## OTTAWA LETTERS.

## The Scant Courtesy With Which Petitions are Received.

Mr. Davin Has a Little Tilt With the Speaker and Mr. Oliver.

More Dismissals Without Enquiry or Investigation-Mr. Davies as Leader.

Ottawa, April 22.—Parliament is at work again, but nobody is taking very much stock in what it does. The interest centres around the impending budget, and yesterday's debate on the franchise bill was on the whole a rather tame discussion. Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Davies spoke with their usual energy, but they were both laboring under the disadvantage that no human being on either side subject. This is not altogether due to the fact that the budget is only a few hours away. It is because of the general feeling that the franchise bill for this session is dead and that the talk about it is purely academic. At all events it is not at present regarded as a sufficiently live question for peo-ple to get excited about. Sir Charles produced a formidable array of tesony against the provincial franchise laws as now operated. State-ments and affidavits were read from Manitoba which seem to establish a remarkable condition of affairs there. Mr. Roche, one of the Manitoba members, declared that it was utterly impossible to get a fair election the local lists. In that province the revising officers are not responsible to anyone but the government of the day. They are not judges. They are not even required to be even barristers of any number of years' standing. Yet it is to this electorate that Mr. Laurier proposes to hand over the election of dominion members.

Sir Charles did not directly advocate manhood suffrage, but his remarks were in that direction. It is plain that he would favor a simple act giving the suffrage on residence alone, without property qualification, and requiring registration under a federal law. Had the late government adopted such a system instead of the more cumbrous one of the Dominion Act of 1885, it is probable that the present government would harlly have ventured to re-establish the old way. The present franchise law is admirted to be confusing, cumbrous and expensive. The proposed one is not mu simpler, almost equally expensive and lacks uniformity. When the subect comes up again, which will probably not be this session, some wise member of a constructive turn of mind will probably embody in an mendment the conditions of a more verfect federal franchise act than er the old law or the new bill.

out some disagreement as to facts of Prince Edward Island. Though Mr. Davies has become a minister he has not yet abandoned his somewhat wild and reckless habit of dealing with questions of fact. Mr. Martin was able to correct him on various details round which Mr. Davies had arrayed some of his arguments.

Mr. Laurier announced yesterday a rather astonishing position which he proposed to take. The government will not answer in the house any reflections or charges which are made on less authority than the statement of a member who is prepared to take the responsibility of a formal accu-

This is the way it came up. Mr. Davin, with a Saska chewan paper in his hand, rose when the orders of the day were called, and brought to the attention of the house an extra-ordinary condition of affairs. Briefly, general election Mr. Laurier was elected for the district of Saskatchewan as well as for Quebec. He sat for Quebec, and Saskatchewan became vacant. The liberals offered the sea to Mr. Paterson, controller of cusns, but he did not accept it. Then they quarrelled among themselves. Mr. Sifton, a brother of the minister of the interior, went out to make peace, but he left the people in a worse quarrel than ever. Then Mr. Laurier sent a distinguished member of the civil service from the Indian He was instructed to make a deal of some kind. The two candidates were Mr. Davis and Mr. Newland. The official went to Prince Albert and called upon Mr. Davis, who was a disappear to him. He told Mr. Davis nger to him. He told Mr. Davis that he was a messenger from Mr. Laurier, and that his mission was to arrange terms of settlement. He prod that Mr. Davis should retire. If he could not see his way clear to do so, steps would be taken for the retirement of Mr. Newland. Mr. Newland would be provided with an office tioned who would be retired to make

Mr. Davis's at Prince Albert. They are brothers, but they do not belong to the same political party. The Mr. Davis to whom the messages were Davis to whom the messenger went was the wrong Mr. Davis. He is a ther or any other candidate who might run in the government interest. This Mr. Davis gave the whole story

Mr. Newlands did retire, though he has not yet received his office. Perhaps this is because Mr. Davis was not elected by acclamation. One Mr. McPhall stepped into the breach and McPhail stepped into the breach and prosecuted a fierce cumpaign against the right Mr. Davis. It will be reared that at the end of the fight

in the proceedings, and the government again intervened in the interest of harmony. This time Mr. Laurier did not send an official. He brought Mr. McPhail to Ottawa, where an arrangement was reached. The terms of the agreement were set forth in a statement which is supported by a statutory declaration. They were

briefly these:
1. Mr. McPhail was to be the next liberal candidate in Saskatchewan, and the government was to recognize him as such.

2. Mr. Davies was to pay over Mr. McPhail a sum of mo 3. The patronage was to be divided between the two factions. party was to be represented on a joint committee consisting of five persons. No appointments were to be made, and no contracts let in the constituency without the consent of four mem ers of the committee.

4. The petition against Mr. Davis was to be abandoned.

Mr. Davis read a statutory declara tion by Mr. Donaldson and Mr. Fish, who swore that they had seen the greement in written form and that it purported to be a compact between the government and Mr. McPhail.

Such were the charges made by Mr. Davin, who, however, declared that he had no further knowledge of them than he obtained from the affidavits and the statements of the parties acquainted with the facts. He took no further responsibility in the matter than to bring the statements before the house and allow the ministers and other parties concerned to make their own statements. Mr. Laurier refused at first to make a statement: Finally he declared that he had no personal knowledge of the transaction, and had not met Mr. McPhail. But this, of course, does not signify, because Mr. Laurier would have too much sense to transact an agreement of this kind in his own person. The only other statement that the premier made was that Mr. Newlands had not been appointed to an office. Nobody said he had. Mr. Davis made no statement regard to the agreement, though Mr. Davin asked him to do so. He merely replied to the charges by saying that the petition against him wa not withdrawn, but failed for want of evidence. This was another quibble. Everybody knows that a petition once If a petitioner abandons his case, all he can do is to allow it to collapse for want of evidence. If there was such a bargain as is alleged, the result would have been just what Mr. Davis admitted it was. So there the case stands.

But it is interesting to note the at

titude of the government. Mr. Laurier took occasion to say that he and his colleagues would not pay any attention to statements based on newspaper charges. Not even the publica tion of an affidavit would call forth a contradiction, when brought to his attention in the house. Nothing less than a formal charge made by a member in his place, who solemnly affirms that he believed it to be true, would be noticed. This, as Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster pointed out was an entirely new position. It before and never ought to be. case such as this one, it would be matter of weeks or months, and quire an outlay of a great deal noney for an opposition member to atisfy himself as to the facts so that he could make a charge and affirm his belief in its truth. If the charges were made, witnesses would have to be brought thousands of miles and an investigation begun which might occupy months of time. If the story is of true it would not take the minsters and the member many minutes tions which might set the whole story at rest. It was surely due from the ministers to themselves and to the country to say whether the statements were true or not. Certainly member of the department must have known whether an official went Prince Albert on the mission stated. Surely Mr. Laurier, who is spending thousands of dollars to establish, as he claims, the non-partizanship of the officers of the service are employed in making political deals for the gov-

ernment. During the discussion an attempt was made to shut the whole thing off on a question of order. Mr. Davin was told by the ministers, and the speaker seemed disposed at first to sustain them, that he could not make his statement and tell his story without first giving a notice of resolution, and then proceeding with formal allegations. But he is an old parlialegations. But he is an old parliamentarian and was able to show by Bourinot that he was pursuing a course that many had taken before him. The speaker at length conceded that Mr. Davin might proceed in the way he was doing against the government, though not against the private members. He could not well decide otherwise since he had himself, when a member of the opposition, preferred charges against Sir Adolphe Caron in precisely the same way that Mr. Davin was proceeding. As a mat-Mr. Davin was proceeding. As a mat-ter of fact, though it was not shown in the discussion, charges were made against ministers and members scores of times in the last parliament, and only on four occasions were they presented in a formal way as now required by the Laurier government. These occasions were in 1891, when Mr. Tarte presented formal charges gainst Sir Hector Langevin and Thomas McGreevy; and Mr. Cameron made charges against Mr. Cochrane of Northumberland. In 1892, when Mr. Edgar preferred charges against L. A. Cow, and at a later when a charge was presented against

Ottawa, April 23.—Some day a reformer will arise in parliament and sweep away the sacred privilege of petition. It is an old time right and once had a deep meaning. The people could not appear in person and make their demands known to parquest in the form of a humble pray-er. But times have changed. The member in parliament is now a hum-

ple do not have to go to him. He comes to them. All the matters which the citizens would bring as suppliant the attention of parliament by petition, they now as masters force upon the attention of members and ministers in other ways.

Nevertheless the practice of forwarding petitions goes on. It is part-ly because of the tradition in its favor, partly because there is something spectacular about it which pleases and possibly because it seems to indicate a considerable volume of public opinion when a huge petition is presented. Perhaps also a petition may afford a basis upon which a member may introduce a bill or make

But if the petitioners could be present in the house when their request is granted, and could follow it through its course, they would be apt to lose faith in the method. When the speaker calls for petitions there are ually not many members in the house. It is the first order of business and is rushed through with the greatest possible expedition. Member after member rises and states that he has a petition from a number of residents of Brown's Flat or some other neighborhood, praying for a certain thing. He gives it to a page, who carries it to the clerk's table, and the document goes into a basket.

It is formally received afterwards and then finds its way to a place where its fellows are piled up in er more seen by mortal eye. No one knows what the petitioners say in support of their requests. No one knows or cares anything more about the prayer. It disappears and is heard of no more, like those petitions whch in eastern countries are sent up in kites or burnt in flames in the hope that they are forwarded to some national deity, or like the letters which confiding children send to Santa Claus by way of the fire place. The only purpose served is in the an-nouncement that a large number of people want a certain thing and this could be furnished in a less circuitous and dilatory manner. As it is, an amount of time equal to two or three days of the session is wasted on this ritualistic performance.

two petitions presented yesterday by members from Toronto were said to have contained the names of 35,000 residents, praying that bicycles should be carried free on railway trains. Besides this formidable array a petition from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and several other bodies in Kingston, praying that parliament should pass a law prohibiting the exhibition of the kinetiscope pictures of the Corbett-Fitzsin fight, was a modest affair. But if there is any virtue in the petition. It belongs to those which come from re-presentative bodies of men and women and which represent the matured opinion of an organization.

Mr. Martin of Prince Edward Island took occasion vesterday to refer once more to the operation of the spoils system in his province. He moved for a return of dismissals and observed that no less than three offimiles of his home. The government sald Mr. Martin, professes to be "Mb-eral as it is in England." It is realted States. Mr. Mulock denies the charge. He says that no officer has been dismissed but for good reason. But what he considered a good reason was not made clear. Several other questioners discovered yesterday, as had been done many times before, that officers are being dismissed every day on charges of partizanship, without investigation and without a hearing. Time after time Mr. Mulock or some other minister admits that Mr. so and so has been dismissed on charges made by some liberal mem-ber or defeated candidate, which charges have not been enquired into and may or may not be well founded.

Mr. Davin and the speaker came into a slight conflict of opinion yes-terday. Premier Haultain of the Northwest Territories is here asking for a greater measure of home rule. years claiming the right of self-government for the western provinces, brought forward a motion for papers in that interest. Mr. Oliver, the mem-ber for Alberta, who seems to be somewhat jealous of Mr. Davin, spoke to attack Mr. Davin and make reflections upon his conduct and his speech. Mr. Davin, in a somewhat spirited rejoinder, suggested that Mr. Oliver exhibited "a miserable insect spirit." The speaker said it was unparliamentary. Mr. Davin protested mildly but the speaker insisted on his ruling. "Shades of Disraeli, shades of Gladstore," said Davin. "What would these statesmen have thought if they had been called to order in the imperial house of commons for using such words. I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I rejoice that we have risen to a height to which Disraell or Gladstone never could have attained." The speaker has laid down the rule that no member may speak of another in the house in a less polite way than he would display in social life. So now we are to have drawing room debates, but Mr. Davin got in a pleasant remark later when Mr. Casey, who, as usual, made a speech, referred to Mr. Davin as having been bitten by a gad fiy. Mr. Davin rose to a point of order. The only person who had annoyed him, he said, was Mr. Oliver, and, according to the speaker's ruling, it was out of order to call Mr. Oliver a gad fly. "I do not object to the remark," said Mr. Davin, "but I am anxious that the speaker's ruling should be re-

He was alone of all the ministers. The premier, he said, was engaged in very important business and so were motion which might call for a con-troversy should stand over. Towards six o'clock, Sir Charles Tupper's motion regarding the appointments re-commended by him after the late elections being reached, Mr. Davies was willing that Sir Charles should not

at that hour in the day. He was very considerate towards the leader of the opposition, and also to another who had a motion ready. They both expressed their gratitude towards Mr. Davies for his willingness to let their motion stand in good place on the order paper, but they were willing to discuss them now. Finally Mr. Davies abandoned role of a generous sovereign, and explained that he wanted to get away and attend an important meeting, and so would be much obliged if member would not press their motions, would allow him to disappear. certainly, if you put it on ground," said Sir Charles, and business dropped.

In the evening, Mr. MacLean explained what he wanted to do to help the railway companies. Mr. MacLean has had a large railway bill before the house for some years. It is intended to regulate all manner of things concerning the accommodation of passengers, and passenger rates He could not get ahead very fast with the whole scheme and now he is taking it up by fragments. His bill this year is intended to compel the railways to fold up the upper berth of ing it, so that the occupant of lower berth may have the whole tion. He is also asking that comps should make a return of all passes issued. He says if the railways carry nobody free they would not be obliged to charge so much for ordinproviding for an easier way to carry water across the railway track. At present a land owner who wishes to carry water across the track is ob-liged to appeal to the railway com-mittee of the privy council, which is a very expensive and slow method His scheme provides for the appointment of arbitrators, and the report of local engineers, and only in the case other means are the privy council authorities to take action, and only by the appointment of a referee.

appearance of ex-Speaker Peter White in the city revives the statement that he may become leader of the Ontario opposition. He is not a member of either house, but since the day he became a speaker, has taken so strong a position in public life that it is deemed essential to give him a high rank in the party councils. The while he is chairman of the Eastern Ontario district for the liberal conservative party, and members of the opposition side of the house have hoped that some by-election might bring him back to the chamber. opposition contingent from Ontario is in need of an energetic, sagacious and generally regarded as the man best adapted for the purpose. His posi-tion as speaker in the last house kept him free from any of the disagreements that arose in the party. It is true that after his term was over he expressed his disapproval of the re-medial bill, but that is no longer an in the party. A few of the younger Ontario members on the opposition side are very aggressive and able men. In a short time we may expect organized into a stronger and more effective political body than could have been anticipated a few months

The conditions required for membership in the corps which is to represent Canada at Her Majesty's jubilee have been made public. The indivi-duals selected, whether non-commissioned officers or privates, must possess a certificate from a royal school of military instruction. They must be not less than 5 feet 7 inches in height, smart and soldier-like in looks, and without beards. If cavalry men, they must be good riders. The pay allowed is to be that of their respective rights, but in no case higher than 75 cents a day. The pay is to commence three days before embarkation, and conclude one day after disembarkation. An allowance of 25 cents a day for the time spent in England will be

MR. FOSTER'S SPEECH. An outline of Mr. Foster's review of the budget has already appeared in the Sun's Ottawa despatches. Per-haps the most effective part of this speech was that in which Mr. Foster read the undertakings of the minister before the election, and contrasted them with their subsequent performance. This is not ancient history. The pledges were given immediately be-fore the late election. Some of them were broken immediately afterwards. Not even the excuse of long lapse of time can be offered for the repudiation. It is really not a change of opinion, as Mr. Foster showed, but a breach of a solemn contract made between Mr. Laurier and other leading men of his party on one side and the people on the other side, who accepted their terms. Take for example, a specific pledge to make coal free. No contract can be considered more bindcontract can be considered more bind-ing than a pledge given on public plat-forms in the face of the electors by a minister asking for support in order that he may put these pledges into practice. Mr. Laurier asked the people interested in free coal to make him premier on the terms which he proposed. The terms included a compact that coal would be placed on the free list. The people performed their part of the contract. He has repudiated his. Not only that, but at the time in which he made this bargain he made another with other people interested in coal duties that coal would not be made free. He is, therefore, in the position of a man who has made two contracts opposed to each other, one of which he intended to break. This is one of many instances

There was a distinct undertaking on Mr. Laurier's part that he would re duce the expenditure by at least three million dollars. In this matter there is perhaps some room for the excuse that he did not know how much it would cost to run the country. In fact, the only plea that can be made is the plea of ignorance. Mr. Laurier can say, "I did not know." "I thought the tories were extravagant. I thought we could run the country for less

ey. I find on looking into the that the tories were better busi-men than we. I find that we cannot govern the country as cheaply two or three millions a year more under our management than it would have cost under our opponents. wish it to be understood that pledges were made in ignorance the facts, and that we fall short the capacity of our predecessors. But, as Mr. Foster points out, distinct pledge as to policy is some thing different. These are pledges which the government has power to carry out. The ministers know that they can put coal on the free list. They know that they have solemnly agreed to do it. They know also that they have solemnly agreed not to do it. They know themselves to be the country now knows them to be, a company of contract makers, and therefore in this particular matter a company of swindlers.

Mr. Foster dwelt somewhat the moral effect of such a condition of things. It is a public disaster that men in high responsibility should be statement. It destroys faith in public men. It causes the honest citizen to suppose that the whole system of government under which he lives based on fraud and falsehood. It causes distrust in the whole adminis-trative machinery. Every man in the any wrong advantage of a govern-ment which is itself dishonest. It destroys respect for law and a disregard for the duties of citizenship. the kind of thing that breeds lawless ness and revolution. A citizen may well feel that he has no public duties toward a government which has no obligation to carry out its own contracts. The discussion of the late and present attitude of ministers led up to some sharp retorts. For example Mr. Foster quoted the elegant poem which Sir Richard Cartwright wont to bring to the attention of the house, in which he showed that it was an excellent thing to be a three-tailed bashaw, but greater still to be a minister's son-in-law. This referred to some appointment alleged to be made by the late Sir Leonard Tilley. Mr. Foster asked Sir Richard whether a three-tailed bashaw was better than a minister's son, referring, of course the appointment of young Cartwright over the heads of the officers of the Northwest mounted police. Sin Richard was a little nettled, and said, "You appointed your cousin," to which Mr. Foster replied, "Well, but I never sang the song of the bashaw.'

Frequent interruptions from Colonel Domville, who shouted "carried," at ties on Canadian products than the intervals, led Mr. Foster to remark Canadian duty, when reduced, will be that his friend seemed to have all he could carry. A more sensational incident occurred over an interruption by Mr. McMulien, who, when Mr. Foster was referring to the breaking do not have thieves, anyway." Mr. Foster said he did not catch the words distinctly, and asked Mr. McMullen to "Does he say they do not have thieves? Why, his own leader hoarded

knowing afterwards that it was stole to use for his own campaign purposes. Today he sits there after the fact has been proved, and makes no proposition of restoring the stolen cash to the people from whom it was taken! thieves! Why his leader slept with the Pacaud, and Pacaud told upon him.' Here Mr. Foster's voice was drown-

ed in a burst of applause, during which he remanied pointing to the leader of the government, a few feet away, and directly before him. When order was restored and Mr. Foster's voice could again be heard, he was asking Mr. McMullen whether wished to know anything more about thieves, and informing him that the time was coming when more revelations would come to light.

Mr. Foster was effective when he was dealing with the compact me by Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. Mulock with the patrons. These ministers had appealed to the patrons at the patron meetings and through the press, and in public and private letters, declaring that the platforms of the liberal and patron parties were identical. In ways these leaders agreed with the patrons to carry out the patron programme when they should have power. Mr. Mulock, as a guarantee of good faith, had when a member of the house, denounced the governor general's salary, demanded the abolition of the senate, moved against free railway passes to members, and introduced a bill condemning the appointment to office of member parliament to omce of members of parliament or persons who had been members of parliament within two years after they ceased to sit in the house. Mr. Mulock is now a minister and has power to carry out this pro-gramme. Has he taken a step to gramme. Has he taken a storeducing the governor general's ary? Has he done anything about free passes? Has he made the appointment of members of parlian a criminal offence? Not at all. The money voted for the vice-regal expenses is as large as ever. The estimate to the high commissioner's expenses is not reduced. Membe and supporters of the government have their free passes in their pets. Mr. Mulock has himself, as minister of the crown, committed what he called a criminal offence by appointing fellow members and sup-porters to lucrative offices. One member of the house had disappeared into the public service. He took office and salary because he wanted it. The ministers gave him office and salary because they wanted to get rid of him and because they wanted to get rid of him and because they knew that he was pledged to vote if he remained against an important part of the ministerial policy.

Richard Cartwright declared that he adopted the patron tariff platfor The patron platform required in on cotton. It required the free ad-mission of tweeds and woollens, and they were placed on the 35 per cent.

duty on cement was increased. It required free oil and the oil duty remained at 5 cents a gallon. The duty has been reduced by one whole cent and on Mr. Davies' figures they are still 100 per cent. The platform called for an increase of duty on luxuries. The new tariff, under the preferential clause, reduced the duty on silverware, jewellry, silks and other articles consumed by the rich. It is true that the duty has been reduced in some industries, but coal, which the ministers declared to be the base of all industry, has been kept as before. The duty on iron has been reduced, but the government professes to have made that right by increased bounties, though the system of bounties was their particular abhorence when they sat in opposition. And while the new tariff gives the agricultural implement men cheaper raw pretty well maintained. The late government reduced the duty on farm machinery to 20 per cent, and this ministry has left it where it was.

Mr. Foster intimated that Sir Richard had been over borne on the tariff programme. He had intended to carry out his undertakings. He had expected to be finance minister; his party did not allow him to have charge of the finance department. His associates in the ministry had made im swallow a tariff that probably was not to his liking.

"And after all," said Mr. Foster, 'he is an English gentleman and a knight, and I believe that he does not sit comfortably in his seat and remember those broken pledges.

the effect of the preferential clauses of the new tariff. The resolution, as it appears in the official statement, is delightfully vague. Mr. Fielding was not able to give a very clear statement as of its meaning. Mr. Laurier's remarks in further explanation recalled the essay on the subject of 'Fog as an illuminating medium. The prime minister does not think that the lower duty applies to Germany and Belgium and France. In fact, he says he is sure it does not. He knows, or thinks he knows, that it has already gone into effect on English goods. The resolution calls for a report of the controller as to whether the most favored nation is entitled to the privileges, but the report of the controller has made no report of England or any other country as yet. It may be taken for granted, however, that most European coun tries will come under the rule, for nearly all of them impose lower duon their products imported into this country. It comes therefore to this that while the tariff professes to be It comes therefore to this a pro-English tariff, it is no more pro-English than it is pro-German or pro-French or pro-Russian or pro-any other country in Europe

Moreover, as Mr. Foster points out. it gives these particular advantages of one-eighth at present and one-quar-ter reduction a year hence to coun-tries on the bash of their present tariff and gains nothing at all for Canada in return. England agrees to argued that England is our own country and has always treated us well, we remember that she treats every other country, domestic and foreign, as well as she does us. But in any case we have received no favore and controlled the state of th in any case we have received no fa-vors and are receiving none from those European countries which it is proposed to put on a level with free trade England. What is the value of all this outburst of loyal profession when we do the same thing for France and all other countries as we do for the one nation to which we belong and the only one nation which admits our products free. And what is the value of these protestations coming from a minister who at the same time declares an intention of disregarding an imperial treaty.

Ottawa, April 24. Ottawa, April 26.-Members of parliament and others gathered about he capital are still talking tariff. It has required two or three days to size up the new tariff bill, and even yet there is some doubt as to its exact bearings, especially in regard to the preferential clauses. Whether there is anything or not in the objec tion that the immediate application of the favored clauses to England is not constitutional, the fact remains that at present the preferential clauses are not applied by the custom officers to other European countries, and it is on this feature of the bill that the most doubt exists. Some members contend that the tariff applies to Germany and Belgium by reason of imperial treaties. Sir ports the contention by quotations from imperial opinion. There is no made to especially favor Great Britain the imperial government would have objected, as it did before, when Mr. Foster proposed to put in this provision. The government thinks that the difficulty has been got over by taking in all other countries which treat Canada as well as she treats

that while the ministers claim that Great Britain is not favored above Germany and other continental countries, they also claim that the treaty vill not apply to the other countries. Nevertheless it is undoubtedly the case that if the duties in the other countries are as low as the Canadian countries must be included. So near as I can make out, neither the German duty, nor those of Belgium and Holland, nor those of Switzerland and Sweden, or Denmark or Italy, are higher on Canadian goods sent to those countries than the duties we levy on the products from those na-

So far as the Canadian trade is concerned, it does not matter in the ast whether continental nations are taken in by virtue of an imperial treaty or by the terms of the bill. The resolutions do not appear to give the government any option in the mat-

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