

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT.

*Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:
Gentlemen of the House of Commons:*

I am glad to be able to relieve you from further attendance on this long protracted session, and I thank you for the assiduity and care you have given to the unusually large number of important subjects that have been submitted for your consideration. It is, however, satisfactory to note the many excellent measures that have been passed, and which it is hoped will prove beneficial to the people of Canada.

Among other Acts, attention may be called to the Manitoba Grain Act and the Grain Inspection Act which, while protecting the high standards of western grown grain from inferior mixtures, secures to the farmer the increased value attaching to those standards.

In response to an advanced public opinion, appointments and promotions to the civil service will be made henceforth only after a competitive examination in which those who excel will receive the reward of merit; and, while the operations of the Act are limited to the service at the seat of government its provisions may later on be extended to the service throughout the Dominion.

The Act revising and consolidating the laws and regulations affecting the disposition of the public lands will it is believed meet with the hearty approval of the western provinces more immediately interested. One of the principal features of the Act is the permission to take up a second homestead within a limited area, and also the right of a homesteader to acquire by purchase the adjoining quarter-section. It is intended that the proceeds of these sales shall in the first place be set apart as a fund for the construction of a railway to Hudson bay.

The amendments to the Bank Act allowing, under certain restrictions, an expansion in the circulation of notes of the banks during the period of the year while the crops are being moved, will, it is considered, facilitate the quick transport of the products of the farm to the markets of the world.

Important amendments have been made to the Act respecting elections which it is confidently believed will more effectively protect the rights of the voters and guard against the exercise of undue influence in electoral contests.

The proposal to make a free grant of land as a bounty to the volunteers who rendered valuable service to the empire in the South African war will meet with hearty approval.

The reduction of the duty on dropped letters in cities and certain towns, and the enlargement of the area within which the postage on certain classes of newspapers may be carried free, will I feel be much appreciated.

The amendments made to the Inland Revenue Act, whereby the discrimination against Canadian grown tobacco created by distinctive labels used in cigars and tobacco will no longer exist; it is confidently believed that those amendments to the Act will have the effect of improving and encouraging home grown tobacco and prove of great benefit to that portion of our agricultural population engaged in that industry.

The increasing demands for improved transportation facilities in a country so widely extended and so sparsely settled as this Dominion, warrants public aid in the construction of railways, and the experience of the past amply justifies the liberal subsidies in the Act that has been assented to.

The placing of the telegraph and telephone systems under the jurisdiction of the Railway Commissioners will meet with the hearty approval of all classes in the Dominion. The rapidly increasing number of applications to the Board of Railway Commissioners involves the necessity for the appointment of additional members on the board.

The extension of the time for the payment of a bounty on lead ores, and the enlargement of the conditions under which the bounty may be earned will, it is believed, stimulate the growth of an important industry in the province of British Columbia.

The physical and mental degradation following from the too free use of opium have long been recognized, and efforts have been made in all countries boasting of advanced civilization to stamp out its use, except when prescribed for medicinal purposes. The increasing consumption of this deleterious drug in Canada has prompted the adoption of the Act to restrain its use except when authorized by medical men.

The issue of government annuities for old age will, it is confidently believed, encourage habits of thrift and economy, securing to the holder some provision for declining years.

The subject of immigration from Japan has received much attention during the year, and it was deemed desirable to send one of my ministers to Japan to discuss with His Majesty's ambassador at Tokio, and with the Japanese authorities, the advisability, in view of the local conditions in this country, and other reasons, for restricting such immigration. I am glad to know that a satisfactory arrangement has been effected, and I feel assured that the terms of the agreement will continue to be faithfully carried out.

An arrangement with regard to immigration from India having also become desirable, a representative of the government was sent to England to discuss the question with the authorities of the United Kingdom, and in this case also with results that promise to be entirely satisfactory.

In both these cases it has been the desire of my government that while caring properly for the interests of the Dominion, the welfare of the empire at large should also be regarded.

The Gold and Silver Marking Act will stimulate the manufacture of a superior quality of those articles composed of the precious metals, and at the same time will protect the public from fraudulent representations.

The Act respecting juvenile delinquents will enable those societies that have for their object the reformation of children living under the influence of criminal tendencies, to more efficiently accomplish their purpose, and thus save the innocent little ones from the evil influences of vicious environment.

The Act restraining the use of tobacco by young persons will, it is hoped, check a growing habit that is seriously affecting the health of many Canadian boys.