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**The Dominion Alliance and the Plebiscite.** On Tuesday, the eighth inst., the Legislative Committee of the Dominion Alliance held its annual meeting in one of the rooms of the Parliament buildings, Ottawa. The chair was occupied by Senator Vidal, president of the Alliance. Some sixteen other members of Parliament were present and a number of prominent temperance workers from outside, including Mr. J. R. Dougall, of the Montreal Witness, and Mr. F. S. Spence, of Toronto. Attention was devoted principally to the expected Plebiscite Bill. Some of the members of Parliament present were inclined to discuss the subject from a political standpoint and to question the good faith of the Government in respect to the plebiscite, and some were opposed to approaching the Government in reference to the provisions of the anticipated Plebiscite Bill, on the ground that prohibitionists had not asked for a plebiscite and that it was unnecessary. However, the following resolution was finally carried without opposition:

That in view of the Government's announcement that a bill will be introduced providing for a plebiscite, a deputation be appointed from this meeting to wait on the Government and strongly press the importance of submitting the direct question of prohibition as a single issue, untrammelled by any other issue, and at the earliest possible date.

It was also resolved that the committee constitute the delegation to wait upon the Government, and that Messrs. Saunders, Dougall, Orr, Carson and Spence be spokesmen. Later in the day the committee waited upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier and asked that only one question, to be answered, "yes" or "no," be submitted to the people in connection with the prohibition plebiscite, and that the question of direct taxation should not be introduced. Sir Wilfrid promised to lay the matter before his colleagues. The one thing for which they could look in the plebiscite, he said, was to have the honest opinion of the electorate. The one object of the Government in the matter was such an expression of public opinion on the subject. The form in which the question should be put to the electors, the Government, he said, had not yet determined. The Premier agreed with Mr. Dougall that direct taxation was not a legitimate corollary of prohibition, but it was a necessary consequence that more taxation must follow, and if a prohibitory law become necessary as a result of the plebiscite, the Government would have to prepare at once for increased taxation. All these matters, Sir Wilfrid said, were engaging the attention of the Government, and while he could not do more at present than promise to lay the resolutions which the committee presented before his colleagues, he pointed out some of the difficulties surrounding the question.

**Opening of the Imperial Parliament.** The fourth session of the present Imperial Parliament, which is the fourteenth of the present reign, was opened on Tuesday of last week with the customary ceremonies. The speech from the throne alludes briefly to affairs connected with the relations of Greece and Turkey and expresses the hope that the difficulties which have stood in the way of an autonomous government for the Island of Crete will before long be surmounted. The sending of a contingent of British troops to Egypt is explained on the ground that intelligence had been received of the intention of the Khalifa to advance against the Egyptian army in the Soudan. Attention is called to the report of the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into the condition of certain of the West India Colonies and to the severe depression which is found to exist in these colonies caused by the reduction in the price of sugar, resulting largely from the bounty-fed beet sugar production of certain European countries. The hope is expressed that a

conference to be held with the German Government may result in the abolition of the bounty system. In the meantime Parliament will be asked to adopt measures for the relief of the immediate necessities of the West India Colonies for encouraging other industries and for assisting those engaged in sugar cultivation to tide over the present crisis.

The speech alludes to the Indian war and praises the courage and endurance of the British and native troops engaged against the hill tribes, but deplors the loss of many valuable lives. Alluding to the plague in India, the speech says: Although the mortality is less alarming than in 1897, it is still such as to cause anxiety and no effort will be spared to mitigate it. The famine, it is declared, is practically ended, except in a small tract, and there is reason to anticipate a prosperous year both for agriculture and for commerce throughout India. Considerable new legislation is foreshadowed in the speech. Among the most important measures are the following: An Act looking to the organization of a system of local government in Ireland similar to that of Great Britain; measures to insure the increased efficiency of the army; to enable accused persons to testify in their own defence; to facilitate the creation of municipalities in London, and to prevent recognized abuses in connection with church patronage.

**Lord Salisbury** in the House of Lords and in connection with the debate on Foreign Affairs. The address in reply to the speech from the throne, Lord Salisbury last week delivered a speech of considerable interest. The Earl of Kimberley, leader of the Opposition in the Lords, had mildly criticised the Government's policy in the Soudan, West Africa and the far East. He wishes, he said, to extract no embarrassing information, but when a Cabinet Minister had spoken of "war," he thought it was time that Parliament was told plainly what it meant. This latter remark was of course in allusion to a statement contained in a speech of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach before the opening of Parliament, to the effect that Great Britain would oppose, even at the cost of war, any policy by which the trade of China should be controlled in the interest of certain nations. Lord Salisbury replied, and in the course of his remarks said: "I will not use a word that seems to grate on the noble Earl's ear, but I may say there is no effort that this country would not make rather than lose our treaty rights." It was true, the Premier said, that in connection with the proposed loan the opening of the port of Ta-Lien-Wan had been suggested to China as one of the conditions. The Chinese authorities had expressed the desire that this condition be not insisted upon, as, for certain reasons, it would be inconvenient. Lord Salisbury then suggested as a compromise that the matter be left in abeyance until the railway should reach Ta-Lien-Wan when it should be opened as a treaty port. This China accepted, and so the matter rests, though the whole question as to the loan is still pending. Lord Salisbury also said: "I have received spontaneous assurances from the Russian Government that any port they open in China will be open to free commerce." Similar assurances have been given by the German Government also in reference to the territory which they had recently occupied.

**The Dominion Parliament.** The Dominion Parliament which met on the third inst., seems likely to have a prolonged and somewhat stormy session. The active policy of the Government and the important matters which Parliament will have to deal with will afford large scope for discussion, and the debating capacity of the Canadian Parliament was probably never larger than at present,—which certainly is saying a good deal.

As the result of bye elections the Government has gained several seats during the recess, and consequently meets Parliament with increased numerical strength. The Opposition, however, is still formidable in debating power and general ability, and is still led by Sir Charles Tupper with apparently undiminished vigor. Some members of the party have not, however, been able to see eye to eye with the leader in reference to the proposed Yukon railway. This difference of opinion has led to an attack upon Sir Charles' position by the Toronto World and a rather sharp passage at arms on the floors of the House between the Opposition leader and Mr. McLean, the member for East York, who is also the editor of the World. It appears that the position publicly taken by Sir Charles has been regarded by a section of his party as too favorable to the Government's Yukon Railway policy and there have been rumors of his intention to resign the leadership of the party, but it would appear that the Conservative members have agreed to sink their differences upon the matter so far at least as to agree upon a resolution in amendment to the Yukon Railway Bill now before the House.

The Yukon Railway Bill provides for the building of 150 miles of railway from the head of navigation on the Stickeen river to Teslyn Lake, by means of which connection will be made with the navigable waters of the Upper Yukon, thus opening up direct steam communication between the Pacific coast and Dawson City in the Klondike country. The mouth of the Stickeen is near the 56th parallel, and in United States territory. Free navigation of its waters is, however, secured to Great Britain by old-standing treaty rights, so that this route to the Klondike will be practically an all-Canadian one. It is said that the completion of this line will bring Dawson city within about ten days travel of Vancouver, so that going to the Klondike will then become a mere holiday trip as compared with the present means of reaching the sub-arctic Eldorado. The government has already concluded a contract, subject to the endorsement of Parliament, for the construction of the railway. The road is to be built by the Mackenzie-Mann syndicate and is to be completed by the first of September next, so that supplies may be sent by this route into the Klondike country before the closing of navigation, which usually takes place about the end of October. The undertaking, considering the time limit, is regarded as an herculean one, not so much because of the engineering difficulties, as from the fact that almost everything with which the builders have to do, except the right of way and the ballast, must be brought into the country and from a great distance. The Mackenzie-Mann Company, however, has large experience and ability and is hardly likely to have entered into an undertaking beyond its ability to accomplish. By way of subsidy, to secure the building of the road, the government agrees to transfer to the Mackenzie-Mann syndicate 25,000 acres per mile of land in the Klondike country, making an aggregate of 3,750,000 acres. The government's bargain is severely criticised by the opposition, on the ground that the value of the land grant is far too large, considering the probable immense mineral wealth of the country and what, considering the possibilities of other routes, may prove to be the temporary value of the Yukon road. The government in its defence lays great stress upon the expected rush of miners to the Klondike during the present season and the consequent necessity of opening up a route through Canadian territory as soon as possible. It is contended that the opening up of this route at the present time will be of great importance to Canada, that this is being secured without any additional charge upon the revenues of the country, that the amount of mineral wealth in the Klondike region is wholly uncertain and that the syndicate is assuming very large risks in the undertaking. The character of the bargain depends upon uncertain factors. If there turn out to be comparatively little wealth in the Klondike country the Government has made a good enough bargain, but if the popular expectations as to the wealth of the Klondike be realised, the syndicate will be made immensely rich.