

THE WEST

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SESSIONAL REVIEW

By Staff Representative

The session over the time is opportune to review the work of the legislature. It is a tribute to Attorney-General Lamont that he led the House so successfully in the absence of Premier Scott, for Mr. Lamont has the happy faculty of getting along well with both sides of the House. He takes his knocks with perfect "equanimity" and hands them out to the other fellow without the slightest compunction. The Attorney-General held up his end fairly well all the way through, but Mr. Motherwell in dividing his time between agriculture and public works was master of neither. Owing to his lack of knowledge of the province generally he could not discuss important questions with that familiarity and intelligence which is expected of his position, and in Mr. Scott's department he was entirely at sea, having in committee of supply, to depend entirely on the deputy, Mr. Robinson. Mr. Calder knew his department of education well, but he shared some responsibility with Mr. Motherwell with respect to public works, and was equally unfortunate in his knowledge of that department. As provincial treasurer Mr. Calder has not inspired the country with confidence in his ability as a financier or as a prophet. He urged before the election that the financial arrangements with Ottawa were adequate to the needs of the province and yet at the second session he has exhausted every source of revenue and resorted to direct taxation. What the state of the public business will be in even two years from now, we must leave to chance, but hope for the best. The current revenue is gone; there is a direct tax upon the farmers and ranchers (towns and cities exempt) of \$330,000; there is an increase of \$100,000 from Ottawa by reason of the Quebec Conference resolutions, and the Government has been empowered to borrow \$2,000,000 on the provincial credit. The only money not spent is what they have not yet got their hands on. Mr. Haultain well named the policy of the Government as that of the "Rodrigal" \$75,000 per year is paid to the R.N.W.M.P. Police in a lump sum, and the Government could not inform the House of the nature of the service rendered in return. Unnecessary provision was made for salaried game guardians, who will do work already paid for in the police appropriation money voted for wolf bounty has been spent among fur dealers, practically thrown away as regards the object of the vote. Many cases were cited where the public works department has given money to party heeling to spend on public improvements, and nearly fifty per cent has gone into the pocket of the "faithful" servant. Owing to the autonomy terms the University, Agricultural College, and Collegiate Institute, will be a burden upon the people and will have to be maintained by direct taxation. The Government's own claims—that Mr. Haultain's amendment admits the principle of direct taxation, but the Opposition could not kill the bill at the third reading, and if they could get the Government to refer the measure back to Committee to make the amendment proposed, which would modify many of the bad features of the act, they would have

been doing a great deal for the farmers of Saskatchewan. If it is possible to revoke a bad bargain, then make the best of it, if a change is possible. This is just what was proposed in Mr. Haultain's amendment to the bill imposing direct taxation. With respect to the Government's taxation scheme the certain result will be that the tax will have to be borne for all time, either by the farmers as at present, or by the province as a whole, or be revoked as a tax and paid out of other general revenue, which the public treasury will not stand. The policy of the Government is that of a "neight stand showman," for they take no thought for the future. This government is about the size of an inferior town council. They undertake to construct a land titles office in Regina. All summer is lost in digging the basement by day labor, at an enormous cost. Then the provincial architect is verbally instructed to take a look at the hole and draw plans; the only stipulation being that the rear wall, next to Geo. Brown's property, must be as good as the front, this being a condition of the site purchase, and the land lots were not presented to the government either. Other officers of the department advise the architect what the plans should be, and as too many cooks spoil the broth, he brings in plans three times as costly as the Government can afford. This is only a sample of administration under the present Government. They spend the public money on Government and party machinery and the machine is about all the country has to look at. That is as far as this Government has got yet. With regard to the broader matters of administration they have no policy. They are not ready to have their hands forced on the telephone question and will only commit themselves to an inquiry. While they cannot view the transportation question with equanimity, they keep their arms folded until something happens, to either force them into action or to improve conditions and restore their composure. On the grain question the conditions they tell us are "intolerable," yet we must look with abiding faith in the future, for the present they have no solution. The Government showed themselves much more capable of handling legislation this session, and if they had shown the same improvement in policy, they would be entitled to much more public confidence. Many important changes were made in legislation at the suggestion of Mr. Haultain, of course, in committee, but it is a credit to the Opposition that they improved as

they did on much of the legislation introduced. With regard to the university bill this was particularly striking, but of course there was absolute harmony in the House with regard to this bill. With the act to supplement the revenues of the crown, or what is known as known as the direct tax bill, the case was different, and there was a disagreement at every point, and this dangerous bill went through as brought down. The same is practically true of the liquor license act which contains provisions that enable the officials of that department to turn their system into a political machine. This is not a threatening danger, but it is a possible source of alarm, and while we have a great deal of faith in the officials at present in charge, party expediency might later drive the government to make an improper use of this department. We believe that the session has weakened the government throughout the country and that the people realize that the present administration is unsafe and that their confidence in office will result disastrously in the future. It is apparent from the expressed sentiment of the country that Mr. Haultain enjoys the confidence of the electors. The Government has criticized him for attacking them when he has not given them a policy, and he can take the attitude of Sir Robert Peel, who once said that he would "prescribe when he is called in." Mr. Haultain can, prescribe, and we believe that at the earliest opportunity he will be called in. His political record in this country contrasts well with the policy of the present Government, which in effect is: "Cheer up and pay your taxes."

In committee of supply the acting commissioner of public works stated in reply to enquiry that the government does not propose to buy teams in connection with their road gang system but will engage farmers and other workmen. There will be a government foreman and camping outfit, but the success of the scheme depends upon whether sufficient men and teams can be secured to do the work. The acute question of water supply in certain districts came up for discussion in committee of supply in the legislature. J. H. Sheppard (Moose Jaw District) expressed his doubt as to the adequacy of the government policy in not continuing the operation of well boring machines, but instead voting assistance to private operators. The conditions under which the government assistance is granted are that after a private concern puts down five wells in which water has been obtained the government will pay the operators a sum equal to the amount of the freight and duty on the machine which practically amounts to half the cost. Mr. Sheppard contended that private concerns will only operate in districts where they can get water easily and in his district it is impossible to get water except by driving hundreds of feet and at present the situation is very acute. In fact there is no other matter of such importance to many of his constituents. The government stated in answer to

(Continued on page 5.)

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HAS The Week Can

The Week of per, in discussion since the that the new t not make Frinc terminus. The "It is not yet the election wa the position to tic enterprise ha Victoria Times t the Hon. Wm. tions, but what to the point as tual conditions policy of the G. today Prince R decried. The la the north broug leaving only six practically all t months ago. Have been taken their assistants, the coming sum charged and are The steamship C down carried a el instructed to an cel every order w

SESSIONAL (Continued) a question spec ine in Mr. Calder the well at Wilco the government \$ have gone down I indication of wate

In answer to an the proposed brid Mr. Lamont said in abeyance for t cannot come to a rangement with t company must hav and if they will c comitate traffic erment would pay the estimates, vi the company will amount the govern to construct a bri account.

Regarding the ex N.R. west from P. Lamont stated that he had been the railway compa matter and has they will commence spring and at leas be built this season

When the vote of final prosecutions Haultain took up the of the relationship, torney General and who have shared in the enforcements during the past year had come to the no of the law professi tain wanted Mr. A policy of his depart spect approaches a p he cannot afford no right with the peopl sity. The attorney reply that his part tion and as he does profits from this t from them. He we said that since he et he has not receiv the business from hi Mr. Haultain asked considered he was a share in the profits, made no reply. T Opposition urged th a delicate matter in is a principle und must be respected a general cannot igno with impunity.

The R.N.W.M.P. Police position with the relationship to the discussion of the ed's department can extent the force has straction of justice year. The province v annually in a jump appears that is larg affect of the police. sion cast on the s is considered expen sion.

Mr. Motherwell when his estimates mittie. The appoint clerk has become a of the dismissal of and the new deputy of the office work through ledge and experience well said he wanted he can send out o farmers, and Mr. ed that if the commu deputy in the offic out over the coun might be able to tak part as the head ment when "matte came up in the hou sion.

In committee of st tained worried out ment important inf the preparation of the Regina land title replies to Mr. Haul show that Geo. H. provincial architect written instructions officials of the depart