

## Our Ottawa Letter

Parliament Meets This Week—New Taxes to be Imposed—Government Considering Appointment of Board of Enquiry

(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, Jan. 29.—The paramount business of the session of parliament which is just about to open will relate to the war, but there will be other business. Industrial and general conditions, which have been seriously affected by the European clash of arms, cannot be ignored. The measures which the government will be called upon to introduce to produce a revenue to make up a deficit, other than that incurred owing to war expenditures, will invite a frank discussion of the economic fabric. Any departure from the present plan of taxation is certain to be in the direction of increased burdens and more diffuse taxation, and the parliamentary discussion will not be without value. Frank criticism will no doubt be necessary if only for the purpose of reminding those who have the power to impose taxes now considered necessary that such taxes are for the purpose of meeting a temporary emergency, and that those who love protection must not expect always to dwell safely behind the new barriers to be erected.

### A Huge Deficit

The financial problems which face parliament, and more particularly the Minister of Finance, are indeed serious. At the special session of the House in August, fifty millions were voted for war purposes. Most of this will probably be spent by March 31, the end of the current fiscal year. At least one hundred millions more, but more likely one hundred and fifty millions will be required for war purposes during the next fiscal year. The amount required is being financed by the Bank of England, and does not constitute the most serious difficulty for the Hon. W. T. White. His chief trouble will be to raise revenue to meet an approximate deficit of fifteen millions in connection with the conduct of the ordinary business of the country, and expenditures on large public works, undertaken before the outbreak of the war, and which are in most instances being proceeded with.

### Probable New Taxes

As matters of this character are always kept a very close secret until the deliverance of the budget speech, any statement as to measures likely to be adopted must of necessity be based largely upon speculation. Of course there are only a small number of things which it is possible for the minister to do, so that the speculation which one hears at the capital may not be so very far astray. That there will be some tariff increases is believed to be prac-

tically certain. Luxuries which have been taxed up to the present time, and luxuries in food and other articles, which have been free because not grown or made in Canada, may be called upon to bear a larger share of the burden. Increased excise duties were placed on liquor and tobacco at the special session. These may be given another upward boost. There is talk of direct taxation in the form of taxes on incomes, etc., but here a grave constitutional difficulty arises, it being claimed that the provincial governments alone have the authority to impose direct taxes. At the time of the Spanish-American war the government of the United States materially increased its revenue by imposing stamp taxes on business paper and also upon proprietary medicines. A business receipt was not valid unless it had attached to it a stamp which cost a few cents. Similarly there was a tax on all cheques issued on the banks according to size. Any person who entered a drug store and purchased a bottle of proprietary medicine was called upon to pay for a stamp which the druggist would attach to the bottle. The best feature of this form of taxation is that it falls upon all classes of the community. It is an open secret here that some of the members of the cabinet, and many members of the House, were of the opinion that stamp taxes should have been imposed at the special session of parliament. Doubtless if this had been done the Dominion revenues would be bigger than they are today, while the burden to the individual citizen would not have been very heavy. A tax on automobiles was advocated by Frank Carvell and other members at the extra session, and may possibly be considered by the Minister of Finance.

### The Liberal Attitude

As is always the case on the eve of the meeting of parliament, there is much speculation as to the probable duration of parliament. Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues are of the opinion that all the business could be disposed of in six weeks, and that the House should be up for Easter, which falls this year on an early date in April. Should the members come back after Easter they are almost certain to remain for another month. Everything depends upon developments. If nothing occurs to impair the political truce, the work may possibly be concluded by Easter. So far as I can gather at the moment, the attitude of the Liberals is that while they are prepared to vote all the money the government requires for war purposes, they will express a desire for definite explanations as to the manner in which the fifty millions already voted is being spent. While agreeing that the measures to render assistance to the mother country must receive the unanimous support of the House, they may be disposed to criticize the details of the government's plans. There is certain to be some criticism of the financial operations of the Minister of Finance in recent months, more particularly the issuance of over twenty-five millions of Dominion notes which are, apparently, without gold backing. It is only natural that the members of the House, irrespective of party, will want to know the why and the wherefore of this procedure. Explanations have been issued, but unfortunately they do not explain to what particular uses the money was put. Such matters are likely to be debated at considerable length, so that it would not be surprising if the session runs on into May. Should the developments in the House indicate a determination of the government to go to the country before calling parliament together again, the session would perhaps be lengthened by a couple of months, while the tone of the discussions would no doubt be more heated. It will be interesting to see if the two parties which managed to get along so nicely together for a few days in August when the German hordes were moving swiftly on Paris, can repeat the performance for a couple of months now that the supreme danger of those ominous days is a thing of the past.

### Commission to be Appointed?

It is a long time since the joint deputation of grain growers and manufacturers came to Ottawa to ask the government to make an inquiry into Western conditions. Absolutely nothing was heard of the matter for weeks, and it began to look as if the request was to be conveniently forgotten. Within the past few days, however, I have heard that there is some likelihood of action being taken and that a commission or board of inquiry will be named to take evidence, study conditions and their causes, and make a report. The idea here is that if such a body is named it will consist of five members. There will be one practical farmer, one scientific expert (presumably an experimental farm expert), one financial man, one transportation expert, and one manufacturer. The two farming and the one transportation representative, it is understood, are likely to be chosen from the West. There is no official intimation that this is the policy to be adopted by the government; nevertheless, it has been suggested and is being considered by the ministers most directly interested. An announcement of the intentions of the government may be made to parliament in the early days of the session.

Private legislation will be considerably lighter than for many years past. Bills seeking renewal of railway charters, more particularly in the West, will be the most numerous, while there will be about half a dozen applications for new charters. Applications for divorce will number about twenty-five, or about half as many as last year. The business before the banking and commerce committee will be comparatively light. Apart from the war measures it is authoritatively stated that the government does not propose to introduce any important legislation. Such bills as the Highways Act, the bill to consolidate the Railway Act, and the Merchant Shipping Act, which have been up in past sessions without becoming law, will be allowed to remain dormant for the present.

### THE BANK OF HAMILTON

The shareholders of the Bank of Hamilton, at their annual meeting recently held at Hamilton, Ont., once more had the satisfaction of hearing satisfactory reports, indicating the continued prosperity of the bank. With a paid up capital of \$3,000,000 and a reserve fund of \$3,600,000, the profits for the year ending November 30 amounted to \$485,265.49, a decrease of only \$13,000 on the record showing of the previous year. A dividend of 12 per cent. absorbed \$360,000, while \$75,000 was written off for depreciation of securities. \$19,309.62 was transferred to the pension fund, \$25,000 was subscribed to the Patriotic, Red Cross and Relief funds, and \$157,087.62 was carried forward. The bank, on November 30, had \$34,523,827.91 in deposits, and \$3,022,100 of notes in circulation, and its assets, totalling \$44,694,282.59, included \$6,137,684.03 in current coin and Dominion notes, \$100,000 deposited in the central gold reserve, and \$28,319,806.67 in current loans in Canada. Hon. J. S. Hendrie was re-elected president of the bank, and Cyrus A. Birge, vice-president.

### TO CULTIVATE SPECULATORS' LAND

Ottawa, Jan. 30.—The government, it is stated, will appoint a commission to take steps to bring much vacant land held by speculators, railways and the Hudson's Bay Company under cultivation this year. Particular attention will be paid to land held by U.S. speculators and non-residents, with a view to securing 100,000,000 acres under cultivation. Data is being secured from municipalities in the West and from Grain Growers' associations. It is probable that Principal Black, of Manitoba Agricultural College, and E. N. Hopkins, of Moose Jaw, honorary president of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, will be on the commission.

Wealthy Chicago men are arranging to take complete outfits in this spring to cultivate the land. The foot and mouth disease in the States is holding up immigration to Canada; twenty-five families from Iowa this week were held up.



Painless

When using our latest method, we, the

## New Method Dental Parlors

guarantee to complete dental work of any description without pain, or Refund Your Money

No person too Nervous  
No work too Difficult

There is nothing new in dental-dom that is not in use by this firm

Office:

(Corner Portage and Donald)

Canada's Best and Most Up-to-date Dental Office

WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

### A PRESCRIPTION

Tell me, ladies, do you know  
What will make your cheeks to glow,  
What will light your pretty eyes,  
Give you a seraphic guise?  
Not the powder puff. Alack,  
That will only put you back.  
—Skating on the frozen fen  
And a little bed, at Ten.  
—Toronto News

"You've read 'The Heavenly Twins'?" asked an Englishman of an Irishman. "Yes, I have." "And 'The Sorrows of Satan'?" "Yes." "And have you read 'Looking Backwards'?" "How the devil could I do that?" said Pat.—London Evening Standard.

### FARM GARDEN COMPETITION AWARDS

Some weeks ago it was intimated that a special vegetable garden number would be issued in the early part of February and contributions from readers were asked for. The response was extremely encouraging, and the experiences sent in, for the most part, form the material contained in this issue. All the articles received were written by farmers who have successfully planted and tended a farm garden, thus forming the most valuable kind of reading matter which can be possibly obtained. The contributions were very uniform, and it was an exceedingly difficult task to decide which of them merited the prizes. After due consideration, however, the awards were made as follows:

"The Value of a Farm Garden"—1, R. K. Monkman, Rosetown, Sask.; 2, H. E. Waters, Pense, Sask.; 3, R. J. Webster, Marwayne, Alta.

"Experience with Special Garden Crops"—1, H. L. Davey, Anerly, Sask.; 2, J. R. Lowe, Chaplin, Sask.

"Farmstead Planning"—1, W. T. Jansen, Reid Hill, Alta.; 2, Oswald S. Hodges, Harptre P.O., Willow Bunch, Sask.

"The Value of Windbreaks"—1, R. K. Monkman, Rosetown, Sask.; 2, John Glambeck, Gleichen, Alta.; 3, W. T. Jansen, Reid Hill, Alta.