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Dominion Parliament. The present session of the Dominion Parliament is a very important one. The speech from the throne, though short, foreshadowed some important legislation. The redistribution of the seats of the House of Commons, the increasing of the poll tax on the Chinese to \$500, provision for the arbitration of labor disputes on railways are amongst the bills to be brought down. A bill providing for the appointment of a railway commission has just been introduced. The Government has also called for tenders for an improved steamship service for carrying the mail, passengers, and freight between Great Britain and Canada. This will lead to a discussion of the entire question in Parliament, and is expected to elicit much definite and valuable information. The tenders are to be for a fortnightly service of 16 knot ships, and a fortnightly service of 21 knot ships, while the tenderers are to state the amount of subsidy required. It is expected that the Canadian Pacific—Elder-Dempster Line, the Allan Line, the Dominion Line, and possibly the Grand Trunk will tender for the service. The Grand Trunk will also apply at this session for a charter to extend their line through to the Pacific Ocean. By the latest reports, the Grand Trunk, in order to be in a position to demand a subsidy, intend to extend their lines to Quebec and St. John, making these cities their summer and winter ports respectively.

The Railway Commission. The Railway Commission Bill introduced by Mr. Blair, which has already been referred to, provides for the appointment of three commissioners, in whom are vested a large part of the powers now exercised by the Railway Committee of the Privy Council. One of these commissioners will be a leading railway official, another a prominent lawyer, while the third will be a leading merchant. The most important duty of this commission will be the laying down of the rates that Canadian railway companies shall impose on their patrons. Companies desirous of increasing their rates will have to give ten days' notice. Then the application will come up for consideration and determination. For many years the people of Canada, especially those of the West, have complained of unjust discrimination by railways. The commission have power to hear all such complaints, and are also empowered to define what constitutes discrimination. The decisions of the railway commission are final, and no appeal is allowed, save to the Governor in Council on a point of fact. It is also their duty to enquire into the transportation question and terminal facilities of Canada.

English Naval Stations. Mr. Broderick wants £34,500,000 for the army next year, and Lord Selborne requires the same amount for the navy. The army estimates have never been approached except in time of war, and the navy estimates, which exceed the current year's figures by £3,250,000, have broken all records. The total national expenditure will reach £150,000,000. Premier Balfour has announced in Parliament the decision of the Admiralty to establish a new naval station at St. Margaret's Hope, on the North side of the Firth of Forth. This seems to have aroused a suspicion in Germany that Britain distrusts the ambition of that country in those waters. Russia is steadily and largely augmenting her naval strength in the Baltic, and in view of what might happen in case of a European war, the North Sea coast of Great Britain is in a singularly defenceless condition. Another project just announced, is to still further strengthen Gibraltar by

the construction of a harbor and a dock eastward of the Rock. In time of peace prepared for war. The South African trouble has taught British statesmen some valuable lessons.

The Irish Land Question. The Irish Land question seems at last to be in a fair way of settlement. Rack-renting by absentee landlords started the trouble and eviction of tenants in arrears added fuel to the flames. For a whole generation, the British Parliament has been endeavoring to settle the difficulty. Statutes have been passed to fix fair prices, to deal with arrears of rent and to enable the tenant to purchase his land outright and become a peasant proprietor. The agreement entered into by the conference between landlords and tenants, held recently in Dublin, was essentially a land purchase scheme. The Imperial Parliament is expected to appropriate over \$100,000,000, which is the difference between what the owners are willing to take and the tenants are willing to give. This is equivalent to an annual charge of \$7,500,000 a year or \$2,500,000 at least more than is necessary, if the land question were settled. Such a settlement seems to be cheaply purchased at \$100,000,000 cash. There will be no compulsion on those tenants who prefer to retain their holdings at a fair rental. The social, economical, and political effect of such a settlement, would be great. Many are the surmises, as to the effect it would have on "home rule," and the relations of England with the United States. Those of an optimistic mood declare that the "home rule" agitation would soon dwindle away, and Irishmen learn to regard themselves as members of the British Empire. Emigration would be checked, and those who have already gone to the United States would soon learn to think, more kindly of their fellow citizens. Others claim that the agitation for "home rule" would still go on, but all the bitterness would be removed. We are convinced that if this 'land question' can be settled, the prosperity of Ireland is assured.

Reforms in Russia. The Czar has issued a decree providing for freedom of religion throughout his dominion, the abolition of forced labor, and the establishing of some degree of local self-government. Although the Jewish faith is not specifically mentioned in the Czar's decree, it is generally believed it is included. The decree is considered the most significant act of State since the emancipation of the serfs. The public hail it as the proclamation of a new era, opening bright prospects of the early improvement of Russian internal administration. It is difficult to calculate the immense advantage of these reforms to the people of a country which has for centuries been governed by a despot, and who have been debarred from all those religious, political, and social liberties which a Canadian regards as his birthright.

Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain has just returned from his triumphant tour of South Africa, and has been received in England with great enthusiasm. The tour has been spoken of as one of the greatest achievements in British statesmanship. Everywhere in South Africa Mr. Chamberlain has been received with enthusiasm, and nowhere greater than at Pretoria and Johannesburg. He has given public testimony of the good feeling shown by representative burghers. It has been definitely agreed that the war contribution of the new colonies shall be \$150,000,000, to be paid in three annual instalments, the first of which the miners propose to pay at once. The loan guaranteed by England for repro-

ductive purposes, chiefly the purchase and retention of railways, amounts to \$175,000,000. The question of labor for the mines is not yet settled. The miners wish to import Chinese, claiming that they cannot afford to pay whites, while the blacks refuse to work. It is rumored that Mr. Chamberlain had agreed to the importation of Chinese labor; but to this rumor he gave an emphatic denial, and pointed out the urgent necessity of bringing the black population into industrial life. How this is to be done is one of the hardest problems of the English statesmen.

Panama Canal. The once famous Nicaragua Canal scheme seems to have been relegated to the background for good, and the United States is about to reap the benefits of the millions squandered on the old Panama Canal. The United States treaty, with Columbia, on the construction of the Panama Canal was signed, January 21, by Secretary Hay. The approval of the treaty, by the legislative bodies of the two nations, will mark the achievement of another great event in the history of the world. By the terms of the treaty Columbia is to receive \$10,000,000 down (the original offer of the United States was \$7,000,000) and an annual payment of a quarter of a million dollars beginning nine years hence. This annuity is a compromise between the hundred thousand that the United States offered to pay and the six hundred thousand that Columbia asked. But the annuity is not subject to any increase hereafter, as was the amount fixed in the original proposition. This money will be a great help to Columbia in her present impoverished condition. The United States is to have a renewable lease for a hundred years of a strip of territory, extending three miles on each side of the canal. The titular sovereignty of Columbia, over this strip is fully recognized, and she is to have the right of free transit of troops through it.

The Nickel Industry. The Dominion of Canada is the greatest nickel producing country in the world, and the Canadian Consolidated Copper Co., at Sudbury, may be said to practically control all the nickel in the world today. Nickel itself has only come into prominence during the past decade. New uses have been discovered for it, and especially has it been applied by the Pennsylvania Railway Company upon steel rails, with the result that whereas the best steel rails had demanded renewal after a few years' service, the application of nickel seems to make them practically indestructible, while at the same time minimizing the operation of the law of contraction and expansion to a very considerable degree. Moreover, while there is extra cost involved in thus using nickel upon steel rails, this will be more than counterbalanced by the added duration of the rail. Of course nickel is applied to the armor of ships which it renders hard and capable of withstanding the most severe shocks, and as a matter of fact the British Admiralty is the best of customers for our Canadian nickel, although it is also sold for this and other purposes elsewhere. The Canadian product before it is finished is worth, roughly speaking, about a million and a half of dollars, but of course its value is greatly enhanced when finished. There are some 1200 men employed the year round at Sudbury, and there are from 800 to 1000 tons of ore treated each day in the production of what is called nickel-copper, a compound which is composed of sulphide of nickel and copper. The chief point of interest is the fact that Canada is coming to the front wonderfully as a country of vast mineral resources, and that in this particular product, the nations of the world must look to her for their supply of a material which is constantly increasing in value, because of its increasing application to a variety of uses. The invention of new methods of treatment will enlarge the product and give it new value. This is Canada's growing time. The future is full of promise.