

THE EDMONTON BULLETIN

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BULLFINCH CO., LTD.,
DUNCAN MARSHALL,
Manager.

MONDAY, MAY 13, 1907.

THE SESSION.

The two outstanding legislative features of the five-month session of Parliament, which closed on April 27th, were the tariff revision and the Labor Disputes Act.

It speaks volumes for the tariff revision of 1897 that after ten years' operation in times of marvelous industrial and commercial development, when the foundations of a national fiscal policy are most severely tested, that the revision of 1907 was much less a general overhauling than a readjustment of minor features. Nothing of the nature of reconstruction was found necessary, there was no alteration of essentials, and the tried and proven principle of a revenue tariff with a British preference remains the foundation work of Canada's real national policy. While it was found necessary in some cases to lessen the preference on some classes of goods used largely on the farm the purchaser was given the benefit of a lowering of the general tariff.

That our tariff is still a tariff for revenue and that the British preference remains is certainly no fault of those Canadian enterprises whose coffers would be filled by a tariff which enabled them to exact more from the consumer, nor of the political party whose tariff ideal is the exclusion of all foreign-made goods. Never has the Manufacturers' Association carried on a more persistent campaign for high protection than during the life of the present Parliament and never has the Opposition been more admittedly willing to become the handmaid of this powerful and wealthy organization. The demand, both of the manufacturers and of their Parliamentary representatives is simply that the Canadian consumer be delivered into their hands by a tariff "adequate" to prevent the importation of any and all manufactured goods. With these demands the Government have not complied and while manifesting the greatest sympathy with the development of Canadian industries have reminded both their fiscal and political opponents that there are others in Canada besides the manufacturers who have a right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The reminder to has been in the form of a wavering adherence to the principle of tariff for revenue purposes.

The Labor Disputes Act is notable rather for what it indicates than as a forceful or coercive measure. The ground-work of the bill is the enunciation in law of the principle that the Canadian public has an interest in the operation of public utilities which neither the greed of employers nor the indifference of employees should be permitted to overlook or to destroy. But the measure takes cognizance of the fact that offences will come in the industrial world and makes provision for the peaceable settlement of such differences without the rights of either the disputants or the public being ignored or infringed upon. One the one hand, the public interest is safeguarded by making it illegal for either employer or employees to stop the operation of a public utility until the cause of dissatisfaction has been investigated; on the other hand, the rights of both employer and employees are safeguarded by provision that either may demand and secure such investigation and that the inquiry shall be prompt, fair and impartial. The session of Parliament in which the Act was passed had not closed until a strike of coal miners in Nova Scotia had been settled amicably by the application of its provisions, and until the striking miners of Southern Alberta and British Columbia, on being made aware of these provisions, had returned to work, pending the finding of the arbitrators. The measure is a long step toward the peaceable solution of labor troubles and is at the same time the "bill of rights" of the public regarding the operation of utilities.

Of possibly not less importance to Western Canada than either of these enactments was the new Dominion Lands Act, which was introduced, but could not be carried through during the session. The purpose of the measure was twofold: First, to con-

solidate the present Land Act and amendments, with omissions, amendments and alterations where experience had proven desirable, and second, to provide for the disposal of 40,000,000 acres of western land heretofore tied up in railway reserves, but now released by the satisfaction of the railway companies' claims to land grants. A further object in view in determining the manner of disposing of the land was the necessity of securing the construction of a railway to Hudson Bay at an early date. Legislative provision has been in existence since 1856 for a land grant in aid of such line, but it is not the policy of the Government to extend the land grant for the 480 miles of road still remaining to be built. It was considered fair in disposing of the 40,000,000 acres of land now freed from reservation to secure to the Dominion some compensation for what assistance it may be necessary to give to the Hudson Bay Railway. On the other hand, it was not considered desirable to throw the land open for indiscriminate sale, as experience has amply shown that this would be equivalent to placing it in the hands of speculators who would hold up the future settlers for whatever prices they might desire. The pre-emption privilege was, therefore, adopted, by which the actual homesteader was permitted to purchase a second quarter-section at a fair price, provided he performed settlement duties on the land, similar to the homestead duties. By this means the land would pass directly into the hands of the farmer and the national treasury would be recouped in a measure for the burden of the Hudson Bay Railway.

From the outset the Opposition made war upon the bill. Mr. Foster assailed it with the fury of a land speculator, who saw his hopes of a speedy turnover threatened by the prospect of this large area being put upon the market at a moderate price; and his companions joined with less parkness, but equal energy in blockading the measure. Owing to the departure of the Premier, to attend the Colonial Conference, contentious legislation had to be postponed and the Land Bill went over until next session.

The new postal arrangement, while not a matter of Parliamentary action, was one of the most important Government announcements of the session. By this the postage on British publications is lessened and that on American publications is increased.

The former needed no justification beyond the desire to promote friendship and business relationship with the Mother Land. Under the previous arrangement the Canadian mails were loaded down with American publications and for the expense involved, Canada got no adequate compensation. A worse feature was that a very large proportion of these publications were merely disguised advertising sheets, and Canada found herself paying for the distribution of advertising matter designed to draw Canadian trade to American business houses. This was too obviously suicidal to continue.

From the Opposition side of the House the session produced absolutely nothing of public significance. Days that should have been spent in the consideration of national affairs were spent in the slander of private citizens of the country who had the temerity to be Liberals in politics and still refused to relinquish the common rights of citizenship. The days dragged into weeks, the weeks into months and still the frantic attempt continued, to offset the insurance report by loud and prolonged malediction. This, of course, was interesting enough as a study in political strategy of a mighty power kind. But meantime, the business of the country which pays the piper was transacted in half-hour instalments, few and far between—usually in the wee sma' hours, when the Opposition orators had run out of wind. Naturally under the circumstances, there could be no proportionate or proper consideration of matters of real national concern—nor does it appear to have dawned upon the Opposition that at least one of the purposes of their existence is to pay some attention to such matters.

Canada never had so good a Government as today, and lucky it is for her, for never had we an Opposition so thoroughly and abjectly useless. Constructive criticism and suggestive discussion have no place in the program of an Opposition in whose thought party expediency towers mountain-like above the mole-hill of Canadian business.

A COLONIAL PREFERENCE IMPOSSIBLE.

The Mail and Empire has gone out of its way to criticize Sir Wilfrid Laurier for not demanding a preference for Canadian products in the British markets as a quid pro quo for the preference Canada has given to Great Britain, as if such were imperatively necessary for the continued unity of the Empire. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has very wisely and with almost prophetic vision, pointed out what the basis of unity must be. Each member of the Empire must look to its own interests and will best serve the whole by so doing. The colonies have received full fiscal independence and have used it to develop their trade, while at the same time they have built up tariff walls against the Mother Country. Doubtless, the colonies feel this policy is vital to their interests. In the same way the British Government holds that free trade is vital to the interests of the people of the United Kingdom. The essential point in the consideration is that the British people depend for food and raw materials on external sources of supply. There is no doubt that it is only by her special productive activity, by the enormous earnings of her shipping and by keeping the largest open market in the world that Great Britain is able to maintain her commercial supremacy in the keen competition of this generation. All these factors depend in the long run upon keeping food and raw materials on the same basis and at an equitable ratio of prices. After the fullest discussion on both sides of the fiscal question the British electorate by an unexampled majority have declared for an open market, and with Mr. Asquith's splendid budget fresh in their minds they will show no disposition alter their views.

Moreover, the growth of Britain's colonial trade has not increased sufficiently to warrant such discrimination on the part of Great Britain against non-British nations. Over fifty years ago, when Britain was beginning her phenomenal commercial development as a result of free trade the imports from the colonies were 27.7 per cent. of the total imports of the nation, and although the imports to Great Britain have enormously increased since that time, yet the imports from the colonies are only 23.4 per cent. In the case of the exports the percentages are 31.6 per cent. in 1875 and 32.8 per cent. in 1906.

MR. SETON'S NORTHERN TRIP.

All true lovers of literature and all who have an ear for nature's message as it is expressed and portrayed to the higher intelligence of man in the humbler creation over which man has been called to dominate and control will find an intense personal interest in the visit of Ernest Thompson Seton, the noted author and naturalist, to the city, and especially in his proposed trip to the so-called Barren Lands that comprise the northern half of the great Laurentian plateau that sweeps round Hudson's Bay. This territory has a message for the rest of Canada and the world which has yet to be told, and we are assured that the lure and mystery of the north will be revealed by Mr. Seton in a manner that will command the attention of thousands, young and old. Mr. Seton pursues this work in the spirit of the scientist whose chief end is to reveal the truth, and will interpret his work with the sympathy and insight of the true poet. His aim is to study the fauna and flora of this unknown region and show that the term Barren Lands is a misnomer, that the land is not barren, but has flowers as luxuriant and beautiful as the semi-tropical belts of this continent, and a range of animal life more useful to the purposes of man than those found in the warmer climates. He will show that this vast area is infinitely rich and that the old idea that the far north of Canada was nothing but a few acres of snow is gone forever. A good deal of the literature of the past relating to Canada has been full of allusions to snow and frozen fields. We are coming to learn that these fields are of rich and varied resources and that they will be highly prized in the future.

A PROVINCIAL VICTORY.

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada sustaining the Medical Act passed by the Alberta Legislature at its first session, is another victory for provincial rights, and is very satisfactory evidence of the unrestricted autonomy of the province. It will be remembered that shortly after the medical act was

passed a physician applied to be enrolled under the old North-West Territories act claiming that until the old medical council was dissolved the province had no powers to establish a new one. Hon. F. W. G. Hamilton took up the case in favor of the old act and threatened Dr. Lafferty, Registrar for the Medical Council, with a mandamus if he refused to register his clients under the old regulations. A test case was taken before the Supreme Court here with the result that a decision was given declaring the Alberta act ultra vires. The decision however, was not unanimous, the vote being three to two against the Alberta act. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada which gave a unanimous decision reversing the judgment of the Supreme Court here and sustaining the Alberta act. The rights of the province were more or less at stake and it is a matter for congratulation that the province has won.

While the matter was pending a small section of the opposition endeavored to turn the matter to partisan account. The Journal ever eager to make party capital out of anything could not wait for the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada for fear its opportunity would disappear, said: "It will be interesting for the legal fraternity to watch how the Attorney-General legislates himself out of the predicament of his faulty legislation." It will now be interesting to watch the Journal explain to its readers that the Attorney-General's legislation was not faulty, in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada. It is appropriate, indeed, that the Journal should have dubbed its editorials "The passing show."

NOTE AND COMMENT.

Well! A May snow storm is not as bad as an earthquake.

Sherman will persist in being a prophet of evil.

Cheer up! We will not have another March in May until 1933.

Winter's grand finale has not made much of a hit this season.

Calgary has 7,000 loads of winter ashes. The Herald man counted them.

Springs are spouting lava in Chili. That happens in Calgary every time a settler passes through there on his way to Edmonton.

One can quote Scripture on charity like a man who has just given twenty-five cents to the minister's stand.

There is one consolation in having this weather. It has forestalled the release of the usual outburst of spring poetry.

There is one crop this spring that is in no danger at least, and that is the crop of stories about peculiar springs we have seen.

London is to have the milk supply of that great city distributed in paper pails that are germ proof. As yet, however, no one has invented a water-proof milk bottle.

John L. Sullivan by keeping sober for 116 weeks has won the promise of a rich New York woman to marry him. Those weeks must have seemed as long as an Alberta spring.

Although the British people refused Chamberlainism, the universal talisman for all her economical ills, she has shown a wonderful vigor that has disappointed the protectionists of the old country. The last budget indicates a surplus of \$25,000,000 and a reduction of \$66,000,000 to the public debt.

After all the talk of graft and exposure, the session has ended without fastening a single administrative scandal on the Federal Government. Several members of the Opposition have been discredited by cold facts. Not a shred of evidence which would damage a Liberal member has been produced.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Seton will find rich and ample material for several books and publications as a result of his trip to the north. Some of his former work has done

much towards imparting the secret and charm of life on the plains and foothills, and if he succeeds so in the north he will have rendered a great public service.

The recrudescence of the self-made man is doubly unfortunate at a time when the world is busy trying to determine the value of unearned income in every man's career. The self-made man is bound to hog everything in his life which seems to be good without pausing to consider what a little accident might have submerged him so far below the surface that he would have suffocated in perfect silence.

REGINA.

R. F. Schraeder, agent of the Independent Lumber Company at Bethune, is charged with the embezzlement of \$200. Schraeder was arrested by the R. N. W. M. police.

T. L. Chapman has been appointed city gardener, the position being rendered vacant through the resignation of George Watt. The salary attached will be \$83.33 per month.

Cement City, or what was years ago known as "Pile o' Bones," that historic butte about seven miles east of Regina, has changed hands, and C. R. Morden has sold his interest in the place to W. H. Mulholland of Toronto.

The city has fixed a new scale of water rates for building contractors. For each 1,000 brick the rate is 13 cents, each cubic yard of concrete 10 cents, and each 100 square yards of plastering 25 cents.

J. L. Rose, who arrived recently from Montana, has purchased a section and a half of land outside the city and intends starting farming on a large scale. He starts immediately to erect one of the finest houses that will be found in agricultural districts in the West. A fine stable will be built immediately and later in the year, a big barn. Ten thousand dollars is to be spent in equipment.

It is announced that in the near future a number of the officials high up in the C. P. R., at Winnipeg are coming to Medicine Hat to witness a second series of experiments in connection with the tests being made of gas as fuel for the car shops.

The Mayor and Publicity Officer Hall will go to Calgary to investigate the rumors that the Crow's Nest train will run only as far as Dunsmore Junction.

Some discussion has been going on in the council as to the value of wooden water pipes instead of iron. In the West wood for water pipes is increasing rapidly and little of a reliable nature has been available as to its merits or demerits.

A horse met death last week at the hat by jumping on a hydrant which entered its body.

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Among the banquet visitors was Gray Turgeon of Hardisty. His town is at the extreme southeast of the constituency and in order to get here, Mr. Turgeon had to go to Wetaskiwin over the C. P. R. He was accompanied by the C. & E., and to Vegreville over the C. N. R.

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HAPPENINGS IN OTHER PLACES.

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