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**Parliament.** In the Dominion Parliament business is now being pushed forward with commendable zeal. The oratorical stage of the session having been passed, the members are now addressing themselves to work with the view of reaching as soon as possible a point at which it may be practicable for Parliament to adjourn. A large amount of projected legislation will not be overtaken. The business of the session is a good deal interfered with by the Premier's compulsory absence in England in attendance upon the Queen's Jubilee celebration. It has been announced that among the important legislation which must be held over is the Plebiscite bill. The reason given for the delay in this matter is that it would not be satisfactory to take the plebiscite in connection with the present electoral lists, and that as the Government intends to pass a franchise bill, it is best that the latter should be enacted at the same session as the plebiscite bill. The absence of Mr. Laurier, who desires to be present when these measures are discussed in the House, makes it inexpedient to take them up at the present session. The delay in the submission of the prohibition question is unfortunate, both because it disappoints for the time being the hopes of the prohibitionists and because it encourages suspicions—groundless suspicions probably—that the Government in this matter is not disposed to carry out its pledges.—Among the legislation which passed the House during the week are Mr. Casey's Bicycle bill, which provides that Railway Companies shall carry bicycles for passengers as baggage, and the Alien Labor bill, which may be described as a retaliatory measure provoked by similar legislation on the part of the United States. The bill had been so amended in committee as to make enforcement dependent upon the initiation of the Government or more strictly of the Attorney-General of Canada.

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**The Government and the Plebiscite.** A large deputation of ministers and others from the Methodist Conference, which was in session last week at Ottawa, waited upon the Government represented by Sir Richard Cartwright and Hon. Messrs. Fisher and Davies in reference to the proposed plebiscite on the prohibition question. A resolution adopted by the Conference was presented, which resolution called attention to the various pledges given by Mr. Laurier to introduce and pass a plebiscite bill at the very earliest opportunity and stated that, unless prohibition were submitted to the people as a distinct issue apart from other questions, it would not be in accordance with the Premier's promise. The sentiments embodied in the resolution were also voiced by speakers who addressed the Government on behalf of the Conference. While there did not appear to be a disposition to doubt but that the Government so far was acting in good faith and that the present delay was practically unavoidable, the delegation was quite emphatic in

holding that, if the confidence of the temperance people was to be retained, a plebiscite measure must be brought forward next session and that the issue as to prohibition should not be complicated with the question of direct taxation. Replying on behalf of the Government, Sir Richard Cartwright complimented the delegation upon the courteous and reasonable manner in which they had presented their wishes and said they would have been justified in expressing their disappointment somewhat strongly. He intimated that the Government considered it of importance that the plebiscite vote should be taken upon a franchise list that would fully and fairly represent the people, but that the Government had found impracticable to carry out its intention of passing a franchise bill at the present session of Parliament. Sir Richard said he spoke without consultation with his colleagues, but believed he was speaking the mind of the Government when he said that a plebiscite bill would be laid on the table of the House very early at the next session of Parliament. Sir Richard does not appear to have made an explicit statement as to whether or not the question of direct taxation would be attached to the plebiscite, but his language would seem to favor the conclusion that in his view the main question to be submitted in the plebiscite should not be mixed with a question as to the best means of making up the deficit in revenue. Hon. Mr. Fisher said the Government was in earnest and the idea of playing fast and loose with this question was the furthest from his mind.

### Importance of Good Roads.

There is, at the present time, a very general agitation in favor of good roads. The agitation is certainly one of a highly commendable and wholesome character. Few things have a more important bearing upon the comfort of those who live in the rural sections of a country than the condition of the highways. No matter how fertile and productive the soil or how great other advantages there may be, so long as the roads are bad, the people are subject to very serious disadvantages. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of good roads. It is easy to see that they represent not only comfort but cash value to those who have to use them.—They mean a saving in time, in team, harness and carriage service, and they add to the value of every acre of land in the sections of country through which they pass. The governments of these Maritime Provinces can hardly undertake anything more directly in the general interests of the people than to give wise attention to the building and repair of the highways. What is wanted is not merely grants of money from the public treasury but competent direction in the work of road making. For lack of this a vast amount of time and money in the aggregate is practically every year thrown away. It is gratifying to observe that in some parts of the country at least more attention than formerly is being given to this important subject. The use of road-making machines in sections of country where the soil is favorable to their operation will doubtless effect much improvement, and it is to be hoped that plans may be generally adopted whereby the road taxes and statute labor shall be expended under more competent direction. There is, however, probably no particular in which so much can be effected in the interests of good roads at so little cost as by the use of broad tires on heavy farm wagon and trucks.

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### Valuable Experiments.

Some valuable experiments, showing the difference of draft required in broad and narrow tires, are reported from the agricultural experimental

station at Columbia, Mo. Contrary to public expectation, it was established that in nearly all cases the draft was materially lighter when tires six inches wide were used than with tires of standard width. This is thought to remove the last objection to the gradual adoption of the broad wheel, and its effect in making, rather than in breaking roads has been thoroughly appreciated. On a macadam street the same draft required to haul a ton load with narrow tires hauled more than a ton and a quarter with the broad tires. On gravel roads the draft required to haul 1,000 pounds with narrow tires hauled 2,620 pounds on the broad tires. On dirt roads, dry and hard and free from ruts, the broad tires pulled more than one-third lighter. On mud roads, spongy on the surface and soft underneath, the broad tires drew one-fifth lighter than the narrow tires. On the same road, when soft and sticky on top and firm underneath, the narrow tires pulled materially lighter, the difference amounting to an average of one-third. When this same road had been wet to a great depth by continued rains, and the mud had become stiff and sticky, so that it would gather on the wheels, the difference was again largely in favor of the narrow tires. These two are the only conditions of the dirt road in which the narrow tires showed to advantage. On meadows and pastures the results have been strikingly in favor of the broad wheels. When the meadows are soft, from 3,000 to 4,000 pounds may be hauled on the broad wheels with the same draft as that required to haul a load of 2,000 pounds on the narrow wheels. The beneficial effect of the wide tire on dirt roads was also strikingly shown in the tests. A clay road, badly cut into ruts by the narrow tires, was selected for the test, as presenting conditions least favorable to the broad tire. A number of tests of the draft of the narrow tire were made in these open ruts, and immediately followed by the broad tires running in the same ruts. The first run of the broad tire over the narrow-tire ruts was accompanied by an increased draft; the second by a draft materially less than the original narrow tire; the third by a still greater decline, and in the fourth trip the rut was practically obliterated and filled, thus demonstrating that if even half the wagons had broad tires the results would be beneficial to all in decreased draft and better roads.

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### The Crops.

If the witness of the present season is not unprecedented—no one seems able to remember when the wetter season occurred. From the first of April to the middle of June fine days have been like angels' visits in their rarity. In May three-fourths of the days were rainy, and for St. John it is stated that the meteorological record for the month shows an aggregate rainfall within a very small fraction of ten inches. So continuous and heavy rains have been of course very much against farming operations. Seeding has been greatly hindered—in many places has been impossible—and in some cases where seed has been put into the ground it has been destroyed by the wet. In Prince, Edward Island, we understand, the rain fall has been less excessive than in the other provinces, and ordinary farming operations have therefore been less interfered with. In eastern Ontario, it is reported, the conditions have been much the same as in the Maritimes. In the western part of the latter province there has also been an excess of rain, but the effects upon the farming interests appear to have been less injurious. The prospects for fall sown wheat is that it will be above an average, and the prospect for spring wheat is regarded as fair, especially upon high lands. The long continued rains have affected the hay crop injuriously on low lying lands in many sections both east and west. On higher lands the prospect of the hay crop is good and the early starting of the grass proved a great blessing in some parts of the country where last year's crop had been short. The prospects for fruit, so far as can be judged at present, appears to be fairly good. Seasonable rains occurred last week in Manitoba and the Northwest, and are said to have greatly improved the outlook for the wheat crop in those sections of the Dominion.