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Parliament Has Made Little Progress Thus Far

Grand Trunk Bill Held Up—No Important Bill Yet Passed—Senator Lynch Staunton Wants Sellers of German Goods Identified—Preparations for Canada-West Indies Conference—Settlement of Debts With Germany

(Special to *The Monetary Times*)

Ottawa, April 22nd, 1920.

UNLESS parliament moves faster than it has during the past few weeks, it will be in session all summer instead of proroguing May 24th, as has been the general talk. Not one of the important measures of the session has received third reading. The Franchise Bill is still in the committee stage, while the new Grand Trunk bill has developed considerable opposition and so far no progress has been made. There have been rumors that the forces which nearly defeated the measure last session in the upper house, will again be rallied, but it is doubtful if there will be much more than a protest from the senators, who are opposed to the whole principle of government ownership. The chief weakness of those antagonistic to the government's policy is that they have no reasonable alternative. There are still no signs of the budget. It is expected, though, that it will be delivered about May 1st. There is lots of talk, but no real information as to the nature of the budget. Ministers, though, seem confident that it will meet with the approval of the house and the country outside of extremists.

The senate, indeed, has been stirring up more excitement than the commons. The senators have tackled that ancient problem, divorce, and have already given second reading to a bill to provide for divorce courts for Ontario and Prince Edward Island. This would leave courts for every province except Quebec, which it is proposed to exempt.

Sale of German Goods

Senator Lynch-Staunton stirred up a real storm in the senate, with a bill which proposes to compel all merchants who sell German goods to put up signs to this effect. Before the debate was finished it ran far from the original subject, Senator Fowler, who was the centre in his day of many an acrimonious debate in the commons, clashing with Senator Beaubien over the war record of France and England and over the merits of Lloyd-George as a statesman.

The bill of Lynch-Staunton proposes to amend the Criminal Code so that "every person who knowingly deals in goods, wares or merchandise, which are, in whole or in part the growth, product or manufacture of Germany or Austria-Hungary, shall keep posted in letters easily legible over every outside entrance to his premises the words, 'Dealer in German Goods' and shall print the words prominently in all his advertisements and stationery." The penalties proposed are six months imprisonment or five hundred dollars fine or both. The law is not to apply to goods in stock at the time of the passing of the act. The bill did not meet with much encouragement on the grounds that it was impractical of enforcement even if desirable, which was questionable.

Plans are being completed at the present time for the coming conference between Canada and the British West

Indies, which will be held in Ottawa shortly, it is hoped before the house adjourns. The Imperial government will be represented and Canada and the West Indian governments are conferring with the Mother Country as to the date and as to other particulars. The conference is an outgrowth of a meeting in February at the Barbadoes of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the West Indies. All of the British West Indies, British Honduras and British Guiana were represented. At this meeting a resolution was passed suggesting that questions of mutual interest to Canada and the West Indies be taken up as soon as possible. The Canadian government was consulted and was in hearty accord with the suggestion. An order-in-council was passed recommending the calling of the conference.

Connections with West Indies

The questions of an increase in the preferential tariff and better steamship accommodation will be the chief ones discussed. The British West Indies favor an extension of the preference passed in 1912. There is a strong sentiment in the Islands, since the war, in favor of dealing within the Empire and they want to see an extension of the commerce between the West Indies and Canada. Wrapped up with extension of the preference is the question of steamship service. Increased business is useless without accommodation. There is a strong feeling that there is no reason why some of the government owned steamers could not be put regularly on these lines to serve this trade and develop Canadian commerce. They have been running irregularly with much success for the past year. In addition to freight service the Islands would like to see better passenger accommodation. They want the Canadian tourist trade, but tourists want high class accommodation. F. C. Keefer, M.P., under secretary of external affairs, recently returned from a trip to the Islands an enthusiastic booster for them as a winter resort for Canadians. He pointed out that Canadians spent \$20,000,000 annually at American resorts. He advocated keeping this money within the empire. This question will be discussed. Another question will be better cable service. At present the cable between Jamaica to the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and British Guiana is out of commission. The question of political union is also likely to arise, but there is no strong sentiment at Ottawa in favor of annexation. Commercial annexation is about as much as can be accomplished at the present.

Liquidating German Debts

Methods for settling debts with Germany have been prescribed by an Order-in-Council just passed. A system of clearing offices has been established. The Canadian clearing office will settle all transactions through a central office in Great Britain. Canadians are compelled to resort to the above machinery for settlement of debts on pain of a