

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 18, 1908.

CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

After a session of seven weeks the Legislature closed its proceedings on Wednesday last. The greater length of the sitting than usual was no doubt due to the fact that with the prorogation the active duties of the present House have ceased and will be followed by an appeal to the people in a general election. Both parties were naturally desirous to put their best foot forward and this led to a good deal of talk, some political manoeuvring and not a little attack and defence, sometimes of a rather spirited nature but mainly conducted in a good natured way. Public men do not usually retain any ill-feeling towards political opponents for occasional heated words uttered in debate, and this is well. Premier Haszard, who was called to the leadership very shortly before the session began, was in a position of exceptional difficulty on that account and from the further fact that Attorney General Palmer was not in the House. He had to meet the fire of a resolute and resourceful Opposition at every turn and was very frequently called to answer matters that had occurred before he had accepted office. He met all the difficulties of the situation resolutely and brought his party through the session with undiminished numbers and

probably as much united and compact in support of his leadership as he could desire. Indeed his position as leader of the party has been materially strengthened during the session.

His departmental colleagues, Hon. Messrs Reid and Cumiskey, especially the former also got through the session without very serious difficulty. Mr. Reid was, however the more fortunate of the two ministers in that regard and was subjected to but little hostile criticism of his administrative acts. Mr. Cumiskey, as chief of the great spending department was often in the firing line, but usually met his assailants with frank explanation or a happy turn of humor which often disarmed them.

Some mistakes were made, as we thought during the session and we pointed them out at the time of their occurrence. Speaker Douglas gave one ruling to which we demurred, but we desire to state in justice to him that it was entirely exceptional. Whatever may be thought in regard to that matter we believe both parties in the House will agree that in almost if not all other cases his rulings were just, and impartial.

The Opposition led by Mr. Mathieson, with able lieutenants in Mr. Morson, Mr. McKinnon, and others, were exceedingly alert, active and resourceful. Their numbers are few, but they missed no opportunity for searching criticism and attack. They may be credited with having done their full duty, if not more, in presenting the alleged mistakes and short comings of the Government in the strongest light. This was their duty. A weak, supine and listless Opposition would be worse than useless. Both the Government of the day and the country at large, we believe, appreciate the watchfulness of those who sit on the Opposition benches. And when hereafter the appeal to the electors is made, both parties will know in advance what they will have to meet and will be the more thoroughly prepared for it by these preliminary skirmishes in the Legislature.

MR. WHITNEY'S GERRYMANDER.

It was to be hoped that the parties had been both shamed out of further gerrymandering the constituencies. A gerrymander is the political equivalent of the loaded dice in gaming. Premier Whitney had been just now redistributing the seats in Ontario, preparatory to the coming provincial election. In part, the arrangement has been fairly made; in part it is a gerrymander.

We state this not on the authority of the Liberal newspapers who are in opposition to Mr. Whitney. The Conservative Toronto World is equally explicit in denouncing a portion of this "redistribution." Says The World:

"If a Liberal Government had done things parallel to the 'readjustment' of some of the changes adopted in the redistribution measure Hon. Mr. Whitney, as opposition leader, would have stormed the skies in protest. Take a last instance. If any Liberal had lifted a township out of one riding into another, as has been done in the Lanarks, what would Premier Whitney have said?" The World goes on to show that this shifting round of Liberal and

Conservative townships has been done in North Lanark, in South Lanark and elsewhere, and adds, "It is things like these that give a government a bad reputation." Premier Whitney has no present need to resort to such crooked devices, as he had a majority of 45 in the Legislature. And he began well. Since 1905 he has borne a high and honest reputation as a leader. But recently he and his government have been doing questionable things. They are apparently afraid to trust the people and to take fair chances on their merits.

IMMIGRATION.

It is conceded on all hands that Canada needs more population. Last year the country paid \$950,000 for this object and this year is paying over a million. This includes salaries and expenses of agents and offices at home and abroad and the bonuses paid to secure immigrant settlers. It appears that in the past ten years 1,170,886 immigrants have been brought to the country, and the bonuses paid for them amounted to some \$950,000. The bonuses are not paid on all who come as many have set out on their own account.

In the discussion in Parliament on the subject a number of speakers favored abolishing the bonus system and also greater care in keeping out undesirables and criminals. A prominent Italian resident in Montreal was quoted by Mr. Monk as saying that 60 per cent of the Italians brought to this country belong to the criminal classes. Some 467,393 immigrants have come in the ten

years from British Isles, 351,644 from continental Europe and 351,839 from the United States.

It is noted that there is a good deal of leakage in the immigration in one way and another, so that the population of the country has by no means increased in proportion to the immigrant arrivals with the natural increase of our native people added. This has always proved to be the case. In the single year 1904 it is stated that 30,000 who arrived as settlers in Canada passed into the United States. The North West census of 1906 did not show anything like the population in the three prairie Provinces that should have been there according to the numbers booked for settlement there. Still there is good reason to hope

that much of the immigration is of a good class and that the total population of the country is advancing rapidly.



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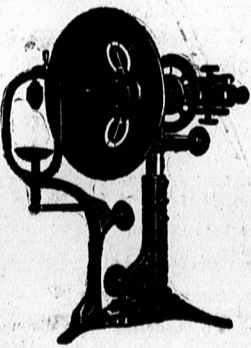
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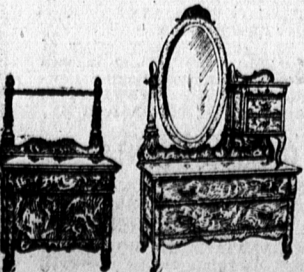
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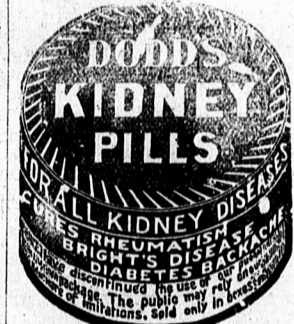
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