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JAMES McISAAC, Editor & Proprietor

SESSIONAL NOTES.

But little progress has yet been made with the business of the session. The House does not sit on Mondays or Saturdays; so that only four days of the week are devoted to the affairs of the Province. Each day's sitting commences at 3 o'clock p. m. and, so far, adjourns before six o'clock. It will thus be seen that four days of less than three hours each constitute the maximum of time devoted, each week, to public business. It surely cannot be said that this is pushing strenuously to the limit.

After routine proceedings, on Tuesday Feb. 22nd, a number of petitions on which to found bills were presented. Bills following in the wake of these petitions were introduced and read a first time. This done a bill to consolidate the acts relating to the court of chancery, which had previously passed through the initial stage, was read a second time and committed to a committee of the whole House. The bill is a very long one and several afternoon sittings have been devoted to it, and is not finished.

After prayers had been said and the Journal read on Wednesday, Mr. Mathieson, Leader of the Opposition, formally asked the Premier the following questions, of which he had previously given notice: (1) Has any memorial or writing respecting the claims of this Province against Canada been prepared by this Government or by any committee thereof or by any committee appointed by this House at the instance of the Government since the 30th day of September A. D. 1908. (2) Has any correspondence taken place between this Government or any person or persons acting on its behalf and the Government of Canada or any member or officer thereof respecting such claims or any of them. (3) Have any Orders in Council been made or passed in the above matter. (4) Have any and what delegation or delegations proceeded to Ottawa or elsewhere respecting said claims. (5) To lay on the table of this House all such memorials, correspondence, minutes of Council and other writings or certified copies thereof, with a detailed statement in writing with dates of the proceedings taken by or on behalf of this Government to present said claims or any of them to the Government of Canada and to press for the settlement of the same and also an itemized statement of the cost incurred up to the present time in relation thereto. Mr. Mathieson requested an answer only to the last clause No. 5, and the Leader of the Government promised that the information asked for would be laid before the House.

The mere mention of the Court of Chancery suggests slow progress. The proverbial slowness of proceeding in this court is exemplified in the case of "Jarndice vs. Jarndice," as all readers of "Bleak House," will remember. Rightly or wrongly, proceedings in chancery suits are generally associated in the minds of litigants with much red tape and interminable adjournments and postponements. The very chancery bill before the Legislature, seems to fit in with these pre-

conceived notions. It has been under consideration in committee day after day but is not yet finished.

When the House got down to business on Thursday, a number of quite pertinent questions were asked by members of the Opposition. Among them were the following:

Mr. James Kennedy asked the Hon. the Commissioner of Agriculture to table all invoices and correspondence from Geo. Carter & Co., as shown to be expended for seeds on Page 82 of Provincial Farm Account. (2) Table a return showing account sales for all farm products sold as shown on same page. (3) Table a return showing how the sum of \$34.67 appearing on page 84 to have been paid for seeds and expenses demonstrating. (4) Table a return showing how the sum of \$157.00 appearing on page 84 to have been paid for postage.

Mr. Delaney asked the Hon. Commissioner of Public Works to table a return showing (1) How the sum of \$500 appearing from the Public Works Report ending Sept. 30th, 1909 have been paid Chas. Bowness (2) For what services were the moneys paid?

Mr. Dobbie asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table of the House all contracts, notices correspondence and other papers respecting right-of-way from Darnley Point Road to Pond Road for which the sum of \$555.00 appears in last Public Works Report to have been paid to Peter MacNutt; was the said right-of-way obtained by purchase or by expropriation? Upon what basis was the price fixed, when was the purchase made, when was the money paid?

Mr. M. Kennedy asked the Commissioner of Public Works to lay on the table of the House a detailed statement showing how the amount of \$1909.70 paid to Prowse Bros. Ltd. for clothing, blankets, &c., for the Hospital for the Insane and Infirmary appearing on page 152 of Public Works Report is made up; was contract let by tender or otherwise? Table all correspondence invoices and other documents connected with same.

Hon. Mr. Richards and Hon. Mr. Cumiskey promised that the information required would be furnished.

Mr. Mathieson asked the Leader of the Government what steps had been taken by the Government towards filling the vacancy in the Cardigan district. The Premier naively replied that the Government had not yet had any official information of a vacancy in that district. "Not to put too fine a point upon it," as the late Mr. Pecksniff would say, this was certainly verging on the limit. It is the privilege of Mr. Speaker sometimes to shield himself behind the technicality that he has not, in his official capacity, been formally notified of a vacancy in a particular constituency. But for the Leader of the Government to take refuge behind any such subterfuge, when it is well known that the vacancy has been caused by himself appointing the sitting member to an office of emolument under the Crown, is carrying the joke altogether too far. Mr. Mathieson did not fail to tell the Leader of the Government that it was the Premier's own appointment of the late member to office that created the vacancy. Mr. Mathieson then and there gave formal notice of the existing vacancy.

On Friday afternoon, petitions were presented, questions were asked and some bills were advanced a stage. The Premier presented a

message from the Lieutenant Governor conveying the report of the Department of Justice on the statutes passed by this Legislature in 1909. An important feature of this report was the opinion expressed by the Minister of Justice that the bill to prohibit agents from taking orders for liquor, being in restraint of inter-provincial trade, was beyond the competence of the Legislature to pass, but he did not recommend that the bill be disallowed as in his opinion the question as to its validity might be left to the operation of the courts.

The bill to amend the city of Charlottetown incorporation act, was read a second time and committed to committee of the whole House. Several amendments to the city charter and the water works and Sewerage acts are asked for, and naturally, considerable debate arises. In the first place, Mr. Mathieson objected that members had not had time since the bill was introduced to consider the bearing of the several clauses. Authority is sought to issue \$23,000 debentures to retire school debentures coming due; and also to issue debentures of \$15,000 for permanent works in addition to the \$95,000 already authorized for that purpose. Regarding the right of appeal to citizens, in front of whose premises permanent side walks are laid down, Mr. Mathieson contended that this right be preserved. He pointed out that our courts exist for the purpose of remedying wrongs, and no one should be arbitrarily deprived of the right of appeal, properly sought. Mr. Palmer concurred in this view. The amendments asked for include, among other things, a proposition to abolish the small salary paid to Water Commissioners. It surely seems unfair to undertake, immediately after a civic election to summarily wipe out these small indemnities, inasmuch as the Commissioners ran their election in good faith, not expecting any change in this particular. It is noticeable that nothing is said, in these proposed amendments to the city charter, about introducing ballot voting in civic elections; although the present Mayor's "Mayorality Policy," strongly approved of this manner of voting. We shall refer to this matter later.

Before the House rose on Friday, the Premier tabled the report of the Education Commission. It is a bulky, exhaustive type written document. The report, in a printed form, has not yet been presented; so that it cannot be discussed as fully as it might be. It was noticeable however, that the Patriot had a lengthy review of this report on Friday. Even before the report was submitted to the Legislature, the Patriot with its review was on the street. This is a new style of conducting public business; submitting reports on important public questions to the Government organs, before placing them before the people's representatives. The commission was appointed to deal with a question of vital importance to the tax-payers, and the people's representatives in the Legislature should be the first to know what conclusions had been arrived at, not the special organs of the Government, for the time being. Consolidation seems to be the dominant feature of the commissioner's report. Two plans of consolidation are outlined. Scheme A places the cost for teachers salaries at \$189,850, and the cost of vans at \$52,580. Total \$242,430. The second scheme places the salaries at \$179,500, and the cost of vans at \$199,300. The cost of the present system with the increases recommended would be \$188,575. The commission did not recommend any way and means to raise the money to meet the increased cost necessary. In answer to a question by the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier said that the Government did not intend to introduce any legislation this session implementing the report of the Education Commission unless perhaps, something in the way of cheaper school-books. The House then adjourned till Tuesday afternoon March 1st.

At the present time of writing the naval debate is still going on. The government is in a quandary. It has one policy for Quebec and one for Ontario. As Mr. George Cowan the militant member for Vancouver said in his recent speech Sir Wilfrid Laurier's proposal is a cross eyed one. No one knows which way it is looking. That there is grave dissension in the ranks of government supporters is evident and with Mr. Broderick seriously ill and the Premier himself confined to his bed there is a state of governmental chaos never duplicated in Canada.

There is likely to be a warm discussion shortly on the question of the removal of the surtax on German goods entering Canada. The manner in which this surtax was removed was spectacular. Not a word went forth from the government camp as to the intention. Mr. Armstrong of West Lambton who has long been the

advocate of better trade relations with Germany when the removal of the surtax was announced asked if the government had taken into consideration the side of the Canadian manufacturers. To this Mr. Fielding replied that the surtax was not a protective measure. It is worth pointing out however that the only thing which stands in the way of Canada getting the full advantage of the minimum tariff of Germany is the French treaty which has proved so far of no value to the Dominion and is not likely to prove in the future. But for this trade convention Canada would have the full benefit of the lowest German tariff and not be restricted to a certain number of articles dictated by the German authorities. Again this seems to be another example of the unbusiness-like dealings of this government. That it is the time for a change everyone recognizes. Until that change comes Canada will drift on the waves of chance without a man at the helm who cares enough about her future destiny to furl sail in time of stress.

Dominion Parliament.

The constant waste of public money on unnecessary public works has been brought to the attention of the House of Commons of late, but it is a matter which does not receive that attention in parliament which its importance deserves. The causes of the smaller wastes are visible in every constituency. Frequently they are in the shape of wharves which accommodate no traffic because there is none to accommodate. So soon as a young supporter of the government gets elected to the House of Commons he forthwith has one able political ambition and that is to secure for his constituency a public building, irrespective of the fact whether the constituency desires or needs the same. As a result the estimates each year are crowded with wharves here and breakwaters there dotted all over the various provinces which will be of no practical use. Then when a large question like the building of the Georgian Bay canal comes up the Government throws up its hands and states that it has no money for such undertakings. More money has been wasted during the Laurier regime on petty works for patronage only than would build two such fleets as are now proposed.

It is safe to assume that this criminal waste will go merrily on. It is part and parcel of the Laurier policy and it is only when men like Mr. F. D. Monk bring the matter to the attention of the country as a matter of public duty that the callous disregard of the public interest comes home. There has been much of recent years to cause the people of Canada to lose faith in the gang of unbusinesslike politicians who are now steering the ship of state. Canada is being made a dear country to live in, and this is due almost entirely to taxation per head greater than in the United States to provide the necessary wharves breakwaters post-offices and custom houses all over the Dominion. If this policy were brought to an end it would enable parliament to remit to the moderately paid people, who really have to earn the money which the government spends with such a lavish hand, a considerable portion of the taxes that are now a burden upon their industry, and a check upon their advancement in comfort.

But in elaborating its scheme of wasteful expenditures the government has a system which defies investigation. There is a committee of parliament which has the privilege of dealing with the public accounts. This committee's activities have been rendered null and void for several reasons. First there is a government majority on the committee which is ever ready to come to the defence of the administration and block enquiry. Then the chairman is always a man who has made himself valuable to the Liberal party by his partisan activities in and out of parliament. These are the main reasons. The government also sees to it that there is always on hand a Liberal member who is also an astute lawyer and the blocking system goes on with such skill and regularity that it is seldom the opposition can break down the well built defences and get to the root of transactions.

It must not be forgotten that it is the money of the people which this government is spending. Once the public really awakes to the fact that it is their own dollars and cents which go to feed the party mill, then the time for a change will have arrived. At the present time Canada is too busily engaged in making money to care a great deal about waste, and illicit expenditures of the government.

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The Lumsden investigation came on the scene twice on the 22nd in the committee on the 24th, when the inquiry into the Ribicombé Sawdust wharf was resumed. Mr. O. S. Crockett who conducted the examination brought out the fact that Mr. Loggie had met Mr. Thomas Murray in August 1908 and had been advised by Murray that the Lumsden committee should nominate the

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The debate on the naval service bill was resumed late Monday afternoon, Feb. 21st, after a variety of miscellaneous business had been transacted by the House. At the opening Mr. Graham introduced a bill to amend the railway act. It is a collection of miscellaneous enactments. One of these is to modify the rule that when a locomotive is running backwards a brakeman must stay on the end of the tender. When shunting this is necessary, but occasions arise when it is necessary to run miles, when there is no danger to the public, and when in cold weather the rule is very hard on the brakeman. By another clause the present enactment submitting working agreements between telephone companies to the review of the railway commission is extended to telegraph companies.

The naval service debate was resumed by Mr. Warburton, who argued against the reality of the German peril. British Dreadnoughts are more formidable than German Dreadnoughts, he said, and the triple alliance is weakening, so that as regards alliances Britain's position is better than Germany's.

Mr. G. H. Cowan, Vancouver, led an able speech in which he pointed out that the word "may" in clause 18 contains the further meaning that the Government may not put the fleet at the disposal of the Admiralty if it chooses; such a course would mean a withdrawal from the empire, the independence which Sir Wilfrid Laurier has avowed to be his aspiration. He further argued that the clause alters the constitutional position of Canada, the B. N. A. act containing a clause preserving to the King the command in chief of the naval forces of Canada.

The inquiry into the causes of Mr. H. D. Lumsden's resignation of his post as chief of the Transcontinental made its real start Tuesday morning, 22nd, with a curious development. Mr. Lumsden made his appearance and announced that he had engaged no counsel and desired none. The Conservative members of the committee thereupon argued that counsel should be engaged to represent the public. The Transcontinental railway commission being represented by Mr. R. C. Smith, K. C. The Liberal majority rejected this and insisted on taking Mr. Lumsden's statement. The Conservatives then asked for an adjournment to enable them to consider their position but this was refused. While by no means certainly it is distinctly a possibility that they may take the ground that they cannot continue to sit on a tribunal in which only one side is represented by counsel. The other side, they insisted strongly, is that of the public, Mr. Lumsden's personal cause weighing lightly against that interest.

The statements which Mr. Lumsden put in respect to some remarkable changes of level classification. For example, on one station the resident engineer's report showed 1159 cubic yards of rock, 6648 of 100 rock and 35,132 of common excavation. Mr. Lumsden's note, when he visited the ground was that it was "all sand and gravel, very few stones." Again, on another station the return was 20,207 yards solid rock, 18,400 loose rock and 17,453 common excavation. His note was that there may have been a few yards of solid rock and about 150 yards of loose rock, but the rest was common excavation, so that about 40,000 yards of common excavation had been classified as solid rock or loose rock. Another return showed 4454 yards of rock, 4884 yards of loose rock and 6494 yards of common excavation; and his note showed 10 yards of rock, 1,000 yards of loose rock and the rest common excavation.

Yet another return showed 4322 yards rock, 1850 yards loose rock and 1223 yards common excavation, whereas his notes allowed only 600 yards of loose rock, all the rest being common excavation. In a further case the return showed 6600 yards of loose rock and 4400 of common excavation, while his note said "all loose common excavation, may have been 50 yards loose rock." There were dozens and dozens of such instances.

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counsel, and this was rejected by a vote of 100 to 67. Impressed with the threat that the Conservative members would withdraw if the conditions were made too unfair the Liberal members of the committee receded from the earlier attitude and assented to the principle that a lawyer should be retained to represent the public interest as distinguished from that of the Transcontinental commission. Another decision was that the engineers named by Mr. Lumsden as those in whom he had lost confidence should be notified to defend themselves.

When the house met the report of the committee recommending the appointment of counsel "to represent the committee" was presented. It is further ordered that the members of the committee on the said committee shall have the right to select the counsel so to be appointed and that such counsel shall be instructed to protect the interests of the people of Canada in the said investigation. In moving this Mr. Loggie will now be clearly that the commission and the government itself are virtually on trial, and are virtually concerned in proving to be false every suggestion of wrong doing or blundering. It would be only another gold brick if there was not to be a clear and definite understanding that the minority of the committee should have the selection of the counsel who was to represent the public.

"No," said Mr. Fielding, who was leading the house. Mr. H. Clarke said that the committee had been unanimous in making the report which Mr. Lennox now desired to amend. The amendment was a reflection on the committee. The majority of the committee, not the minority, should govern. Mr. Barker replied that the motion was satisfactory as it was. The division was then taken, the vote standing 100 to 67.

If the naval bill is not withdrawn and held over until next session it will not be the fault of a couple of western Liberal members who were on the 24th circulating for signature a petition to Sir Wilfrid Laurier to do one of two things, either bring this naval debate to a sudden conclusion so that they can get to their homes by Easter, or withdraw the bill.

It is impossible, of course, under the present conditions to limit this important debate, and at the present rate the house cannot close before June, even although future Wednesday evenings will now be reserved for the work of the Commons. Therefore the petition narrows itself down to a request for withdrawal of the bill.

Western Liberals in common with western Ontario Liberals are not enamored of the bill and would gladly see it dead. Mr. Borde's platform for the day, appeals more to their consciences. The naval debate dragged wearily Mr. C. J. Doherty opposed and Mr. Turgeon supported the bill.

There was a stormy meeting of the committee investigating the Lumsden charges on the 24th, but finally the opposition minority again secured a victory over the question of the appointment of counsel to represent the public. It was decided after considerable argument, more or less of a heated character, that Mr. MacDonald for the majority and Mr. Barker for the minority would confer together, and that Mr. Barker would submit the names of half a dozen leading lawyers who would be acceptable to the minority, and if the choice could be fixed unanimously on one then the committee would accept.

Further hearings of evidence was postponed for a week as counsel so appointed would have to become familiar with the case, and the engineers, mentioned by Mr. Lumsden as being some of those in whom he had lost confidence, notified that the inquiry was proceeding in order that they might appear and be heard if they so desired.

At the opening of the proceedings the chairman, Mr. Geo. Ross, asked Mr. Lennox to state the minority's views on the matter of counsel. Mr. Lennox stated that while they were there for the purpose of acting as judges the fact could not be concealed that the question of partisanship entered into the proceedings. It was to the interest of the government to have some of those in whom he had lost confidence, notified that the inquiry was proceeding in order that they might appear and be heard if they so desired.

Mr. MacDonald—You have no right to assume that. The government is not on trial. Mr. Lennox—You are not in the government. Mr. Lennox was proceeding to outline his views when Mr. Wilson of Laval broke in with the remark that the committee had met for one object, and that was to decide the question of counsel. "Let us drop long speeches and get down to business," he said.

Mr. Geo. Ross—Mr. Lennox is a member of this committee and has a right to present his views. Mr. Lennox continued that it was impossible for the members to forget their political affiliations and he entirely dissociated from the proposition that the counsel to represent the people should be selected by the government majority. It must be understood that in this case the majority did not rule by force and the minority should in all fairness be permitted to select the required counsel. The people must be permitted to have an opportunity of placing confidence in the committee.

Mr. E. M. MacDonald strongly objected to Mr. Lennox's remarks concerning partisanship which were evidently made for the benefit, he said, of the Tory press. Was Mr. Lennox's conception of his duties as a member of the committee so low, asked Mr. MacDonald, as to charge the majority with being partisan? Mr. Lennox—There is no lawness on my part. Mr. Wilson—What do you mean? You are insulting the committee. Mr. MacDonald—[I refuse to let the statement go abroad that this government

Mr. Lennox—I say it is. Mr. Clarke—There is absolutely no partisanship as far as the majority is concerned. The only partisanship has been displayed by Mr. Lennox, so far. There is really no minority or majority on this committee. Mr. Andrew Loggie was the chief witness before the public accounts committee on the 24th, when the inquiry into the Ribicombé Sawdust wharf was resumed. Mr. O. S. Crockett who conducted the examination brought out the fact that Mr. Loggie had met Mr. Thomas Murray in August 1908 and had been advised by Murray that the Lumsden committee should nominate the

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