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CURRENT COMMENT

The Speech from the Throne in the Provincial Legislature, is now in the limo light, and ere long there is danger that it will also have its experience in the melting pot. It is surely in material and composition a twentieth century innovation, with the full character of its originators stamped indelibly in almost every line upon its face. One of these chief characteristics is that, like the Bell Government, it is full of promises, but like their past record there is the lesson of our experience that is not SO FRUITFUL IN PROMISE. It first apprizes of that important piece of news, now growing to be almost two years old, that "the Great War" has terminated, and proceeds to add that "our gallant soldiers are being rapidly and successfully re-established in civil life." What it failed to announce in this connection, was the fact that this "re-establishment" was left absolutely to the Federal Government, which they are so fond of abusing, and to private enterprise, with the provincial combination looking on and like the Indian maiden shouting out "me too." It speaks also that "Pamela has been an abundant harvest. But no hint that of these blessings and this national plenty, "my Government" has culminated the example of sister governments the world over in contributing a small modicum from this horn of plenty to feed a few of the starving millions in China.

In fact in its selfishness there seems to be a reserve idea that for this "abundant harvest" their own government should be awarded the praise, as with apparent reluctance, instead of unreservedly ascribing all to the Divine munificence, it suggests that "we SHOULD be profoundly grateful to Divine Providence." Conspicuous for its absence was even the hint of anything which they had actually done during the year to accelerate the production of this "abundant harvest." There was one little announcement of a something which they claim to have actually done, and for practical purposes about the only thing they did do, was in reference to the "beginning made under the Canada Highways Act." It was not referred to at this time as THAT "INFERNAL SCHEME" but as being of a more heavenly and angelic character than in its days of Opposition denunciation. It is one of those remarkable instances where, in a thing of disrepute, and most infamous of evils, under the fault-finding criticism of an unprincipled Opposition, is transformed into the supremacy of grand accomplishment when it comes into their own possession. "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, and when he hath gained it he goeth away boasting."

It has been common knowledge for some time past that the Government of the day has been promising to make a reasonable effort to collect before resorting to any measures of increased taxation. It is, according to the Speech, in that paradise of their party—the future. It has had a "conference" with the Governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, with a view to the presentation AT AN EARLY DATE of certain claims of the Maritime Provinces, relative to Western School lands, extension of boundary lands, and other matters of an allied nature. It doesn't say that papers will be laid before you upon the subject. Sufficient we presume to lay these before the power behind the throne. About two years ago they made this an election issue. The Liberal Governments of both the other provinces have also appealed to the country since, with this Government's turn to next face the

DUALITY By Edgar A. Guest

Which is the man you are prouder of, the man that the world can see. Or the man you are when you're alone, the man that will some day be? Oh, it matters not what our toll may be, nor the goal that we have in view. Though we stand as one in the light of day, each of us thinks as two. The world man struggles for gold and place and the world man frets and swears; He acts a role on the stage of life, and sham are the robes he wears. But nobody knows what the other man thinks, nor if he be false or true. For he talks and counsels and shows himself to nobody else but you.

EDITORIAL NOTES Abounding in propositions and lacking in propositions is the way in which one gentleman defined the Speech from the Throne. "An excellent illustration of the decadence of education in Prince Edward Island" was the matter-of-fact opinion of another.

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that there is a "power behind the throne" in the Bell Government dominions, but there has been more or less of perplexity as to where it was principally centralized. Some have supposed that the father of the TAXATION ACT ruled the roost, but the Speech dispels this suggestion, for the time being at least, and the Commissioner of Agriculture looms up as the force taking precedent not only to the departments of government but to the legislature itself. Eleven clauses of the document are devoted, not to inviting permission or direction from the House as to his movements, but in telling them of what his imperial importance has done and intends to do whether by their permission or otherwise. His dignity has even transcended our provincial powers, for he is going to institute "The importation of crushed limestone AT REDUCED FREIGHT RATES." He has as much influence in the "controlling of freight rates" as the "man in the moon," whom the Patriotic announced as the chief directing inspiration of their movements. Like Shakespeare's little wanton boys floating upon bladders, they would like to swim before the public upon the credits of Messrs. Arsenault, Kennedy, Messervey and Holman whose personal efforts inclined the Railway Commission's ears towards the interests of their province in the matter of freight reductions.

While the Speech displayed a vague sparsity of anything of practical importance, either done or intended to be done, by the Government, its most notable feature is in what it did not contain, but which it should have included as indicative of its legislative program. There wasn't a word about the "Standardization of the railway," so confidently promised in that immortal Bell Manifesto, and more vehemently assured to the people, in the columns of the Patriot and from political platforms, as the certain reward for returning this combination to power. This subject is now in the hands of the joint Boards of Trade for the province, who are sending a delegation to Ottawa to press the matter upon the Federal powers, and should they succeed we will find the useless local aggregation trying to ring in for the credit and praise, as in the matter of freight concessions. Nor was there a line or remark as to their movements for the saving of our Oyster Areas from that destruction which Mr. Bell and his colleagues so frequently and volubly declared was the direct result of Conservative mismanagement. How the oyster fishing is now, the Speech doesn't tell us. It is now under Liberalism; beg pardon,—under Bell Government mismanagement.

It professes one piece of good news, IF ONLY IT BE TRUE, that "a substantial reduction has been made in the debt of the province. We will await the appearance and analysis of the public accounts, and the external auditor's report, if they will take the risk of giving one, before jabbering too heavily over this announcement. With our remembrance of their expertness in creating a big deficit last year out of nothing, we are inclined to the belief that this "debt reduction" when sifted out, may prove to be only a refund of the reputation stolen last year from the Arsenault government. The most that we anticipate will be some further lessons upon juggling of figures from the most accomplished of experts in this line. And yet there are many good reasons why there should be a substantial debt reduction, for as we have most frequently pointed out, they have bled the country white in every conceivable method of taxation, getting after everything, "TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE" to an extent that if they have no big reserves we don't know where the money went.

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Our Ottawa Letter

OTTAWA, March 6th, 1921.—After a very badly manouvered campaign in the House of Commons the Leader of the Opposition lost out on his amendment by 25 which was the Government's majority. With eight government supporters sick and absent, that would have meant 33 of a division had all been present to vote. The two members who paired with Richardson and Crothers—Buchanan and Campbell—it is almost certain would not have voted for the amendment. Dropped up with the success in West—Peterboro—MacKenzie King thought they could make the no mandate go in Parliament, consequently the fight was made not on any principle of politics but upon pure tactics. Now the opposition can not ignore the issues of day, and above all the tariff issue, unless the members of that party choose to ignore parliament altogether, the logical result of which would be to resign. A great deal of eloquence was wasted in trying to prove that the government has no right to carry on a contention in itself new to British constitutional government. The official-Liberals have now to face the Budget which contains the vital principles of the Government's policy. The agrarian party, led by Mr. Cregar and Dr. Clark, though it did not assume to challenge the right to carry on, was scarcely more logical in voting for an amendment the reasons for which it was confessed was all wrong. The result of the vote which was received with tremendous applause has put new "pep" into the supporters of the government, which harras some untoward and unexpected developments will proceed with its program and go through the session a good majority behind it.

And talking majorities while 33 is a reduction of considerable compared with the original majority, it is a substantial one, and outside of Nova Scotia and Quebec it is respectively the largest which any government in Canada has. Drury is carrying on by the grace of the parties opposed to him. Norris in Manitoba is clearly in a minority and has to depend upon those members who do not wish another election. Oliver in British Columbia has a sufficient majority but a small one. Foster in New

country when the subject will again loom up big and promising. We are up against the fact that in all this time nothing has been done, AND IN FACT WE ARE FARTHER AWAY FROM SUCCESS THAN EVER BEFORE.

THE PREMIER'S DEFENCE

Premier Bell's defence of the government on Friday night was characteristic. At the very outset he forfeited any sympathy that might have been accorded him by the contemptible way in which he tried to handle ex-Premier Arsenault's criticism of the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Arsenault as every one who heard him knew and as every one who knows him will believe, made no reference whatever to the manner of the reading of the speech. His criticism had reference only to its grammatical construction which any one with the most elementary knowledge of the English language will admit was disgraceful in a liberally prepared official document. Yet Mr. Bell, with a full knowledge of what Mr. Arsenault had said, tried to imply that the latter had criticised the manner in which His Honour had read the speech. The trick was deftly turned against him when Mr. Arsenault, on a point of order, arose and flatly contradicted the insinuation.

Mr. Bell's plea of ignorance of the finances of the province during the election campaign was the old story told last year and did not go down even with his friends for the scathing words of Premier Arsenault were still ringing in their ears, accusing them of having secured their election by deceiving the people. Mr. Bell also put his foot in it badly when he declared with well assumed vehemence that with the Liberal party "the voice of the people is the voice of God". Even his Liberal friends winced at this rally while the galleries laughed.

The plea that no authoritative promise had been made to the people that the taxes would not be increased, did not "take" either nor was it regarded as a good excuse. When he claimed that representations made by the press or by private candidates did not bind the great Liberal party! He declared that the Liberal platform contained no such promise. He did not mention the fact that the Liberal manifesto issued by Mr. Bell had never been referred to during the campaign. Nor did it mend matters when he explained the Liberal change of policy with regard to taxation by quoting the adage "Necessity knows no law."

His excuse for the general delinquency in the payment of taxes was due to the attitude of a "portion of the press" was only laughed at. No "portion of the press" had advised non payment of taxes and even if it did it would not have affected the legality of the taxes.

THE SITUATION IN EUROPE

Peace, so called has brought little respite to Europe. Russia is today tenfold more of a hell than it was during the worst days of the war. The great war of nations over which the world shuddered for four years and a half was by comparison, a war of civilization; in any case it was war and slaughter and destruction according to certain more or less defined rules of warfare and of savagery. What is going on in Russia today is not even this; it is murder without even the justification of war. Cities devastated either from within or without; communities wiped out either by internal or external violence; enemies, those of their own household or those of a hostile camp; uncertainty, murder, pillage everywhere; these are the conditions in unhappy Russia today.

If we go to believe the reports the Bolsheviks are at present getting the worst of it. The anti-Bolshevik movement said to be under the direction of Grand Duke Michael, a brother to the late Czar appears to have made progress. It

porarily at least but conditions are such that prediction or hope for betterment would be futile. The future of Russia is shrouded in gloom and uncertainty, uncertainty except in misery starvation murder and pillage. Trade with the outside world seems practically impossible, yet the resources of that vast dark continent are inexhaustible.

The German problem appears to be slowly solving itself. Allied armies are on the ground to enforce a settlement of the terms upon which Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918, terms which she has ever since repudiated, disputed, begged off and by every device known to human ingenuity dodged. She is now up against the real thing, the thing that once before brought them to their knees. It is said the Germans are taking it stolidly and philosophically, they are urged by their leaders to accept the situation quietly; that the Allies in this arbitrary action have violated the terms of the treaty of Versailles. They have studiously avoided all reference to their own persistent violation of the treaty, to their underhanded concealment of arms and munitions, to their deception in presenting to the Allies their financial position.

One thing which appears at least to those outside of Germany to have been unwise was the fact that they had not prepared their people for this latter invasion. The first thing the populace knew of the Allied advance into Germany was when they awoke one morning to find Allied guns in their public squares, Allied soldiers on their streets and Allied officials in charge of their public offices. They have not yet recovered from their surprise; perhaps when they do may be something doing; in any case, it is too soon to predict what the Germans will submit to, even to the inevitable. She is not yet at the end of her resources of trickery and deception.

PRESIDENT HARDING AND THE TARIFF

The following extract from the inaugural speech of President Harding will give some idea of his party's views on the tariff question and what kind of "reciprocity" we may look for during the present regime. "It has been proved again and again that we cannot, while throwing our markets open to the world, maintain American standards of living and opportunity and hold our industrial eminence in such unequal competition. There is an alluring fallacy in the theory of banished barriers of trade but preserved American standards require our higher production costs to be reflected in our tariff or imports. Today, as never before when peoples are seeking trade restoration and expansion we must adjust our tariffs to the new order."

The Fordney Bill was introduced by President Harding's party before his inauguration as President. It was vetoed by President Wilson but the spirit and the inspiration of the bill remain and a similar one will be passed Canada's defence is to pass similar tariff legislation.

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Brunswick is in a position of about fifty-fifty. The closing features of the debate were not impressive. The galleries were filled, the impending fate of the Government, so to speak adding an interest to their proceedings not chargeable to their merits. The Opposition enjoyed a monopoly of the talk. Mr. Frede Pardee is always a fair speaker, but invariably gives the impression of not being very much in earnest. The speaker to whom it was an appreciative hearing was the Hon. W. S. Fielding and even he was laboring under two serious disadvantages. One was his lack of sympathy with the tactics of his leader and the other is his manifest sympathy with the proponents of protection and his desire to desire to see the principle perpetuated. In his perplexity he endeavored to make a point by stating that whichever of the three parties, each led by a young energetic leader should come into power—and the country would be safe. That is a rather important admission on the part of one of the leaders of a party who have been holding up Mr. Meighen as a sort of evil genius of government in this country.

(Continued on page five)

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