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The Federal Parliament.

The present political situation is perhaps the most interesting in the lifetime of this government. Sir Wilfrid Laurier finds himself up against the stone wall of unyielding opposition to the reciprocity pact and will be forced to go to the country in order that the opinion of the people may be expressed at the polls on the most important question which has loomed up in Canada since confederation. Mr. Borden's enthusiastic reception in the western provinces and the anxiety shown by the farmers to hear both sides of the question have strengthened the hands of the opposition who have maintained from the first that so vital a question should receive the verdict of the men with the ballot. It has never been the custom of Sir Wilfrid to take the people into his confidence. On the naval policy he refused to take their judgment and so on this reciprocity issue affecting as it does the national and economic destiny of the Dominion he fears to trust the people. But unless all the signs of the political times fail Sir Wilfrid Laurier will have to take the plunge in the uncertain waters of the general election. Mr. Borden promised the men of the west that he would do everything in his power to ensure that they had a chance of voting on reciprocity before the agreement came into effect and since the house has met after its two months recess the opposition has gone on calmly discussing this feature of the agreement when it has been brought up for consideration by the government.

When parliament reassembled on the 18 inst., Mr. Fielding again brought reciprocity to the fore and the debate thereon was resumed. First however the opposition presented an amendment to the motion which it had been adopted by the government would have ensured substantial recognition of the services of the patriots who during the Fenian raids of 1865-1870 defended the soil of Canada from the attacks of the armed enemy. For fifteen years the veterans have been pressing their claims upon the government and they have been led on by specious promises to believe that something would eventually be done for them particularly in view of the handsome treatment meted out to the veterans of the rebellion of 1885 and the men who went to South Africa. On the present occasion however Sir Wilfrid Laurier found it impossible to evade the direct issue any longer. Promises would not do and he asked his followers to vote down the amendment calling for substantial recompense of these warriors of the long ago. As Mr. Borden well put it Laurier has been humbugging the veterans for fifteen years and they were deserving of better treatment than to be made the victims of the generous promises and broken pledges of the high priest of opportunism. Thus on Tuesday last the opposition went on record as being in favor of recompensing the Fenian raid veterans and the government as being opposed to such a debt of honor.

The census is a terrible mess and there is no doubt

that it has been permitted to spin itself into a cocoon of confusion in order that there may be no possibility of redistribution before the elections. Mr. Fisher admitted in the House when pressed by Mr. Borden that there was no possibility of the final count being known before October and there is every likelihood of the elections being over by that time. If there is no redistribution before elections and the west is thus deprived of the increased representation to which it is undoubtedly entitled the blame will rest on the shoulders of the government. Last March Mr. Borden suggested that the census taking be commenced on April 1st instead of June 1st, and thus get the final count in by August 1st. Then bring in their redistribution bill and go to the country on the reciprocity issue. This plan was ignored by Laurier. The responsibility therefore for the present condition under which the election will be held on the old census of ten years ago lies wholly with the weak politician who by his blunders and opportunism has brought this country to the verge of the quagmire of discontent.

Wednesday was another day of the curious struggle, quiet listless, perfunctory and yet with a touch of grimness which so far has been the note of this revived session. What actually happened was that members talked of various subjects until about 5:30 o'clock and that from 5:30 o'clock until the hour of adjournment, certain Conservatives delivered speeches upon reciprocity. Values shift and change strangely. Really the most interesting things of the day took place in the miscellaneous performance, of the afternoon. We learned something about the census, and the government made an interesting announcement of a policy of non intervention, "let them fight it out themselves," policy in regard to the coal strike on the western prairies. These are of intrinsic importance, yet in the ebb and flow of party warfare, the important facts are that the Liberals said not a word on reciprocity and the Conservatives debated it, and another day drifted by without a vote. "Obstruction," yell the Liberals. True, they have not discussed the subject adequately from their point of view. For example, they have not even made the effort to reply to Mr. Jameson's crushing analysis of the fallacies of reciprocity as applied to the fishermen on the Atlantic coast.

True, not a single Conservative has spoken twice in the committee. But these are mere details. This steady debating of the subject does not suit the Liberal book. "So obstruction it must be." As a curtain raiser Mr. Monk asked some questions about the Imperial Conference blue book. He was anxious to have a full report printed early. Mr. Borden joined the discussion, and after a good deal of questioning, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was vague in his replies, gave the House to understand that the Imperial blue book is already in type and the proofs have been read. When it comes here the government will see about it being reprinted.

The government is turning its cries of obstruction to an ingenious use. When grave scandals are exposed it refuses to reply, lets the case go by default and yells, "Obstruction." Thursday there was exposed before the House the record of a conspiracy by which the revenue was defrauded of a million dollars. What was its reply? "Obstruction." "Obstruction."

"We won't answer because you are obstructing." What happened was that J. D. Taylor, of New Westminster, brought up the Chinese immigration frauds. These frauds affect British Columbia and aroused interest in that province to an extent which induced newspapers in Vancouver to publish verbatim reports of the evidence before the recent commission. Mr. Taylor as a representative of the province brought it up.

The story is that an extensive conspiracy to smuggle Chinamen, opium and other dutiable articles effected extensive frauds; that these meant a loss of a million dollars to the revenue; that according to Gordon Grant, Liberal, for a while the Liberal executive at Vancouver got a rakeoff of \$120 a Chinaman, that a family quarrel in the local Liberal party caused the exposure. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Paterson, and Mr. Oliver were warned of these frauds three years ago. When the family row induced the Liberal patronage committee of Vancouver to consent, a commission was appointed. This was last December. The commission reported two months ago. The report has not been presented to parliament. Bad as were the revelations, the House would have nothing to go upon, but for the fullness of the press reports. What reply? Sir Wilfrid Laurier rose and said that Mr. Taylor was obstructing. After the protests which this evoked had been duly filed, the prime minister said that Judge Murphy the commissioner, had made a voluminous report to Sir Richard Cartwright. He and Sir Allan Aylesworth had looked it over. Judge Murphy recommended that certain persons be prosecuted but this had not been done as they had left the country.

Judge Murphy also suggested that the report be not made public until the prosecutions had been brought about, in order that the culprits might not be aware of the nature of the recommendations. Accordingly he had decided not to lay it before parliament. But he and Sir Richard Cartwright would look the report over again and decide finally. Thus you see the argument Judge Murphy recommends prosecuting certain persons. They have run away and we won't prosecute them. Pending their prosecution, Judge Murphy advised non-publication. As we haven't prosecuted, this lets us out of publishing it. Meet the exposures. Rebut the ugly charges of rake-offs, etc? Oh, no, you are obstructing. So the Liberals sat still, made no reply and jeered. Mr. Taylor, who is not the easiest person in the world to bully, spent the afternoon in putting a few columns of evidence on Hansard. And in the evening, after Sir Wilfrid Laurier had refused to discuss the matter, and Mr. Borden had condemned his refusal, Major Currie put a few columns more on the official record.

A direct challenge to the government to dissolve parliament and fight out the reciprocity issue on the hustings, was made by George H. Cowan, of Vancouver. Mr. Cowan followed Major Currie, and after dealing with the Chinese immigration scandal, branched off into a merciless ragging of the various ministers present, beginning with Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The latter, he feared was falling in love with himself, like Narcissus and would die of self admiration. He warned the Premier against self laudation, too much looking glass and the fatal course of Narcissus. "It is not a question of the

white plume," he said "but if it is delayed it may be a question of the white feather." Urging the government to face the issue, courageously, man fashion. Mr. Cowan said "There is no use dodging the issue, you will not succeed. If the worst comes and you are dismissed from power, take your fortune like brave men." The reciprocity debate was not reached till midnight when Thorburn of Lanark, got back to his speech. Mr. Thorburn wanted an adjournment and sat down, but when the finance minister got up and moved the adoption of the resolution he got quickly up again.

The last hour of the House witnessed a storm. Thorburn talked till a quarter to one. Basted of Dufferin, then rose and wanted an adjournment, to which the minister of finance refused on the ground that the time had been wasted. This brought prompt denials from the Opposition leader, J. D. Taylor and others. Major Currie became bellicose. He charged the finance minister with only seeing one side of any question. "He spends his life, in a barrel and only sees things out of the bung-hole." Coercion was the weapon of the tyrant and the day was past when English speaking people would stand for a tyrant. "And the day is not far distant when the Lauriers and their crew will have passed away on this continent," he declared amid Conservative applause. The prime minister and the minister of finance seek to coerce a free parliament into passing a measure, which is not according to the constitution, and should be submitted to the people. Nothing has happened like this since the days of the Long Parliament and ship money. They are endeavoring to turn the hands of the clock backward. "If we have wasted the time of the House the Minister of Finance has been well paid for it. If the \$120,000 was honest money why doesn't he give the names of the people who gave it. He of all men to come before the people. The man doesn't understand how he stands in the eyes of the people of this country." Finally the government agreed to an adjournment after Mr. Best had spoken for half an hour.

The word Friday night was for a dissolution in a fortnight or, at the outside, three weeks, and an election early in September. As soon as the government thinks it has satisfied the country that the opposition is obstructing the big smash will come. The "obstruction" cry is not worrying the opposition in the least, and is having no effect whatever on the Conservative determination to let the people vote. Every preparation is being made by the government for the appeal. The clerk of the crown in chancery is the busiest man in Ottawa, and the printing bureau is turning out wagon loads of election papers and notices. The game in the house still goes on, but the real doings are outside and everybody knows it. Each side went into caucus on yesterday. After this the sessional outcome will be no longer in doubt. It is to be an election, as soon after the wheat cutting as possible, and with or without the new lists for the unorganized districts of Ontario. In these districts the vote may be deferred as has been done before in British Columbia and parts of Quebec.

Beware Of Worms.

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**Crop Prospects.**

A bulletin on the crops and live stock of Canada has been issued. The condition of the field crops of Canada for the month ending June 30, as compiled in the Census and Statistics Office from the reports of a large staff of correspondents, is on the whole quite satisfactory, although on account of uneven rainfall it is not uniform for all the provinces. Even in parts of the same province, as in Ontario, there is a considerable inequality. For the most part in that province excellent reports are made, but there are districts in which the grains and hay have been badly affected, for want of rains in May and June.

For the whole of Canada the condition of winter wheat is only 75.26 per cent as compared with 100 for a full crop. This is ten per cent less than last year, two per cent less than in 1909 and nearly 14 per cent less than three years ago. In Ontario it is only 73 per cent of a full crop, as compared with 94.29 last year, 78.60 in 1909, and 88 in 1908. In Alberta, the only other province in which winter wheat is largely grown, the condition this year is 88.22 per cent compared with 95 in 1908. Spring wheat in all the provinces this year is given the high average condition of 94.73 at the end of June, which is better than in 1910 by 12.62 per cent, better than in 1909 by eight per cent, and better than in 1908 by nearly 15 per cent. Ontario and British Columbia are the only provinces in which the conditions are under 90, and in Saskatchewan and Manitoba it is close to 100.

The average for barley is 93, which is six to ten per cent better than in the preceding three years. It reaches close to 95 in the Northwest provinces, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and over 90 in Nova Scotia and Quebec, a point below 90 in Ontario and only 84 in British Columbia. Oats show an average of 94.40 for all provinces, which is higher than any year since 1908, and is 95 or higher in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec and the Northwest provinces. In Ontario it is close to 90, and over 90 in British Columbia.

Rye, peas and mixed grains are given a condition of about 90 for the Dominion, and are higher than in any year beginning with 1908. Hay and clover and alfalfa are both below last year's condition, and pasture is a point higher. In the three Northwest provinces the condition of pasture is over 100.

The feature of late cereals is the increase of area in flax which is nearly 300,000 acres more than last year. The largest increase of flax is in Saskatchewan, where this crop in recent years has grown into great favor.

The numbers of live stock do not show much change from last year, but their condition at the end of June is very satisfactory. All classes are within less than two points of 100, and an excellent uniformity is shown throughout all the provinces.

**Forest Fires.**

Vancouver, July 21.—Damages estimated at \$500,000 has been caused by forest fires at Squamish. The timber belt through which the flames fought their way is one of the finest in British Columbia.

Amherst, July 21.—Forest fires in Cumberland Co. still rage with unabated violence. The smoke is visible for thirty miles. So far the Shulee timber Co. operated by Robinson & Wright have been the heaviest losers. It is estimated that the fire has swept over 6,000 acres of their holdings, destroying vast quantities of green timber.

The village of Shulee has been in constant danger all this week and fears are still entertained for dwellings there.

**Bananas or Reciprocity.**

Ottawa, July 20.—"It is extremely unlikely that Jamaica will enter into a reciprocity agreement with Canada," said Mr. Hart, a wealthy sugar planter of Kingston Jamaica, today. "At present the United States takes our entire banana crop. Canada, we fear, would be unable to do this. And if we entered into a reciprocity agreement with this country the United States would drop us and we would be without an advantageous market for our bananas. Those interested in the sugar industry, however, favor reciprocity, so that opinion in this matter is fairly evenly divided, but the opposition to the proposal will probably prove too strong."

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