon Mr. Borden to discontinue with the public services of his first lieutenant in the Commons, declaring that as long as men like Mr. Foster dominated the party it could not expect to gain a very large share of public confidence. Mr. Borden's reply was to give Mr. Foster the maximum amount of publicity in the ranks of the party, and those who were clamoring for his retirement are now as loudly applauding his retention.

When Mr. Borden made his tour of Western Canada last fall, the greatest relief among the leaders of Conservatism was the absence of Mr. Foster. Someone who could stir up the dry bones was badly needed. It became more apparent at every meeting that Mr. Borden not only lacked the ability to outpace or inspire his supporters, but that he also lacked large ideas. His public utterances were of the most commonplace character, and his explanations of his Halifax platform were about as nebulous as the

platform itself. Few leaders of a party ever had a more discouraging tour, and the result must have been rather depressing to Mr. Borden, so much so, in fact, that he returned to the duties of the session with so little spirit that he has virtually allowed Mr. Foster to lead the House almost ever since.

The Conservative party thus finds itself with so weak a leader that it is forced to turn to the member for North Toronto for relief, and to accept the virtual leadership of the man whom a section of the party and press was trying, a short time ago, to drive out of public life. This must be a rather humiliating position for them to be in, but with a leader like Mr. Borden and such lieutenants as Messrs. Powell, Bennett, Sprague and Haggart, it is from dire necessity they turn to the organizer of the nest of traitors of 1896 and accept him again as their guiding star. Mr. Foster is today the whole militant force of the Opposition at Ottawa, with R. L. Borden as an observer, except in a very occasional instance, such as the government aid to the banks in moving the farmers' crop, when Mr. Borden asserts the fact that he is leader, at least in name, lest his political existence should be entirely forgotten.

## OPPOSITION TACTICS.

Last week's proceedings in the House of Commons disclosed the following facts:

1. That the Conservative party intends, notwithstanding the failure of Dr. Pringle to prove his charges of improper moral conduct against Controller Lithgow and ex-Registrar Girouard of the Yukon Civil Service, to exploit the Privilege correspondence against the Government at the next Dominion election.

2. That it is beginning to realize that, in continuing to stop the grant of supplies, it may arouse public antipathy, unless its policy is disguised under some stronger pretext than the elections bill.

3. That the sensible and business-like member on both sides of the House, Mr. Pringle, to the persistent obstruction that has taken place in the House, to go into supply have been proposed, and that unless the more verbose members voluntarily exercise restraint, the rules of the House must be amended so as to admit of the unfortunate members who have to listen to them imposing such restraint.

4. That the needs of the times and the necessities of the country render it imperative that the business of the House of Commons should be organized and conducted around by time limits and that the closure rule, in force in the British House of Commons, should be adopted.

The Pringle papers form an old subject, extending over five years. The correspondence began with charge of misadministration, then accused the Government of corruption in the election of 1904, and later developed into charges of immoral conduct against the men employed in the Civil Service. It mentioned two specific instances, and Commissioner Henderson was directed to investigate them on behalf of the Minister of the Interior, but when Dr. Pringle was asked to give the proof of his charges, he declined unless paraded in all the offensive and defensive armory of a royal commission. The law did not permit of this in such a case, and no minister had to refuse to authorize such a commission. Dr. Pringle has now made this a grievance against the Government, and he has, moreover, to defend himself against an action for slander—the cost of which is causing the reverend doctor some uneasy nights. The case will come on this summer. In the meantime the matter is sub judice and does not permit of comment either way.

The last three points revolve round the central topic of obstruction, and the consequent stoppage of supply, whereby latterly the Opposition have sought to prevent the Government from doing justice to the general body of electors in Manitoba, where a railway strike has been in progress since a commission. Dr. Pringle has now made this a grievance against the Government, and he has, moreover, to defend himself against an action for slander—the cost of which is causing the reverend doctor some uneasy nights. The case will come on this summer. In the meantime the matter is sub judice and does not permit of comment either way.

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discomfort and trouble somewhere. If the votes for the camps had been taken, the position would have been no better. The Government would still have been without money in other directions. The Opposition then pointed out that they had agreed to the Customs vote, and asked why the Customs officers were not paid at once. The Government's reply was that, though the estimates were passed, the money had not been voted; and the Government could not be bringing in a fresh supply bill every other day when the Opposition kept up a long list of demands for a few hundred thousand dollars of estimates. Besides, there were other public servants just as deserving as the Customs officials, and the Government did not mean to make flesh of one and fowl of the other.

The suggestion that the Government should have introduced a supply bill under the circumstances stated, is contrary to constitutional practice. It would mean that there would be, perhaps, a dozen or more supply bills in a session; and it is not customary to have more than one, which is all that is necessary when a Government is opposed by a normally rational Opposition. The rumour of the Conservative party at present in the House of Commons is almost as whimsical as the famous rumour which Cromwell dismissed in a fit of rage and exasperation. Like its historical predecessor, it has all sorts of weird notions of its own importance, and it too, feels that in it alone resides the will of the people. It is unflinchingly presumptuous, it professes to represent the united voice of the people, and tries to dictate to a party double its numbers who were elected by the same means as themselves, on precisely the same franchise. The forbearance of the Government under the annoyance of this persistent presumption—which, in effect, inverts the whole process of Parliament—has at last given way, and last week the Opposition were plainly told that the Government would no longer consent to be dictated to by an insignificant minority in weak judgment as it is in numbers.

The Opposition has held up the House for months without any valid reason; and its conduct has been as petulant as that of a parcel of children. The fault of the Government has been in humoring them so much. In humoring the Opposition the Government has got the country out of humor; and it has to rehabilitate its reputation for business capacity. There must either be some reformation in the conduct of members of the Opposition, or they must be curbed by the closure. But, when this eventually is brought to the fore, the Opposition turn and say, "Who says we have been obstructing? We haven't been obstructing," and while they are saying it they are obstructing. Proof is to be found in the very proceedings of last week. On four out of the five days of last week the items of supply passed did not amount to more than \$300,000; and on the fifth day there was a comparatively large vote of \$1,300,000. The total for the week was about \$2,300,000. There are seventy millions to be voted, and at this rate, it will take thirty weeks, or nearly nine months, to do it. Yet the Opposition are not obstructing.

On Monday they obstructed for eight hours, and there was three hours of commerce of supply. On Tuesday they obstructed for eight hours, and there was one hour of supply. On Wednesday they obstructed for two hours, and there were three hours of supply. On Thursday they obstructed for five and a half hours, and there were four hours of supply. On Friday there were six hours of supply, and the remainder of the time was occupied in discussing the efficiency of the rules of the House to confine Parliament to the transaction of the business of one country. Duncan Ross and other Liberal members advocated the closure; and their protests against the way in which the time of Parliament had been wasted found an echo in the heart of Mr. T. Connelley, the Conservative member for East Huron, who remarked that he would bring a county council of business men and farmers from Huron who would do the work of Parliament in six weeks.

"I am ashamed to think," he said, "that we have sat here all this time and accomplished so little. It is not that we do not go through the form of working, for we sit here such long hours that we actually endanger the health of the members of the House. There is only one factor in this Dominion that I know of where the employees are expected to go to work at eleven o'clock in the morning and work until three or four the next morning, and that is this factory on Parliament Hill, where we empty windbags and manufacture laws."

Here is the Opposition condemned out of the mouth of one of its own members; and yet the Opposition, led by the Hon. George E. Foster, the author of six-hour speeches and the manufacturer of obstructive motions, have not been obstructing. Oh, no, they have been facilitating business all the time—Ottawa Free Press.

## FOSTERIAN FIGURING.

One of the greatest ambitions of Conservative candidates in Alberta is to prove that no reduction in the tariff has been made during Liberal rule. In his reply to the budget speech, Hon. Geo. E. Foster propounded a unique method of misrepresentation in this particular matter—and one of the candidates in particular has adopted Mr. Foster's plan, that he would give the ex-Finance Minister credit for the idea is only a detail.

Mr. Foster's plan is to add the bounty paid upon iron and steel manufactured in Canada to the receipts of the customs tariff and work out a percentage of taxation upon our imports on this basis. Mr. Foster's argument is that the bounty is a tax and should be added to the tariff, but he fails to point out that the bounty is paid out of the receipts from the tariff. In the picture language of the Journal Mr. Foster and his colleagues must have been "setting there as dough-heads." This is a rather nasty back-handed slap at Mr. Foster, but the Journal has hit him before and made it up with fulsome flattery later on.

The next paragraph of this effusion runs as follows: "Granting also that the Liberal administration has accomplished much for the advancement and development of Canada, what about it? Why does the country pay its members \$2,500 a year? Is it not to do what they possibly can for the welfare of the people? Is it not to pass wise and just laws, and forward measures for the improvement of our public services? Granting also that they have done this—that the government have a splendid record in this respect, is that any reason why they should be paid \$2,500 a year? Is it not to pass wise and just laws, and forward measures for the improvement of our public services? Granting also that they have done this—that the government have a splendid record in this respect, is that any reason why they should be paid \$2,500 a year? Is it not to pass wise and just laws, and forward measures for the improvement of our public services? 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