

Summary of The Week's News of The World

Our Ottawa Letter

(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Press Gallery, Ottawa, December 9.

With the approach of the great day when the organized farmers of Canada will appear before the parliament of the nation to demand the redress of their grievances and the removal from their shoulders of burdens which they have too long borne for the benefit of corporation magnates and millionaire manufacturers, interest in Western problems is becoming more and more acute. Everyone is preparing to extend the glad hand to the farmers, everyone is posing as the farmers' friend.

"There are too many lawyers in this house," said an eminent legal luminary on the Conservative side today, "but if the gentlemen on the other side of the house can produce a farmer who has advocated the interests of the farming class more persistently than I have, let them trot him out."

The Western members are all anxious to know who are coming from their own constituencies, and every effort will certainly be made to make the visit of the delegation a pleasant one. Delegations have been in Ottawa this week interviewing the members of the government on every kind of subject; from British Columbia on the dredging of the Fraser river, from Kingston with regard to the improvement of the Rideau canal, from other districts with reference to local matters, and today provincial premiers and ministers have been in conference with regard to the number of seats to be allotted to their provinces at the next redistribution, but none of these have attracted half the interest which is being taken in the great farmers' delegation.

In the house of commons little has been done this week, but it is not in the house that questions of importance are really decided. The Manitoba boundary questions was brought up in the house on Monday by a series of questions addressed to the premier by W. H. Sharpe, of Lisgar. In reply Sir Wilfrid Laurier read correspondence which had passed between himself and Premier Roblin as a result of which Mr. Roblin visited Ottawa on November 25 for the purpose of discussing the financial terms of the proposed extension of the boundaries of Manitoba to Hudson's Bay. Sir Wilfrid stated that on this occasion he suggested to Mr. Roblin that as the matter to be decided was that of financial terms, it would not be advisable to discuss it in the absence of the finance minister, Mr. Fielding, and the conference was consequently postponed until Mr. Fielding's return to Ottawa. A new feature in the controversy revealed by the correspondence read was a statement by Premier Roblin that if Sir Wilfrid would make some offer, this, together with the proposition made by the Manitoba government—the same terms as were extended to the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta—should be submitted directly to the people of Manitoba by a referendum.

Winnipeg Exhibition Grant
In reply to a question by Dr. Sproule, Sir Wilfrid Laurier informed the house that the government had not yet come to any conclusion as to a grant to the Selkirk Centennial exhibition at Winnipeg in 1914.

The greater part of Monday's sitting of the House was taken up with a discussion on the oyster industry with particular reference to the preservation and extension of the oyster beds on the shores of Prince Edward Island. The question under discussion was nominally a motion that certain reports and correspondence be laid on the table of the house, and on this A. B. Warburton, of Queens, P.E.I., spoke for four hours, giving the house a complete exposition of the oyster industry.

Hon. Frank Oliver, minister of the interior, replying to a question by Hon. Geo. E. Foster, stated on Monday that no land had been sold by the government on special account of the Hudson's Bay railway construction, but up to October 31, 1910, 6,375,200 acres had

been sold as purchased homesteads and pre-emptions, on which \$1,295,150 had been received and \$22,779,045 was still due. The amount collected, he said, had been deposited to the credit of consolidated fund (the general funds of the Dominion).

Immigration Statistics

Another question answered by the minister of the interior was as to the sources of immigration and the cost of securing settlers. He stated that in the year ending March 31, 1910, the number of immigrants received from England was 40,416, from Scotland 14,706, and from Ireland 3,940, the amount expended in those countries being \$240,715.32 and the number of agents employed nine. From the United States 103,798 immigrants were received, the expenditure being \$234,347.46 with 21 agents; from Belgium 910, the expenditures being \$6,260.48 with one agent; and from France 1,727, the expenditures being \$10,750.71 with one agent.

Mr. Oliver also stated in answer to a question that a number of farmers from Western Canada would be sent to Great Britain this winter to do immigration work, and men had been selected for the purpose. No names were, however, mentioned by the minister.

Public Accounts Committee

The public accounts committee began its work of investigating the expenditures of the last fiscal year on Wednesday. The public accounts committee room is the favorite hunting ground of members of the opposition on the lookout for scandals, and ministers in charge of spending departments of the government are not usually very enthusiastic about presenting themselves to be shot at. In the report of the auditor-general every item of expenditure, from the purchase of a cruiser down to a ball of string is shown in detail, and members of the public accounts committee have the right to call for requisitions and vouchers and to examine clerks and officials in order to ascertain for what purpose the various articles were needed and whether they were purchased as cheaply as possible.

As a preliminary to the investigations of the committee the opposition endeavored to have the accounts of the year 1908-9 referred to the committee as well as those of 1909-10, and this brought on a somewhat acrimonious debate in the house, in which the Conservatives alleged that certain legal gentlemen on the liberal side, and especially Hon. Dr. Pugsley, minister of public works, had in the past prevented a proper investigation of the public accounts by making technical objections to important questions. Eventually an amendment moved by Sir Wilfrid Laurier was adopted providing "that when in a report of the committee of public accounts it is recommended that particular items of the auditor-general's report of the previous year be referred to the said committee, the house will favorably consider the said recommendation."

Railroads' Liability Bill

The bill dealing with the question of cattle killed on the railway track which has been introduced by Arthur Meighen, of Portage la Prairie, was on the order paper for second reading today (Friday), but it was not reached and will now stand over until next week. Mr. Meighen has had considerable experience in his law practice of cases in which cattle have been killed by trains, and he stated that in nine cases out of ten, under the present law, the farmer has no redress, the company having only to prove that the cattle were allowed to run on the prairie or on the road allowance in order to escape liability. Mr. Meighen is of opinion, however, that the farmer will be able to get damages in practically every case if his amendment is passed into law. The present railway act provides in subsection 4 of section 294 that when

any horses, sheep, swine or other cattle at large are killed or injured by a train, "the owner shall be entitled to recover the amount of such loss unless the company establishes that such animal got at large through the negligence or wilful act or omission of the owner or his agent or of the custodian of such animal or his agent." This relieves the company from liability for animals turned out on the prairie or road allowance, but the proposed amendment removes this defect in the act, the latter portion of the subsection being made to read "the owner shall be entitled to recover the amount of such loss unless the company establishes that such animal so got upon the property of the company without the negligence of the company or the omission of any duty binding the company under this act." Among the duties imposed upon the company by the act is the maintenance of fences, gates and cattle guards, and Mr. Meighen's bill proposes to add to the provision for cattle guards the words "and the style, construction, material and dimensions of such cattle guards shall, before the first day of April, 1911, be submitted to the Board (of railway Commissioners) and receive its approval."

Another Railroad Bill

A bill to require a coroner's inquest to be held in every case where a person is killed by a railway accident was before the house this week, E. A. Lancaster, of Lincoln and Niagara, introducing it as an amendment to the railway act. The minister of railways, while not opposing the bill, said he thought it would conflict with the authority of the provincial governments in the control of coroners, and the bill was allowed to stand over for the present.

Among the visitors at the houses of parliament this week was W. H. Hoop, prominent in Winnipeg labor circles, who is here to interview the minister of justice on behalf of Fedorenko, the Russian revolutionist, whom the Czar's government is seeking to have extradited, and whose case has aroused such great interest throughout Canada and the United States. Mr. Hoop has recently held successful meetings in Chicago, New York, Boston, Montreal and Toronto for the purpose of enlisting public sympathy and securing funds for the defence of Fedorenko, and he is now awaiting the result of the appeal to the higher court in Winnipeg.

OTTAWA DELEGATES

Following is a list of delegates to Ottawa appointed since the last issue of The Guide:

Manitoba—Oakville, C. H. Burnell; Salem, Edward Maxwell.
Saskatchewan—Weir Hill, R. McCurdy; Clapton, D. H. Coppin; Latham, P. E. Gordon, W. H. Murphy; Ohlson, Z. E. Stromquist; Birch Hills, William Bellamy; Allen, John Klotz.
Alberta—Cowley, W. T. Eddy; Lloydminster, W. McKenzie; Macleod, J. R. McLeen, Robt. Patterson; Rowdonville, one delegate; Bon Accord, J. J. Brown; North Conjurung Creek, J. A. Sangster; Vermilion, W. P. McAlpine; Lakeview, W. J. Moran, J. McNeire; East Clover Bar, M. Reynolds, Jr.; Claresholm, G. Malcolm; Vegreville, T. Balsam.

J. J. HILL FOR RECIPROCITY

New York, Dec. 8.—James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway, made a strong written plea for reciprocity with Canada at the fourteenth annual dinner of the Canadian society at Delmonico's tonight. Mr. Hill is out West at present and the speech he was to deliver was read by Mr. George David Stewart, former president of the society. "Both nations," he said, "demand a closer and more definite commercial compact," and he thought that if a consensus of opinion could be taken reciprocity would have a majority on both sides of the line. Canada, he pointed out is the third best customer of the United States, and our imports from, and exports to the Dominion, have increased within the last ten years 131 per cent. Our present import duty, he said, was not protection, but punishment for the consumers. The opportunity for establishing free trade between the two countries, he declared, was never better

and he advised that it be seized before it was too late. "Canada and the United States have failed to improve the opportunity plainly awaiting them," he said. "It is possible that should these countries fail again, as they have so many times in the past, since 1866, to listen to intelligent self interest combined with real statesmanship as embodied in the reciprocity policy, the voice of opportunity may be silenced forever by the changing circumstances that alter permanently the outlook of nations as well as the fortunes of men. In both nations today a thousand interests are calling for a closer and more definite commercial compact."

ALBERTA MINE DISASTER

Calgary, Alta., Dec. 9.—Shortly after seven tonight a terrific explosion in the Western Canada collieries mine at Bellevue on the Crow's Nest Pass forty-five men were entombed. The fire seems to have been put out and the mine was entered a few hours after the explosion. Twenty men were removed at midnight, of whom seven were dead and the remainder were very badly burned, some of them fatally burned. The men in the mine were all foreigners, either Italian or Slavish. No person knows at present how the accident occurred.

STRIKE THREATENED

There is considerable suspense in railway circles in regard to the probability of an engineers' strike which will tie up traffic in practically the whole of North America. The centre of the trouble is Chicago, but if the strike is called it will embrace all the roads of the United States and Canada. The general impression among local railway men is that the strike will be called on Dec. 13, unless the railway people agree to the demands of the engineers for increased pay. If the strike is called on that day it will not go into effect for six days which would mean that on December 21 all locomotives would be inert. It is stated by some of the railway men that once the strike is on not a train will move with the exception of the mail trains. The fact that it is the holiday season will not make any difference. If a settlement is not arrived at, it is said, there will be no delay in inaugurating a continental strike.

MASSEY-HARRIS BUY U. S. PLANT

Toronto, Dec. 12.—Very important steps have been taken by the Massey-Harris company in the purchase of the Johnston Harvester company's works at Batavia, N. Y. The sum involved was between two and three million dollars. The Johnston Harvester company now employs twelve hundred men, and has a larger ground area than the Massey-Harris works in Toronto. It was purchased as a going concern, and is now running at nearly complete capacity. In giving the reasons for purchasing, Senator Melvin Jones, general manager of the Massey-Harris company, said that with the growth of its foreign trade the company had been endeavoring to increase its Canadian plants. This extension has been carried about as far as possible, both at Toronto and at Brantford. "We have felt," said Senator Jones, "under present conditions that the best interests of our company would be conserved by the purchase of the Batavia plant rather than to add so largely to our present capacity in Canada." The head offices will remain in Canada and the plans here will be carried on as at present.

PORT ARTHUR SHIPPING

Port Arthur, Ont., Dec. 9.—The winter fleet of boats at Port Arthur this year will be the largest yet, at least nine freighters that usually make their winter headquarters at the lower lake ports are expected to remain here, as follows:—Edmonton, Jacques, McKinty, Mapleton, Tagana, Seguin, Fellatt, Wahoonah, and Glen Eliah. All are now here with the exception of the Glen Eliah and Wahoonah, which are on their way up loaded with package freight. The Harmonic arrived to-day with 2,500 tons of package freight. On her down trip she will take 1,500 tons of flour. The Harmonic left this afternoon on her last trip and on the passenger list were members of the crew of the Dunelm. The Easton came in from Duluth to-day.