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DUNCAN MARSHALL, Manager.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1909.

AT OTTAWA.

The Government have made it plain that if Parliament does not get down promptly to the despatch of business the fault will not be due to unpreparedness or negligence of the Government. The House assembled on Thursday of last week. The debate on the reply to the speech from the throne has been concluded and the announcement made that the estimates will be brought down this week, the expectation being to go into supply for the first time today. From now on, therefore, the House of Commons will have work of the first importance and in ample supply before it day by day. If the work is not done or is not done when it should be, the fault must lie in a disinclination to attend to business. If certain disquisitions gentlemen have read right the moral of the late election returns there is prospect of provocation being reached by late spring or early summer.

The premier, answering a question, informed the House that a second convention had been signed with France modifying the concessions extended to Canada by the new treaty with that country, this treaty it will be remembered was negotiated by Mr. Fielding a year ago, and ratified by Parliament at last session. The French Senate however considered it as altogether too one-sided and declined to approve of it. The new convention is calculated to meet their views and to secure their agreement. The acceptance of the treaty is a subject of first importance to this country, for it opens the market of France to the products of Canadian farms, a market which imports tremendously the things we are producing more largely every year and in the increased production of which the success of our farming interests is bound up. The treaty secures to us the status of a "most favored nation" in France, a concession bound to be of immense immediate benefit and of still larger benefit in years to come.

Judge Cassel's report on his investigation into the allegations perpetrated by officials of the marine department has been laid on the table. It is a formidable document of some 200 pages. The premier announced at the opening of the House that it had not yet been received. The early presentation means therefore that it has probably never been considered in council nor even read by the minister of the department. This is in keeping with Mr. Brodeur's course during the investigation and before. It was not until he had set his hand to the work of reform that the Opposition discovered reform to be necessary. That the reorganization be effected in the department has been splendidly beneficial to the public. During the inquiry officials found guilty of suspicious transactions were suspended, and when it became apparent that the patronage system had been the means they used to defraud the public, this was abolished and a purchasing system instituted which is strongly endorsed by the commissioner. Mr. Brodeur deserves not only the commendation explicitly accorded him by Judge Cassel, but the "well done" of the public for applying vigorous remedies when and where they were found necessary.

THE COMPENSATION ACT.

The Workmen's Compensation act continues to be a topic of general consideration from many different angles of view, and the prolific source of resolution, petition and deputation to the Provincial government. The employer gave it to be understood long ago that if the measure was not amended to their liking the fault would not be that they did not say what they wanted. They have also made it plain that if it is not amended to their liking they will not say what they wanted. Two recent presentations were made to the Government, from the Western Coal Operators' Association of Southern Alberta, and from the Edmonton board of trade. The operators are reported to have asked for the repeal of the clause providing compensation for a workman permanently disabled by accident. The board of trade afterwards investigated and concludes that the act should place a specific limit on the liability of the employer and they suggest also the inauguration of an insurance system in order to assure the workman getting the compensation to which he is entitled.

That the operators' request will be complied with seems scarcely likely for all men who need compensation are not permanently disabled. It is just to burden the occupation with the temporary support of an injured man and his family it cannot be other than just to throw upon it also the duty of supporting the family whose breadwinner has been crippled for life in his employment.

The board of trade on the other hand recommended more definiteness as to the liability of the employer on the ground that without definiteness of liability trouble may be experienced in getting insurance sufficient to cover the possible claims which may be made upon him. As a safeguard to the workman they propose a system of government insurance. This would free the workman from the danger of his employer becoming bankrupt and thus unable to pay his claims.

These two recommendations seem to offer a possible alternative to the operator's proposal. With the employer's liability determined beyond dispute and the payment of the compensation guaranteed by public insurance there would be no occasion to request the repeal of one of the most vital clauses in the act.

CURRENT COMMENT.

President Roosevelt will move West to reside after his holiday jaunt in the jungle. For once the Senate will endorse his proposal without debate.

THE TALK OF AN ABRUZZI-ELKINS WEDDING.

The talk of an Abruzzi-Elkins wedding is reviving. Without intending rudeness it really seems in order for that couple to hitch-up or shut-up.

THE MONTREAL GAZETTE IS DULY INCENSED THAT CANADA HAS TO FIGHT BOND FOR 6 MILLION POUNDS IN THE BRITISH MARKET.

This it considers the consequence of a "reckless and incapable" disregard of every consideration of prudence and caution in the administration of national affairs. If the Gazette had turned back a page or so and learned that the money was required to pay off a bundle of notes issued by Mr. Foster in one of his annual fallures to make ends meet it might have used the same language, but again, it might not.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA ON DOMINION AFFAIRS.

Mr. Robertson was mistaken in thinking he spoke for the party in provincial matters. Mr. Borden was equally mistaken in fancying that he was empowered to speak for the party touching Federal affairs. Against the correctness of Mr. Borden's claim to the leadership and his exercise of the functions of leadership the Herald has raised no protest. Why then its outcry when the provincial leader, chosen by the same method, exercises his functions in precisely the same way? Clearly the objection cannot be to the manner of selection cannot be to the manner of selecting a leader or to the manner of the chosen leader's discharging the functions, else Mr. Borden would come in for equal censure with Mr. Robertson. The trouble must be then in the difference in the personalities. Mr. Borden, the Herald is prepared to tolerate and support, but Mr. Robertson it is prepared to condemn when he does precisely what Mr. Borden had done a year or so previous.

Can it be that another "nest of traitors" is hatching, to operate in the Provincial instead of the Federal sphere? That already the plans are being laid for ousting the honorable member for High River from the leadership? It would seem so, for on no other basis can the Herald's hostility toward that honorable gentleman be explained. Whether the surmise is correct or not time will tell. But in the meantime Mr. Robertson is the duly chosen and fully accredited leader of the party in Provincial affairs, thoroughly qualified according to the usage of his party to outline the policy to which it will adhere and to enunciate the principles for which it stands ready to answer.

That there will be considerable answering to do seems likely. To his declaration of hostility toward railway construction induced by bond guarantee, the honorable leader has added some equally remarkable language touching the relationship of Canada to the Mother Land. According to his way of thinking we cannot continue the present relationship, for why does not say. Three courses appear open to him: Imperial federation, annexation, and independence. Imperial federation he does not like; in annexation he sees the outworking of the laws; but to independence he thinks we are drifting, willingly or not.

This from the duly accredited leader of the party which in all ages and in both hemispheres, has plumed itself on its loyalty; a party which came into being to emphasize the duty of obedience to rulers even against the rights of the subject; which was transplanted to Canada, to propagate there the class distinctions and privileges of which it was the child and the defender in the Home Land; the party which loses no opportunity to deride its opponents for having straggled for liberty against kings, governors, barons and commons; the party which now in Federal affairs presumes to declare that the basic fiscal policy of its opponents is too favorable to the development of Canadian sentiment as distinguished from Imperial feeling.

Yet for this the Conservative party in Alberta must answer, whether or not they approve the sentiments or share the views. They are the views and sentiments of their duly appointed leader; presumably the views which guide him in his official duties, which weigh daily with him in the deliberation of public affairs, and which touching matters of Imperial relationship, govern the official action of himself and the party he leads. Mr. Robertson is king and the king has spoken. Will the party stand by its original doctrine that the king must be obeyed?

THE CRISIS.

The resignation of Mr. F. W. Morse, the rumored retirement of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, and the reports of the unfavorable reception of G. T. P. stock on the London markets are receiving the editorial attention that was to be expected from the allies and beneficiaries of railway monopoly in Western Canada.

These events and rumors are taken to mean that the company are finding difficulty in financing their enterprise. The conclusion is probably correct. If it is not correct the fault certainly does not lie at the doors of the humble journalistic servants of the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern, who have done what in them lay to curtail the enterprise from its inception to the present day and who now comment with long faces but jubilant tones that the difficulties they labored to create have materialized, whether through their efforts or those of the allies, political and commercial.

That a road as long as the Grand Trunk Pacific, projected through a country in great part unsettled and in considerable part unknown, designed to be built in the most direct line and with the least gradients and therefore in the most expensive manner; that difficulty should be found in persuading the British money lender to put his money into such an enterprise by no means strange. The less so when it is remembered that the

ANACIAL DEPRESSION HAS SWEEPED OVER THE WORLD DURING THE YEARS WHEN THE FINANCING MUST BE DONE.

Less still when it is remembered that in the financial centres where the money must be sought the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern have for years had powerful alliances whose interests would be supposed to be concerned by the discouragement of investment in the new road. And least of all when a party and its papers in Canada deliberately set itself from the outset to persuade the world that the enterprise was impracticable, and certain to bring financial disaster if not absolute ruin upon all connected with it. The Canadian Pacific project, with its interested enemies abroad and unswerving ones at home all but "broke" the men who undertook it. How could it be that a second project, equal in magnitude, should be undertaken in every light and condition of the time was accorded the cordial hostility of two rival concerns built by British capital?

Such have been the conditions under which the financing of the Grand Trunk Pacific has had to be done. From the first the enterprise has been represented in every light calculated to prejudice the British investor against it—that by members of the Canadian House of Commons, by the leader of a great Canadian political party, by the newspapers which tender that party their support and by the Canadian press in general. The party has stood identified for a generation. Evidence has not been wanting that the C. P. R. has exercised its influence in the money mart of London to prevent and hamper the construction of the new road even more enthusiastically and more persistently than it has exercised its influence to another the Canadian Northern project in its infancy. And to what it may have done in this instance has doubtless been added the earnest assistance of its aforesaid enemy, but for the time and in the cause, its active ally, the Canadian Northern. Meantime in Canadian itself, the Opposition in Parliament and the Opposition papers from ocean to ocean have pursued a studied course which if it bore fruit at all could only persuade the British investor that every dollar he put into the G. T. P. was probably gone forever.

It is not signs of distress should be observed therefore in connection with the bond sales of the new road; nor that on their appearance the Opposition press should go into poorly disguised frenzies of jubilation. The law of cause and effect still holds; and neither has the loop of the subject, which might have had them pointed for the time. But before the western people join the chorus they would do well to reflect on what the construction of the G. T. P. has already done toward establishing railway communication and competition throughout the western country; and also on what might be expected to be the consequences if the financial difficulties of the company, duly aggravated and multiplied as they no doubt will be by the loyal Opposition and their journals, proved more than the enterprise could weather. If construction were either abandoned as impossible or postponed until confidence in the road could again be restored.

The C. P. R. main line was completed in 1885, and in the succeeding twenty years that company built something like 500 miles of railway in the whole Northwest Territories. The C. P. R. have built more than 500 miles of railway in the past three years. Why the change? If 500 miles in twenty years was all the country deserved or could support why have they suddenly begun to pour money into the building of railways at the rate of 500 miles in three years? The answer is not distant when the railway extension policy about ten years ago. But they pursued as leisurely a pace as the C. P. R. They were heading for Edmonton perhaps, but they were taking their time about getting here, and in that case their time was our time too. But in the summer of 1904 the C. N. R. suddenly woke up, as the C. P. R. did, and began to lay steel at a record-breaking rate. They built into Edmonton more quickly than anybody thought they could do, and sooner than they probably thought they could do themselves. They say this remarkable change in their rate of building was about the same time that the C. P. R. found the necessity of also increasing its pace?

The reason is not far to seek and scarcely needs reciting. In 1903 a project was launched in Parliament for the construction of a new transcontinental railway across Canada and for the introduction of the most aggressive railway corporation of the eastern provinces into this country in a struggle for traffic. This was something new for the C. P. R. and the C. N. R. To the former it meant a challenge for its supremacy. To the latter it meant the necessity of swimming forth or drowning. The C. N. R. previous to that time had been content to extend slowly, creating traffic as it proceeded; and the C. P. R. recognizing this policy, lost no sleep through fear that the small-like con-

STRUCTURE OF ITS RIVAL WOULD EVER TAKE IT OR THREATEN TO DIVIDE THE TRADE OF THE COUNTRY WITH IT.

But a new transcontinental was something of a different order. To the C. P. R. it put up the proposition to build the way or lose it. Its business—and the business of the country—was at stake. The "short line" from Winnipeg to Waskia, and the extension of the Soo line to Lacomb; in the answer, it put it up to the C. N. R. to get its through line built first or to undertake to finance it in face of two powerful competitors instead of one—and the main line built into Edmonton in a season was the answer.

Nor is this all. The whole railway problem in Western Canada has changed in six years. Then the question was, would any roads be built; now the question is, how many will be built. Then the query was, when will work commence; now it is, when will the trains begin to run. Then the query was, how long will the people longed for railways; now they confidently expect them. Six years ago the chances of railway construction in the North-West Territories were scarcely brighter than they had been for twenty years. Today those prospects are clear for a period of construction such as has not been witnessed on this or any other continent. Why? Partly because a new system is being created; and partly because it has been driven into the consciousness of the old companies that they no longer hold the monopoly that they were awaiting and that they want the business they must make provision to handle it and that they have a time to lose in doing it. For the lateral reason, too, that the activity thus awakened has brought people into the country by thousands every year, people who have pushed back beyond the old frontiers and in themselves created a demand for railways where none were needed before.

But we are not out of the woods yet. The G. T. P. has not yet been completed. It will be in operation from Edmonton to the lakes next summer but that is a different matter from being in operation from Moncton to Prince Rupert. If construction were to stop, what Or if it were indefinitely postponed, what? The benefit we have received so far has been benefit due to apprehension raised in the minds of the rival companies. But if the enterprise, through lack of funds, were either tied up or suspended for an uncertain time, this apprehension would be removed, the C. P. R. and the C. N. R. recognizing that they had no particular reason for haste, would take their time, save their money and develop business along their existing systems rather than build new lines. The only apparent alternative would be an uncertain time, this apprehension to stop, what Or if it were indefinitely postponed, what? 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