

London Advertiser

FOUNDED IN 1853.
LONDON AND EVENING DAILY.
PUBLISHED WEEKLY.
THE LONDON ADVERTISER CO.,
Limited, Publishers,
110-112 Dundas Street, London, Ont.

PHONE NUMBERS:
Business Department.....107
Editorial Rooms.....124 and 130
Job Printing Department.....115

TO SUBSCRIBERS.
Readers of The Advertiser are requested to favor the management by reporting any irregularities in delivery.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.
Daily, Delivered by Carrier in City:
One year.....\$5.00
One week.....\$1.00
Daily, Delivered by Carrier Outside City:
One year.....\$5.50
One week.....\$1.10
Daily, by Mail, Outside City:
One year.....\$6.00

The Advertiser is on sale regularly at the following news stands, where subscriptions may be left:
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Chicago, Ill.—Chicago Newspaper Agency, 170 Madison street.
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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEB. 26

POLITICAL OUTLOOK.

At least two propositions may be safely affirmed of the present political situation in this country:

1. At no time since 1896 has the position of the Ottawa Government been more comfortable and apparently more secure. There is not even a manufactured scandal hanging over its head. There is not even a trumped-up charge of misadministration against any Cabinet minister. The supporters of the Government were never more united. There are no issues impending which threaten to divide the party. The country has entered upon another period of extraordinary prosperity and the public revenues are likely to be buoyant for several years. The ascendancy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier was never greater and more unquestioned.

2. The Opposition is not more formidable now than at any time since 1896. Upon the one important issue upon which its leaders have challenged the Government—the naval question—it is divided and distracted. Mr. Borden's leadership has not developed new strength, and he is still handicapped by association with Mr. Foster. The Opposition is without a constructive policy to oppose to the Government's record. If a general election were held tomorrow, the Opposition would be without real weapons or fighting ground. It seems that only a serious blunder on the part of the Government could furnish its opponents with a valid campaign cry.

THE FARMERS AND THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC.

"Unbusinesslike" is too mild a term to apply to the methods of some of the hydro-electric agents in bargaining with the farmers over the right of way easements for Niagara power lines. They appear to have worked on only one rule: pay as little as the farmer can be bamboozled or bullied into accepting. The compensation received by each owner depended upon his liability. There was no system of valuation and no regard for equity. Some of the specific cases of injustice brought to the attention of the Legislature by Mr. MacKay and Mr. Reid (South Wentworth) should be given publicity.

Wesley Smith, of Glandford Township, Wentworth County, was offered \$255 by hydro-electric "scouts" for the right of way over his farm. He asked more, and the offer was raised to \$600. He went to arbitration, and was awarded \$550. The agents then wished to spread the payments over 20 years, although they had paid other farmers along the line the whole amount due them in cash. Smith held out for full payment, and the towers are still lying on his ground.

W. A. Lovatt, of the same county, was offered, and refused, \$200 for the right to place nine towers on his land. A little later he was offered \$400. Arbitration was broached, and the agents raised their price to \$1,250. Lovatt again refused, insisted upon arbitration, and was awarded \$1,500 as a fair sum for the privileges which hydro-electric agents tried to extort from him for \$200.

The case of Samuel Hanna is equally flagrant. The agents tried to hurry him into signing a contract for the right of way for three towers at \$20 each, and \$75 for the destruction of trees on his farm, or \$125 in all. They told him that the Government had fixed the price, that they could pay him no more, and that he could get no more. He refused, and they raised their offer to \$250, then to \$200, and finally "after a year of dickering and threatening," to quote Hanna's words, they offered \$700 or arbitration. Hanna accepted notice of arbitration, and immediately was tendered \$875, which he accepted in order to avoid legal proceedings. He considered he was not getting fair play for the damage done his farm, or the inconvenience of working around the towers for several years.

Here is a signed statement by another farmer, Rufus Goodale:

"First they offered me \$150 for three or four towers, and some trees, and distinctly stated the Government had fixed \$20 as the highest price for towers. For nearly a year they came back trying to get me to take their price. They did considerable damage to my barley, peas, etc., in erecting their towers. I am prepared to swear I only settled with them finally for \$625 when they threatened to take forcible possession, and to avoid legal trouble, and I don't consider I got anything like fair value for the damage done to my farm."

Mr. Reid said he could name hundreds of farmers who had received similar treatment. "In my own municipality," he said, "they kept running back and forward for over eleven months, badgering these men every

once in a while, threatening them with arbitration, telling them they had the power to take the land, and they were going on taking it." Mr. MacKay indicated the policy which should have been pursued:

"There is no reason under the sun why the commission could have sent out two or three competent men who would be able to value these easements according to the conditions, the number of towers to be erected, the number of trees to be hedged spoiled, and go at once, and not start dickering and brow-beating, and offering \$200, and ending by giving \$1,200 or \$1,500. Competent men would have gone over the ground and told the farmer exactly where they intended to place the easement and run the line, and then would have told him what they considered a fair and adequate allowance for that easement, and if he was not satisfied with that, tell him he must go to arbitration; and let there be no dickering and no grumbling. (Applause.)

"The Province of Ontario ought to act like a province. It doesn't matter if it is the agents of the Province, it is the Province that is acting just the same, and it ought to act in a manly, straightforward, equitable way, and not in a brow-beating way."

GOOD ROADS IN ONTARIO.

Nineteen counties in the Province have adopted the good roads system and planned the improvement of three thousand miles of their leading highways.

The Good Roads Association of Ontario consider the time favorable for a general advance in the construction of good roads throughout the whole Province. With this in view they are arranging for a widely-representative convention to be held in Toronto on March 2, 3 and 4.

Efforts are being made to secure the attendance of members not only of county councils, but from the township bodies, and all other associations that are interested in improving the roads of the country, such as the farmers' institutes, agricultural societies, fair associations, various live stock associations, fruit growers and others. The movement is spreading also to the towns and cities.

The programme will provide for a valuable series of addresses from superintendents of county road systems already in operation, explaining the method of designating roads, the machinery and material used, the cost, and how the money is raised.

Experts, in addition, are being secured from New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and other states, where the finest roads in America have been built.

After a thorough discussion it is proposed to decide upon some policy that will include the most valuable points of all these systems. During the convention a huge delegation will wait upon the Provincial Government to consult with it as to future assistance.

As over five hundred delegates are expected to attend, special railway rates have been secured. Middlesex should be well represented.

THE BRITISH POPULAR VOTE.

The popular vote in Great Britain has been figured out as follows:

	Liberal	Conservative	Unionist
England.....	2,539,889	2,539,882	2,539,882
Scotland.....	292,226	268,801	268,801
Wales.....	206,288	97,123	97,123

The Liberals and Laborites have therefore a majority of 51,007 in England, 109,162 in Wales, and 126,265 in Scotland—a total of 286,534. The uncontested constituencies are included in these figures, by allowing 80 per cent of the votes in each riding to the candidate elected by acclamation.

It is estimated that the Unionists profited to the extent of 300,000 votes through the scandal of plural voting, so that they would have been in a minority of nearly 600,000 if the "one-man-one-vote" system had prevailed.

The Liberals and Laborites did not secure a majority in the House of Commons proportionate to their strength in the country. For instance, they are in a minority of 13 seats in England, although they polled 51,000 more votes than the Unionists. The figures for the last four elections show that the popular vote has not worked out equitably:

	Majority	Majority	Majority
	in Votes	in Seats	in Seats
1895.....	1,210,632	1,213	1,213
1900.....	1,332,974	1,195	1,195
1904.....	1,426,418	1,239	1,239
1910.....	1,286,534	1,632	1,632

None of the figures above include Ireland. The Nationalists had an aggregate majority of 200,000 over the Unionists in the recent election.

These are the days when poor Rover leads a dog's life.

The Opposition's naval policy is the latest thing in mosses.

A classical quotation from Hansard, Feb. 23, page 4,222:

An Hon. Member—Rats!

If dogs are to be killed, the local authorities should provide a merciful method. Is there a lethal chamber at the pound?

Somebody has sent the Toronto Star \$50 toward buying a Dreadnought. The Star will no doubt gladly acknowledge the receipt of the remaining \$10,999.950.

A contemporary says that Hon. Joe Martin has not lost his unconventional habit of calling a spade a spade. But Martin habitually calls it a blankety-blank shovel.

Our local contemporary scores Professor McCurdy, and then gives him an opening by speaking of Mohammedan India, a well talk of Catholic England or Protestant Ireland.

A successful public speaker is usually a learned man; but learning alone does not teach the art. A scholarly address to which citizens listened not long since was full of food for thought, but the food was thrown together like a dog's meal.

Madame Melba has bought a dairy ranch in Australia. The prima donna

will probably be an agriculturist, as distinguished from a farmer. A farmer makes money in the country, and spends it in the city. An agriculturist makes money in the city and spends it in the country.

If Canada had seventeen million people instead of seven, would any Canadian advise hiring other men to defend his country? Certainly not. Canada will have 17,000,000 people in the not distant future, and we may as well begin doing big things.

CANADIANS AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

(Toronto Star.)
The Asquith Government was a democratic government, a government that stated its existence upon measures of social justice and social reform. It had substituted old-age pensions for the decreed degradation of the pauperous. It had fought the evils of intemperance and ignorance. It had endeavored to make wealth and industry bear its fair share of taxation. It had tried to restore the land to the people.

In such a contest the sympathies of Canadians would be with the victims of social injustice, rather than with the privileged classes. Canada was not peopled or settled, or built up by privileged classes, but rather by the victims of social injustice in Great Britain and Ireland. The children of privilege do not emigrate. Those who leave their old homes to build up new homes in a new country are either the victims of a wrong social system, or they are strong and adventurous spirits, who are willing to trust to their own arms and brains under conditions of equality.

SOAKED.

(Cleveland Leader.)
"What time is it?"
"I don't know."
"Don't your watch going?"
"Worse—it's gone."

WATCH FOR SCAREMONGERS.

(Cleveland Plaindealer.)
Germany wants a \$100,000 loan. It will not take the English experts long to figure out that this means 24 battleships at \$5,000,000 apiece.

A BEAUTY CURE.

(London News.)
The beauty cure that is engaging the attention of fashionable society at the moment is the milk cure, and its only fault is that it is ridiculous. Cheap for a cure adopted by fashionable society. The milk is taken inwardly and outwardly. A glass of hot milk slowly sipped at night composes the mind and prepares the body for restful slumber. Milk is rubbed into the face at night with a piece of soft linen and allowed to dry, and in the morning the face is washed in milk, but no soap must be used. Skin regularly washed in milk is declared to be proof against sunburn.—Health.

A USURER REBUKED.

(New York Sun.)
Shellock was bargaining for his pound of flesh.

"Nothing doing," answered Fortia: "we are on the vegetable wagon."

Not understanding the term, Shakespeare wrote up a different version.

PREJUDICE AGAINST SLEEP.

(Family Doctor.)
Why can some men sleep at will, and some nervous men, too, while others, sometimes very "heavy" men, with apparently unmovable nerves, are tortured by insomnia? Why, too, do some men seem to obtain sufficient rest in five hours sleep, while others require nine? Do some men "sleep slow," as Mr. Smiley facetiously argued in one of his amusing stories, or do they actually require more sleep?

The popular prejudice against sleep works an infinity of mischief. There are plenty of shagwags even among the cultivated class, but the sleep shagwad is in that class a very rare specimen. The tendency of the educated is to wakefulness, and the man who does intellectual work and exhibits what his friends think a disposition to overwork is actually a healthy instinct. Sleep recuperates him and he knows it.

A FIT.

(Hamilton Spectator.)
Wise-haired Tories should feel right at home in those metal muzzles.

ENTHUSIASM.

(Chicago Record-Herald.)
When there is nothing left for a man to be enthusiastic over he might as well be dead.

MUZZLIN'.

(Toronto Star.)
As the fashion journals so aptly remark, muzzlin' is much in vogue just now.

HUMAN NATURE.

(Philadelphia Record.)
Cynics—When a man gets all the money he needs there's only one thing he wants.
Silly—And that is, Cynics—More money.

AMBIGUOUS.

(Belleville Intelligencer.)
A country paper says in an obituary: "He leaves two sons, both married, to whom we extend our sympathy." Looks like a chance for a disagreement.

CHEAP POWER.

(Montreal Gazette.)
The London Street Railway Company, it is reported, is being asked to pay \$3 a year for electric power supplied through the Hydro-Electric Commission. Again it may be remarked that it was thought the Ontario scheme was to give consumers cheap power. There will be no great race of big power-using industries to the commission belt if they have to pay at that rate.

BAD KIND.

(Philadelphia Record.)
Nell—Don't you think Maude dresses with a great deal of taste?
Belle—Yes, but it's generally bad.

JOHN BURNS.

(London News.)
It is a matter for sincere gratification in this country that John Burns has retained his seat in the House of Commons, and by an unexpectedly large majority. He is much more than a Liberal leader of marked ability. Were he only that, we should feel no more interest in him than in Mr. Lloyd George, nor so much as in John Morley. But he is a conspicuous representative of the finest product of the world-wide movement of organized labor. He is a clear-headed, fair-minded, courageous and astute statesman, and he has learned his difficult art in the hard and uncertain school of experience. It is not many years ago that he was a passionate and violent agitator, from whom nothing but disturbance in season and out of season, was to be expected. Today certainly his sympathy with his own class is not less passionate, but his view of their rights, powers, policy and aims is broad and practical.—New York Times.

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BEEF BARONS CHARGED WITH CHEATING PUBLIC

Indictments Out for Six Big Companies and Twenty-One Packers.

New York, Feb. 25.—The beef trust of the United States, embracing six great packing companies and 21 packers, several of them multi-millionaires, socially and industrially prominent, were indicted by a grand jury in Hudson County, New Jersey, today, charged with conspiracy in limiting the supply of meat and poultry.

The indictment is drawn under the law of New Jersey, which provides upon conviction a maximum penalty of three years in the penitentiary or a \$10,000 fine, or both. The offence is extraditable, which means that practically all the meat barons of this country must either successfully resist extradition, or come to Jersey City for trial.

Pierre Garven, the public prosecutor of Hudson County, announced tonight that he would forthwith notify the defendants of their indictment, and would be ready to force extradition in each and every case where the individual concerned is not willing to face trial voluntarily. None, he says, will be spared.

Dribblets Let Loose.

The indictment goes on to state that mere dribblets of the supply were put on the market at stated intervals, small quantities agreed upon by the defendants, thus to curtail and restrict the supply "for the purpose of feloniously, arbitrarily and unlawfully increasing prices to the public."

Interesting and significant relations between the Armour, Swift and Morris interests, through the medium of the National Packing Company, are set forth in the document. In order to carry out the conspiracy, it is charged, certain adjustments in the directorate of the National Packing Company were necessary. At this end, the indictment says, a meeting was held in Jersey City, Dec. 11, 1908, at which various directors of Armour & Co., Swift & Co., and Morris & Co. were elected directors of the National Packing Company, constituting a majority and controlling the board. The Armour interests were represented by J. Ogden Armour, Connors and Mesker, the Morris interests by Edward Morris, the Wilson and Kenneth K. McLaren, a resident director (McLaren was not indicted), and the

Swift interests by Edward F. and Louis P. Swift and L. A. Carlton.

What Trust Controls.

The make-up of the directorate of the National Packing Company indicates how wholly representative it is of the great packing interests of the country, while in turn the company owns the capital stock of the following: Fowler Packing Company, St. Louis Dressed Beef and Provision Co., Fowler Canadian Company, Ltd., Fowler Brothers, Ltd., of Liverpool, Ontario Packing Company, Hammond Packing Company, G. A. Hammond Company, Anglo-American Provision Company, United Dressed Beef Company. The National Packing Company was incorporated under the laws of New Jersey in 1903, and has a capital stock of \$15,000,000.

STONE TOWN NEWS

Serious Illness of Mr. Hugh Fraser—Children Nearly Set Their Home on Fire.

[Special to The Advertiser.]

St. Marys, Feb. 25.—Mr. Hugh Fraser, of the west ward, suffered a paralytic stroke on Sunday, and after partly recovering from its effects, he had another slight stroke today. Three doctors are in attendance. At present he is in a very precarious condition. A carload of horses was shipped from here today for the west.

The Baptist Sunday school room in

the basement of the church is undergoing painting and decorating by W. H. Judd.

The preliminary investigation of the trial of Dale vs. Blanshard in reference to the voting of the \$20,000 bonus to the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway Company by Blanshard Township took place at Stratford this week. A Water street family had a bad scare by the careless handling of matches by children on Wednesday. The curtains on a window in a room caught fire and dropped to the carpet on the floor, but burned out before much damage was done.

NOTES FROM WALLACEBURG

An Esteemed Resident Near Death's Door—A Washington's Birthday Party.

[Special to The Advertiser.]

Wallaceburg, Feb. 25.—Mrs. Pigeon, who had a severe stroke of paralysis yesterday, lies in a very critical condition. Slight hopes are held out for her recovery.

Edwin McCreary, of Toronto, was called here yesterday to be in attendance at the bedside of his father, who lies at the point of death.

Miss Ruby Joiner, of Detroit, is spending a few days at the home of her parents.

Mrs. W. D. McRae, entertained a number of ladies at 6 o'clock dinner on Washington's birthday, Feb. 22.

John Sweeney, of Oil Springs, is the guest of his brother, Charles Sweeney, who has been residing with her niece, Mrs. Thomas Forhan, died yesterday. The funeral takes place in the Catholic Church. Inquest will be made in Wallaceburg tomorrow.

REV. MR. HICKS' RECEIPT

Investigating Committee of Essex Church Say He Should Produce It.

Essex, Ont., Feb. 26.—The committee appointed to investigate the departure of Rev. David Hicks, the Methodist minister, has decided to hold a formal inquiry into the case within about three weeks. It is said that the charges against the minister will number three, with twelve counts.

The members of the committee declined to express any opinion on the case, except to say that if Mr. Hicks has a receipt for the \$219 collected from his congregations for missionary purposes, and alleged to have been sent to the board at Toronto, he should produce the document.



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