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## Journal of Commerce

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### Special Articles

The Canadian Harvest of 1915.  
By Ernest H. Godfrey, F.S.S.

Are War Indemnities Futile?  
By W. W. Swanson.

Keep Your Eye on Saskatchewan.  
By Prof. J. W. Macmillan.

Cotton vs. Wheat.  
By Guy Cathcart Pelton.

Conditions in the West.  
By E. Cora Hind.

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### The Idle Senate

SCHMES for reforming the constitution of the Senate of Canada have occasionally been laid before the public, but none of them has been found sufficiently acceptable to be very seriously considered. Doubtless the question will again come up for consideration, and perhaps a system will be devised which will bring the constitution of the upper chamber more into harmony with the principles of popular government. But while this larger question slumbers, there is much need of some improvement in the working plans of the Senate under the present order of things. The upper house is capable of doing much more useful work than it now does, for the body includes in its membership many men of ability and large business experience; but the method of handling the public business at Ottawa does not enable them to give the full benefit of their services to the country. The chief business of the Senate in the early part of the session is to adjourn. The other day, when a somewhat protracted adjournment was moved, a string was attached to the motion, in the form of a statement that the Senators might in the meantime be recalled by telegram. The regularity of this procedure may well be questioned. Objection to the length of the adjournment having been taken a recess for two or three days only was ordered.

The trouble is that in the early part of the session the Senate has little or nothing to do, and in the latter part the Senate is overloaded with business to which it cannot give anything like deliberate consideration.

There are two ways in which this condition might be improved. One is by the Government being prepared to submit a portion of its legislative programme to the Senate before laying it before the House of Commons. There are some Government measures which, under constitutional practice, must first be submitted to the Commons. There may be others which, though perhaps not technically within the same class, are of such a character as make the Commons the body best qualified to deal with them at the first stage. But there are usually a number of measures which, while they deal with matters of importance, are of somewhat routine character, not challenging hostility, but requiring careful examination. General measures of that class might well be prepared in good time, and be submitted to the Senate in the early part of the session. The second way in which improvement might be made is in the method of handling the numerous private bills. With the exception of the divorce bills, which we suppose will have to go to the Senate until the sensible step is taken of having for the rest of the Dominion such capable and efficient divorce courts as are found in the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia, most of the private bills for the in-

corporation of companies and other purposes of a private character, are now sent to the House of Commons. There should be some arrangement whereby many of these bills could take their first stages in the Senate. A joint committee of the Senate and Commons should be able to make such an arrangement respecting the distribution of the private bills, and the Government might endeavor to give the Senate in its early days some public bills of the class we have mentioned. In this way the rush that now takes place at the close of the session might be avoided, and the members of the Senate would be afforded an opportunity to do the useful work which they are both able and willing to perform.

### The New Taxes

THE Minister of Finance has reconstructed his Budget resolution, with a commendable desire to meet some of the many objections raised when his scheme of taxation was first announced. Some of the objections concerning inequalities in relation to capitalization will be removed. The business to be taxed dates from Dec. 31, 1914, instead of August 4, 1914, as first proposed, but the tax is still retroactive as respects the business of 1915.

One of the gravest objections remains—that capital engaged in active business is taxed, while capital in the form of bonds and mortgages is free from the new burdens. A straight and general income tax scheme, with reasonable exemptions, would no doubt have been attended by some difficulties, but one may question whether they would have been greater than those which the Minister will meet in the application of the system now proposed.

### Labor's Growing Power in England

THERE is hardly any feature in the recent history of Great Britain more striking than that which relates to the ever-increasing power of what are usually called "the working classes." That expression is much more frequently used over there than here. In our country practically everybody is a worker, and nearly all will claim a right to be enrolled among the working classes. In England those who are generally classed as workers have a very complete system of organization which they are using in a manner clearly indicating their determination to have a powerful influence in public affairs. For a long time labor has had its representatives in Parliament, and their number is steadily increasing. The Cabinet some years ago opened its doors to Mr. John Burns, who held his position until his differences with his colleagues on the question of the war caused his retirement. Mr.