

THE WEST

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WEDNESDAY, April 3, 1907.

HOPEFUL SYMPTOMS

The Prince Albert District outrage which has now passed into history stands alone in the annals of time and the action of the legislature in giving S. J. Donaldson his seat after his opponent had been declared elected, is a peculiar, a proper and a just precedent. That there was not a dissenting voice in the House when the privilege and election committee reported, is a tribute to the spirit of fairness that permeated the members during the hearing of this enquiry, and whatever evidence of partisan bias may be attributed on other occasions in considering this "great wrong" justice held full sway.

The speech of Attorney General Lamont is a hopeful symptom that the government shows signs of a moral recovery which we trust will not stop at the restoration of one seat, but that they will become further actuated by justice and honor and return the other stolen property to the extent of four or five seats more at least.

They might do it—who knows? The light is still burning.

UP AGAINST IT

Mr. Wylie put Mr. Motherwell up against it in the House in his speech on the budget debate. The commissioner of agriculture is charged with the responsibility for severely injuring one of the most important industries in the west. Mr. Motherwell could have prevented the cent an acre tax being imposed on ranchers who are lease holders and it was his duty to do this especially in view of the fact that he never loses an opportunity to express his affected regard for the live stock interests of the province.

The fact of the matter is, as Mr. Wylie said in the House, the Commissioner does not know the conditions prevailing in the southwestern part of the province; he has never been there; and does not apparently want to become acquainted with the country, its people and their industry and the conditions surrounding it. Mr. Motherwell thinks he has done his whole duty when he has sent his deputy out to institute meetings which he ought to attend himself, and then when questions come up in the legislature affecting his department he could at least vote intelligently on division, something which he cannot claim for himself at present. The second black eye to the live stock interests is the attitude of Mr. Motherwell in letting the Beef Enquiry lapse.

The member for Maple Creek certainly hit the commissioner hard, but it was coming to him.

THE DOUBLE CUT

It was argued from the Government benches in the legislature that the one cent an acre direct tax for secondary education was lost sight of in view of the fact that the farmers of the province have lost at least one cent a bushel on their wheat this winter by reason of the railway blockade and that this might well be regarded as a direct tax.

If the railway blockade has caused the loss of a cent a bushel on wheat that is no reason why the government should follow up the blow by hitting the farmer as Mr. Wylie says, "on the raw." One injury is surely not a justification for another wrong.

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HAULTAIN DICTATES GOVERNMENT POLICY

His Telephone Motion Brings an Announcement From Mr. Lamont and an Amendment Embodying Principle of Motion is Submitted

March 26 At the opening of the morning sitting of the legislature Mr. Haultain rose to move: "That an early establishment of a system of telephones, owned and operated by the province is desirable."

In moving this resolution the leader of the opposition said if it had been indicated before the estimates were presented that the Government intended to undertake an enquiry into the telephone question this motion as it is worded might not have been necessary, but it is well for the House to give an expression of feeling on this matter, and this resolution will point the way for the government they will thus be guided on the principle of the question, but can be left to themselves to work out the details of the matter.

The circumstances do not indicate that the government had a policy with regard to this matter till he gave notice of his motion and the government after asking for postponement from time to time and now bring down an amendment embodying the principle of his motion. There is no doubt about the feasibility of the project as the matter of government ownership of telephone lines is beyond the experimental stage. In this province at the present time we are not so hampered by the vested rights of private corporations as they are in older communities. The telephone business is a natural monopoly when once a

and, any way, where is the Government's railway legislation protecting the farmer against a repeated blockade and consequent loss? We find the Government sitting still with their arms folded and their "equilibrium" undisturbed, but they have done something—they have figured that the farmers still show signs of life, and he surely can be led a little harder, so they put a direct tax upon his land, and make provision that this will be a first charge against his goods and chattels.

The government supporters have juggled arguments this session trying to show equality and justice of the one cent an acre tax, and justifying it because it is no worse than the farmer losing a cent a bushel on his wheat through conditions controllable by this government.

CLERICAL INTERFERENCE

No cleric, as a cleric, has any business in our politics; he must participate in them as a citizen with no more rights than any other citizen. We would deny no clergyman, whatever his denomination, the right to hold and express political opinions; but he cannot plead "benefit of clergy" if those who disagree with him dispute his findings and submit his apparent motives to the same unfeeling scrutiny they would receive were he a professional politician. Archbishop Langevin, as citizen, can support the Roblin government if he chooses; but it is quite in order for the Free Press to analyse his reasons for doing so and if he finds in them a menace to what it considers the public interest, it is its right and its duty to call attention to the fact. This is a free country.

Archbishop Langevin has gone much further, however, than merely exercise his rights as a citizen. He has sought to use his power as head of the Church in this province to secure political support for a political party, and he has reassured his right to control the votes of his flock whenever in his judgment the issues call for interference. This is the Ultramontane doctrine very familiar to all who are acquainted with Quebec's political history during the last half century. The position is unwarrantable and illegal, politically it is inexpedient in the last degree because in the language of Sir Wilfrid Laurier it will expose this country to "legislative of which it is impossible to see the consequences."—Free Press, Winnipeg.

This is certainly hot stuff from the Free Press, and what weight it would have, had not that "journalistic prostitute" defended Archbishop Langevin in his clerical interference in the Saskatchewan elections?

system is established, and one of the most grasping and tyrannical monopolies in Canada almost controls the entire telephone systems of the Dominion, and we must do something to protect ourselves against the encroachments of this concern. The only argument against the public ownership of this utility is the stock cry that the public cannot make a success of a project of this kind. That argument, however, is a reflection that is unwarranted, but if there is a weakness in the public ownership principle, it is because of the lack of public sentiment. A system of telephones, however, can be operated by the people economically and profitably.

Mr. Lamont Agrees Mr. Lamont, acting leader of the government, in replying to Mr. Haultain said that the resolution was one worthy of the best and most careful consideration of the House. Mr. Scott had this matter under his permanent supervision but his unfortunate illness had so delayed it that it was impossible to take the question in a practical way this session. An enquiry would be made, however, and he hoped to have a report ready for the House at the next fall session.

Langley's Amendment Mr. Langley (Redberry) was put up to move the following amendment so as not to accept their policy on this matter from the opposition: "That while the House favors the principle of Government ownership and control of a telephone system for the province, it is of the opinion that before any active measures are taken for the inauguration of such a thorough enquiry into the working out of similar systems in Manitoba and elsewhere, and that steps already undertaken by the government with this object in view should be continued in order that the legislature at its next session, may be in a position to deal with this important question."

J. T. Brown The member for Souris followed Mr. Langley and maintained that notwithstanding the amendment the principle of the resolution has been adopted by the government and he congratulated them upon their good sense in this respect. No objection to the government to go blindly into a commission of enquiry is but a detail of the proposal.

Mr. Motherwell joined in the debate and said that the time might not be found opportune to undertake the public operation of the project. There might be necessities more urgent.

All the Same Mr. Haultain speaking to the amendment said that with all the ingenuity displayed in the discussion by the government they had not shown a distinction but merely a difference between the motion and the amendment. The latter is composed of commonplace phrases which mean nothing more than his motion. If he had been extended the usual courtesy, the House could have been unanimous, but notwithstanding that he had not been treated fairly he would not divide the House as the government had accepted the principle of his motion and make the legislature a unit on the question. The motion then passed unanimously.

Taxing Corporations Following Mr. Haultain's motion Mr. Calder moved that the House solve itself into a committee of the whole to consider a resolution to provide for the taxation of corporations and others. The provincial treasurer said that up to the present large corporations have not been called upon to pay such taxes as contemplated in this resolution. The proposal embodies a principle now universally adopted especially in New York state and he thought it expedient to provide for such taxation in this country at this session so as to make these corporations contribute to the general revenue.

Mr. Haultain The leader of the opposition replying said that the House will not hold that corporations should not bear their rightful share of taxation for carrying on the affairs of the country, but the provincial treasurer had been most unfortunate in his citation when he referred to New York state, for in that state of the American union they had dispensed with direct taxation and were placing the burden of taxation upon the large corporations. Mr. Haultain regretted that the railways are not being taxed, and he would like to know why these larger corporations are exempt. "Is the government," he enquired "afraid of the C.P.R. exemption? He would like for the government to make a bold statement of policy with respect to the taxation of railways."

Mr. Lamont Mr. Lamont replied to Mr. Haultain and stated that the government would tax the gross earnings of the railways. Mr. Haultain—Does the hon. gentleman subscribe to the principle that we can tax the C.P.R.? Mr. Lamont—I do not think that we can tax their lines, but we can tax their earnings. Mr. Haultain—Which is not the point referred to. The motion was then adopted.

GOVERNMENT RESPECTS C. P. R. EXEMPTION

Mr. Lamont in Answer to Mr. Haultain Says That Lines are Exempt—Will Tax Earnings—Haultain Regrets Weakness of Policy

March 26 On Tuesday afternoon Mr. Calder moved the third reading of the bill to supplement the revenues of the crown. In doing so he made reference to the resolution passed on the previous Friday by the L. I. Districts Convention, protesting against the levying of this tax of one cent an acre on all farm lands for secondary educational purposes. The minister contended that the object and scope of the bill was misunderstood by the delegates present. He contended that as there are in the province twenty-two million acres of land not paying taxes the government proposes to tax the whole province to make those at present exempt, contribute to the provincial revenue. This is the real purpose of the bill and the secondary educational scheme is only an incident. As regards the machinery for collecting the tax, he said that the whole scheme that can be devised, and if the taxes were not levied on the rural schools complications would arise. As regards the towns and cities being exempt, he would only say at the present they are paying more than the rural schools for elementary education.

Mr. Haultain Replying to the provincial treasurer, Mr. Haultain said that the hon. gentleman was surely in error when he said that the farmers were under a misapprehension regarding the meaning of this legislation. They realize that this bill is for the purpose of enforcing direct taxation on the farming community. The farmers now recall the pre-election pledges of the government and their campaign cry, when they from one end of the country to the other said that if the province had retained the public lands, it would be necessary, in order to carry on the affairs of the government, to resort to direct taxation, and now the farmers are getting direct taxation.

Discrimination The direct tax is a discrimination against the new settler, who, before he has a common school has to build high schools for his more favorably situated friends in the towns and cities, where the schools are already helped very liberally by the government.

This is a time serving policy, because it does not make proper provision for the future, and when this fund disappears in a few years, as it will disappear, through the organization of new school districts, the whole burden of taxation for secondary education will fall on the agricultural community.

Bad Financing This is bad financing as well as an injustice for it is leading the rural school districts to look upon this legislation as a permanent scheme, when it cannot be a lasting source of revenue except by making a charge on the general revenue, which of course the bill provides, and the government assumes it will be.

The fact that we have to resort to direct taxation is an admission that the revenue is not sufficient for the purposes of administration.

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In view of the objectionable feature of this legislation, he would in order to make it less burdensome on the least able to pay it, move an amendment to the bill which if adopted will relieve the bona fide homesteaders; impose the tax on the non-resident and exempt the small lease holder. Stating that he believed it was the intention of the bill to mislead the rural districts to regard this grant as a permanent source of revenue for school purposes. Mr. Haultain moved the following amendment:

That the Bill does not commend itself to the House for the following reasons:— 1. While taxing the speculator it also forces settlers, before they are able to obtain a common school, to contribute to higher education in the shape of the Provincial University and Agricultural College while cities, towns and villages are exempt.

(Continued on page 5.)

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GOVERNMENT

(Cont.) 2. It imposes Agricultural 3. It forces the children of College 4. It forces of any li 5. It imposes older and 6. It imposes persons h 7. It provide grants d 8. It impos School a 9. It impos Provincial 10. It impos tion in t 11. It impos school dist 12. It impos and incre 13. It impos drawn or 14. It impos charge upo 15. It impos the Provin 16. It impos alrea 17. It impos poses by t 18. It impos taxation. 19. It impos for a 20. It impos said Bill 21. It impos but that it 22. It impos mittee of 23. It impos the pose of m 24. It impos section sha 25. It impos (a) Lands o 26. It impos of any Sch 27. It impos The School 28. It impos (b) Land of 29. It impos to the exte 30. It impos Sixty acre 31. It impos limits of 32. It impos actually and 33. It impos the owner o 34. It impos (c) Land b 35. It impos under the 36. It impos withdrawn 37. It impos lease for 38. It impos Cause 10. 39. It impos 40. It impos If in any 41. It impos payable an 42. It impos heretofore 43. It impos moneys set 44. It impos secondary 45. It impos School dist 46. It impos trict shall 47. It impos such sum 48. It impos portion to 49. It impos this posit 50. It impos amount set 51. It impos payable as at

Mr. Sutherland urged that the new settler which will be organized a new school. Mr. Haultain—A new settler by sent out to meet him. Mr. Sutherland ately of the amount speculators who are paying taxes, and tribute is the purpose.

D. J. Mr. Wylie (Maple) the member for Sa could not get the without protest. will hit his constitu in fact hits them o would not be doing did not go on record Wylie read letters sources protesting and submitted a re stock breeders' a term rancher is a people. They regard baron, which is a n tively, for men with of cattle up are call his constituency. T men are occupying l from settlement by of the interior beca agricultural purpose acres of this land to cattle and rest the same as the Regina by dollars an acre. tice the ranchers a the government. Th bill will make the the professions of th opposite, but, conce while the government this tax unjustly authors of it are a this country for ever.

The acting commiss works said that in a munities, taxation

ELECTION

Deposit Raised possible for March In introducing the actions act attorney said that he would n eed than a few brief court en banc had de was no controverted inance in this provin 1905, and now it w tary to delegate to legislation sufficient i election cases. The bodies that could del er the Dominion par local legislature. T not done this and no legislature proposed the bill before the only a temporary me at the next session brings down a new c present bill will hav ed. He hoped to en tion at the next ses greatly assist in co sections and severe p provided for infracti