

Our Ottawa Letter

The New Parliament—Activities of the New Members—Election Acts to be Reviewed

Ottawa, March 13.—When this letter appears in the columns of The Guide parliament will have commenced its deliberations and the new Union government will have, through the formal speech from the throne, presented its chief legislative proposals for the session to the people. While the session does not promise much excitement, unless the issues are all wrong, it should prove to be one of the most intensely interesting since the days when the coalition cabinet of Macdonald and Brown, made co-operation possible. The government which meets parliament on Monday is not a coalition administration in the sense that the Macdonald-Brown government was. It probably resembles more closely the Union of Liberals and Conservatives which followed the split in Mr. Gladstone's party over home rule when a body of members consisting of the numerically greatest portion of the Liberal party remained in the Upper House as His Majesty's loyal opposition. The straight Liberals under Sir Wilfrid Laurier numbering some 90 odd will be approximately twice as numerous as the Liberal Unionists who will support the new government. The majority of the Unionists of the Liberal stripe of politics come from west of the great lakes, where the get-together spirit was considerably stronger than elsewhere in Canada when the election campaign was on. Added together the two wings of the Liberal party are slightly stronger than the Conservatives but no one here thinks that there will be any disposition to coalesce or to return to old party lines until the war is over and probably not this side of a general election.

Short Session Predicted

I have it on the best of authority that it is not the intention of the opposition to unduly prolong the session. There will be criticism of the taking of the soldiers' vote under the provisions of the War Time Elections Act and also of the Franchise Act and a demand is likely to be made for a repeal of the latter. This is quite likely to produce the hottest debate of the session. The subject is one that is likely to prove a bit awkward for Liberal ministers in the government who opposed the bill in the house and it is suggested in some quarters that the government may meet the situation by agreeing to wipe the measure off the statute books. It will doubtless be replaced after the war is over by a bill giving the franchise to all women and restoring to naturalized Canadians the right to cast a ballot.

There are rumors that some of the old-time Ontario Conservatives who have never been greatly pleased with the Union government will, metaphorically speaking, occupy "cross-benches" and slap the wrists of the ministers when they feel so disposed. I have conversed with some of these members and they claim that the Union government has not accomplished anything that could not have been done by a party government. They resent the inclusion of men of radical tendencies in the cabinet and doubtless most of their criticisms will be directed towards the plans of these new ministers. On the other hand it is thought that Liberals elected in Eastern Canada pledged to support the government's war measures, but not otherwise bound, may be disposed to direct an occasional shaft of criticism at the members of the Borden administration still in the cabinet. On the whole it will be recognized that while there is no question as to the government commanding the loyal support of those elected to support Union there may be occasional rifts in the late that will make the session quite worth while for those who like variety in connection with legislative proceedings.

The New Eastern Ministers

When the house foregathers the new ministers of the crown will be very much in the public eye. All students of the political situation, no matter how extreme their views, are willing to admit that the Union government is considerably stronger in personnel

and administrative ability than the Borden administration which passed away last autumn. Hon. Robt. Rogers, Hon. J. D. Hazen, and Hon. W. J. Roche are the three members of the Borden government who will be missing from the cabinet circle and the house. Hon. Frank Cochrane is still a member of the cabinet and of the house. He is no longer minister of railways but he is the connecting link between the government system of railways and the administration. Of the new men the light is not expected to shine with great intensity upon Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, the new Minister of Marine and Naval Affairs. Mr. Ballantyne is a business man with no great liking for politics and will probably be content to administer his department with quiet efficiency. The ministers whose performances in the house and elsewhere will attract the most attention are Hon. N. W. Rowell, Hon. Frank Carvell and the western group: Hon. Messrs. Sifton, Calder and Crerar. Mr. Rowell, as president of the privy council, has been an exceedingly active member of the new administration and undoubtedly

The Three New Western Ministers

The three new ministers from the radical West may, more than any others perhaps, excite the interest of parliament and the people. Mr. Calder and Mr. Sifton have not sought much publicity since they became federal ministers but it is known that their time and abilities have been fully engaged in dealing with the problems awaiting solution. Mr. Crerar has not sought publicity either, but it has to a considerable degree been thrust upon him because of the position he occupies as minister of agriculture. As Dr. J. W. Robertson remarked at a luncheon recently at which an address was delivered by Mr. Crerar, he, above all other ministers, should command the support and the sympathy of the people. The military problem having in a large measure been solved the great remaining task is that of increased production and to Mr. Crerar and his associates the people of Canada and of the Motherland as well, are looking for a solution. It is only putting it mildly to state that Mr. Crerar has created the impression that he will spare no efforts in his endeavor to increase the resources and incidentally the fighting will of the people.

Militia Department Changes Forecasted

I had almost overlooked Major-General Mewburn, the new minister of

bath cars to hear, let him tell somebody else."

MAY LEASE HOMESTEAD

Ottawa, March 13.—On the recommendation of Hon. Arthur Meighen, minister of interior, a new homestead regulation has been adopted providing that in the case of an entrant for a homestead being absent on military service and unable to cultivate the land, he may lease it to other parties.

The new regulation, which has been passed with a view to increasing agricultural production, will apply to entrants engaged in the naval as well as the military service, and also to homesteaders "engaged in any work deemed by the minister to be of national importance." The leasing of unpatented homesteads in cases where the entrant has died or is insane is also authorized.

The regulations provide as follows: "The breaking and cultivating of the land held under entry, the erection of permanent improvements, and, in cases where the entrant has been granted the privilege of substituting stock in lieu of cultivation, the maintenance of livestock on such land by the lessee during the term of the lease, may be granted to the entrant as fulfillment in part or in whole as the case may be, of the requirements for obtaining letters patent, providing that such evidence there-



Solving their Own Problem. Citizens of a Pennsylvania Town Helping Themselves to Coal during the Shortage.

his influence has had much to do with war-time prohibition. He is strong on social reform and is likely to have proposals to make along these lines later on. Although a leader of advance thought Mr. Rowell is credited with Conservative tendencies in matters relating to the tariff and business. Many people here are inclined to believe that he will gradually gravitate towards the Conservative party and that he is likely someday to be a Conservative Prime Minister of Canada, with a united Ontario behind him. But this is mere speculation.

Mr. Carvell up to the present time has kept himself pretty much in the background. A year ago he was the most cordially hated by the supporters left of the speaker and the member most cordially ybated by the supporters of the government. This session he will sit with the ministers whom he has been accustomed to assail so vigorously and at times no doubt will be the object of criticism by his one-time associates. Mr. Carvell frankly confesses to some tendencies which are regarded as being reactionary in the West. He has expressed himself more than once in public as being dubious as to public ownership of railways. He says the management of the L.C.R. by the government has not encouraged him in the belief that government control would be an improvement on private ownership. What Mr. Carvell thinks he is very liable to say and the course he will adopt as a minister in the Union government will attract considerable attention in the house.

militia, who will share with Mr. Crerar the distinction of being a minister in a Dominion cabinet without previous parliamentary experience. On the whole, General Mewburn is believed to be making good. It is generally recognized that a mistake was made when the authority of the minister of militia was confined to this side of the Atlantic and an overseas minister appointed. It may have been a good course to adopt to clip the wings of Sir Sam Hughes but the results have been decidedly unsatisfactory and a reversion to the old order of things when there was no dual control of Canada's military forces is quite probable. This is a question that will engage the attention of the ministers who will attend the Imperial War Cabinet sessions in June.

FREE TRADE LEAGUE

The International Free Trade League, 38 St. Botolph Street, Boston, U.S.A., is what its name implies. It is out to abolish custom houses and barbed-wired tariff entanglements of all kinds throughout the world. It invites members who believe in free trade, peace, good-will among nations—international men. Its secretary is Kenneth B. Elliman; terms of membership, \$1.25 per year, including subscription to the League's quarterly. The League believes that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." The secretary does not desire correspondence with tariff-reformers, tariff-deformers, tariff-for-revenue or any other half-way-house trade obstructors. His latesting is out day and night for tariff destroyers. "He that

of, as is satisfactory to the minister, is submitted."

FOWL SPOIL IN STORAGE

A sensation has been created in Winnipeg as the result of the announcement that 8,500 pounds of chicken belonging to Wm. Davies Co. had been sent from the company's cold storage plant to the city incinerator and destroyed as unfit for human food. Controller Puttee, stated that there had been destroyed on one occasion 4,000 pounds of chicken and on another 4,500 pounds, making a total of 8,500. The Davies Company had taken the initiative in getting the chickens destroyed, it had paid for the incinerator fee, and "from those facts," said Mr. Puttee, "we may be sure that the chicken were in a pretty bad way."

The chicken had been in cold storage since October of 1916. It was estimated that in numbers the total destroyed was in the neighborhood of 3,000 birds.

Is your house or barn the first object that the winter winds strike in several miles sweep across the prairie? A good windbreak will make a world of difference about the farmstead. It will add much to the comfort of both man and beast. Even the birds do not regard the bare wind-swept prairie as a home. The windbreak will make a home for them too.

The expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production.—Karl Marx.

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