MAXIMS OF A MERE MAN

The dew of compassion is a tear.

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

The People's Paper — Read by Everybody

Covers Prince Edward Island Like the Dew

MAXIMS OF A MERE MAN

It is late before the brave despair.

Charlottetown Guardian Two Cents. Morning Guardian, Founded 1887.

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"NO CONCESSIONS TO FORCE"--CHAMBERLAIN

FRANCE MAY MAKE CONCESSIONS TO ITALY

WILL YIELD NO LAND HOWEVER, SOURCE STATES

Chamberlain Cast In Role Of Mediator In French - Italian Dispute?

(A. P. by Guardian's Special Wire)

PARIS, Dec. 29—A person close to the Government said tonight France is willing to grant some colonial concessions to Italy to keep the peace of Europe but without actually yielding any land.

After putting up a strong military and naval front to discourage Fascist ambitions for territorial expansion at expense of the French Empire, Premier Daladier's Government was described as "ready to open diplomatic negotiations to appease the Italian hunger."

Two French warships and Senegalese troops were enroute to Djibouti on the heels of rumors—denied in Rome—of an Italian military threat to French Somaliland.

Among possible subjects for negotiations were a new statute for Italians in Tunisia, further concessions on the Addis-Ababa-Djibouti railway and a voice in direction of the Suez Canal.

A brief storm which arose in the French Chamber of Deputies over Communist charges that Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet had withheld news of Italy's denunciation of the 1935 colonial pact was weathered safely by the Daladier Government.

Chamberlain Mediator

ROME, Dec. 29—Italians insisted tonight that Prime Minister Chamberlain would be unable to avoid the role of mediator between France and Italy on his Jan. 11-14 visit to Premier Mussolini.

The Fascist attitude was that Italy's still unofficial clamor for French "compensations" in Africa under the 1915 London Treaty that brought Italy into the Great War would be the leading problem in Mr. Chamberlain's appeasement mission.

It was indicated Mussolini would not fail to raise it in conversation with his guest.

(In the French view, the 1935 colonial accord between France and Italy amounted to French compliance with the 1915 promise that Italy would be compensated if Britain and France gained African territory at Germany's expense.

(Denunciation by Italy of the 1935 accord was disclosed last week. This agreement, never ratified by Italian and French Parliaments, made certain territorial concessions in Africa and, among other things, provided for progressive removal of Italian citizenship and other rights of Italians in Tunisia.)

COMING EVENTS

**Buying dress poultry daily until March. Correct grading. George Leightizer Co. L-59-12-22-tf.

**Kinkora Hall. Bingo and Dance. Monday evening, January second. L-203-12-30-21.

**Masquerade dance, Spring Park School, Friday 8:30. Prizes. Auspices of Women's Institute. L-311-12-30-11.

**Hockey and skate, Graham's Road tonight. Perfect ice and light. Refreshments. L-313.

**Farmers—Please note change in loading day for next week only. Livestock Marketing Board. L-314.

**The Ladies Auxiliary Canadian Legion meeting in Legion Rooms tonight 7.30 P. M. Members please attend. L-286-12-30-11.

**Buying dressed poultry Friday, December 30th, paying highest market prices. Correct grading. Signed Jenkins Bros., Vernon. L-201-12-28-31.

**Poultry—Buying daily live and dressed Poultry paying top market prices. Correct grading. Prompt returns, Island Cold Storage Company Ltd.

**We require a quantity of cattle preferably well fleshed bulls for boning. Write or phone for prices Signed Island Cold Storage Co Ltd., L-210, 12, 28, 61

**Borden Rink opens tonight, skating 8 to 10 p. m. Excellent ice, new sound system with latest music. Admission, adults 20c, children 15c. L-315.

**Livestock Marketing Board loading through local shipping clubs week of January 2nd as follows: Tuesday afternoon—Montague, Souris, St. Peters, Uigg, Millview, Baltic; Wednesday forenoon till train time—Charlottetown, Kensington, York, Bedford, Wiltshire, Hunter River, Bradalbane, Kinkora; Afternoon 12-3, Albany. Please list with local secretary. L-314.

Spanish Government Warship Forced Aground Attempting Desperate Dash For Freedom

GIBRALTAR, Dec. 30 (Friday —(AP) —The Spanish Government destroyer Jose Luis Diez was forced aground near here early today after attempting a desperate dash for freedom through a gauntlet of Insurgent warships.

Before running aground, it was reported here, the vessel rammed and sank the 1,500-ton Insurgent minelayer Jupiter.

Insistent gunfire from Insurgent land batteries at Ceuta and from the Insurgent Cruiser Canarias and other Insurgent vessels forced the lone Government destroyer aground on eastern beach, roughly 50 yards from shore.

She had been undergoing repairs in this British port ever since last Aug. 27, when she limped in after a punishing battle in the Straits with Insurgent warships. Thirty-two men including 26 Insurgents held aboard as prisoners, were killed in the engagement.

The crew of the Government destroyer had been playing hide and seek with superior Insurgent forces for a year and a half. In the summer of 1937 she put in at Falmouth, England, for repairs.

Later she sought refuge at Le Havre, France, after being damaged in a battle off Northern Spain. She was holed in the 2 1-2 hour battle with the Insurgent cruiser Canarias and two Insurgent armed trawlers when she made a dash to get through the Straits last summer.

Insurgents Break Through Loyalist Lines At Balaguer

HENDAYE, France, Dec. 29—(AP)—The insurgent offensive against Catalonia was reported tonight to have broken through the Government central front at Balaguer and rolled back the right flank through Granadella, increasing the threat to the Government stronghold of northeastern Spain.

The day's most important and violent action centred at Balaguer bridgehead, in a vital zone on the Segre River front about 15 miles north of Lerida.

There, insurgents said, General Franco's planes, tanks and men finally battered a breach in the fortified line to which Government troops had clung stubbornly against all attacks since the Insurgent general offensive started Dec. 23, Width of the gap was not given.

A Government communique acknowledged the Insurgents had occupied the Montero heights of the Balaguer sector, after a series of "costly" attacks supported by tanks and aviation.

Canada's Credit Balance In World Trade $280,000,000

OTTAWA, Dec. 29—(CP)—Canada will have a credit balance on its world trade for 1938 of approximately $280,000,000, according to estimates based on Bureau of Statistics returns for 11 months and interim reports for December. Last year the excess of the value of exports over imports was $316,000,000.

Canada's exports this year of domestic products will total around $922,000,000 and foreign goods re-exported around $44,000,000. The imports will be approximately $686,000,000. Last year the exports were $1,110,000,000, foreign goods re-exported $15,000,000 and imports $809,000,000.

Release Report On Mental Hospitals

(C. P. by Guardian's Special Wire)

TORONTO, Dec. 29—Establishment of a board of review for mental hospital patients and amendment of the Ontario Medical Act to permit sterilization in certain cases are among major recommendations of the Magone Commission's report, released today after a four-months investigation into conditions in provincial mental hospitals.

The report commends hospital superintendents, physicians and nurses on their work "under very trying circumstances" and declares that "in no case does it appear that there has been a wrongful certification or that a patient has been detained longer in an institution than was necessary for his proper treatment."

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

PRAGUE, Dec. 29—Sign of the times in a Prague store window: "We exchange gas masks for German dictionaries."

RUSSIAN AID TO CHINA IS CLOSE SECRET

Instructors Found Mainly To Consist Of Lower Officers Of Soviet Army.

(By Haldore Hanson, Associated Press Foreign Staff)

KWEILIN, Kwangsi Province, China, Dec. 29—The extent of Soviet Russian aid to China in both supplies and personnel is one of the most closely guarded secrets in the Chinese-Japanese war. Even so, there are enough evidences to justify estimates.

Any visitor to this capital of Kwangsi, 400 miles southwest of Hankow, can see a score of Russian military instructors, in civilian clothes and slouch hats, on the streets. They live at the most expensive hotel in town.

Investigation discloses that the men are lower officers, probably sergeants, sent to demonstrate the new Russian artillery and machine-guns.

A hundred miles further west in Kwangsi, at Liuchow, a group of 70 Russian aviators and mechanics has resided. The Russians have been shifted from one base to another, sometimes for combat work and sometimes for the training of Chinese pilots.

Near the borders of Tibet, in the western province of Szechwan, several small groups of Russian pilots, varying from eight to 20 men each, are giving advanced instruction to Chinese fliers.

Another Russian group, at Suchow in the northwest province of Kansu where the highway from central Asia crosses the Chinese frontier, is said to number 300 automobile mechanics and drivers and possibly 40 air instructors.

There have been frequent rumors that Russian staff officers are replacing the former German advisers of General Chiang Kai-Shek. The name of Michael Borodin, Russian leader in the Chinese revolution of 1925-1927, sometimes is mentioned.

To check these rumors this writer spent two weeks at Chiang's headquarters and visited the larger military bases but not one Russian adviser was seen.

Including a large number of aviation mechanics whose present whereabouts are unknown, the total Russian personnel in China does not exceed 800. Its work is of a technical nature, having little or no influence on Chinese policy.

The extent of Russian supplies is more difficult to estimate.

Supplies began arriving by truck from the Soviet Union by way of northwest China in October, 1937, and continued for five months until spring rains washed out the road. These supplies included aviation parts and gasoline, artil-

(Continued on page 9, Col 1)

Stockbroker Ousted From Exchange As Unfair Trader

NEW YORK, Dec. 29—The first expulsion from the New York Stock Exchange since Richard Whitney's last March occurred today when J. A. Sisto, general partner in J. A. Sisto and Co., was expelled for improper business conduct.

The market had been open 15 minutes with trade strong and active when Edward A. Bartlett, Jr., chairman, mounted the rostrum and rang the gong. The huge room was immediately hushed. Bartlett announced the board of governors had convicted Sisto on three charges.

The first was that for which Whitney—now in Sing Sing prison—was expelled, "conduct or proceeding inconsistent with just and equitable principles of trade."

It was charged Sisto had caused the Sisto Financial Corp., of which he was president and a director and which he dominated and controlled, to purchase from him at $23 a share a total of 1,000 shares of the stock of Sisto Financial Corp., which he had purchases about the same time for $15.12 1-2.

The second was that the books of the firm had been altered and the third involved an allegation that the company books were improperly kept and that records of accounts were changed to make it appear that unprofitable transactions had been profitable.

'ARMED CHAOS' REPORTED IN NANKING AREA

Plunder, Privation And Famine Rife Says American Professor Following Investigation.

BY LLOYD LEHRBAS
Associated Press Foreign Staff

SHANGHAI, Dec. 29 —(AP)—M. S. Bates, professor of history in Nanking University, reported today that "armed chaos" existed in the Nanking region, which the Japanese occupied Dec. 13, 1937, after a six weeks' campaign.

"During the past year the area has been thoroughly plundered, with the process continuing; privation is common, with life maintained on a distressingly low level," Bates, an American, said in a report of findings during a survey of crop and economic conditions in the former Chinese capital and the surrounding countryside.

The investigation was made for the International Relief Committee. Neutral observers considered the findings typical of conditions in other Japanese-occupied regions in view of general Japanese economic policies and reports from other communities.

Meanwhile, severe Guerrilla fighting along the Tsientang River in Chekiang Province southwest of Shanghai was said by Chinese to have caused 1,000 Japanese casualties. The Japanese said 254 Chinese were killed and 62 captured during a two-day drive against Guerrillas around Soochow, 50 miles west of Shanghai.

Another development today was the statement of a Japanese naval spokesman that the United States-owned Shanghai University would not be returned to its owners, despite Tokyo's promises to the United States, while hostilities, conitnued in China.

Prof. Bates estimated that 44 per cent of the Nanking population was destitute. Farmers and peasants, he said, were struggling valiantly for existence and making practically normal plantings. Harvesting, however, was said to be seriously below normal as a result of the war and floods.

Other major findings:

Producers and consumers were handicapped through a manipulation of supplies and market for the advantage of officials or the military.

Transportation was difficult, costly and unreliable.

There were numerous complex levies on goods in transit, especially those entering Nanking.

No banking or credit facilities existed.

Reserve stocks were practically non-existent.

Requests Ministers To Substantiate Or Retract Charges

TORONTO, Dec. 29—Premier Mitchell Hepburn said today he had addressed letters to Transport Minister Howe and Labor Minister Rogers at Ottawa requesting they substantiate or retract their Port Arthur charges that he had entered a conspiracy with Premier Duplessis of Quebec to remove Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

"I think I am entitled to ask for substantiation of their charges," Mr. Hepburn declared. He added that he had asked Mr. Howe to substantiate or withdraw a charge that the Ontario Premier had interfered with the recent Howe nomination convention at Port Arthur.

"Why, I didn't even know he was having his convention so how could I have interfered with it?" he said.

Mail Order Bride Enroute To Canada

RHOSNESSEY, Denbighshire, Wales, Dec. 29 — (C P Cable)—Miss Sarah Tomlinson, 28 of Rhosnessey will sail tomorrow for Halifax enroute to Viking, Alta., to marry Jack Jones, whom she has not seen for 11 years.

Jones left Flintshire in 1927 to become a farmer in the Viking district. Her parting hope was: "I hope he has not grown a beard."

THIEVES HEED PLEA TO IGNORE PATRONS

NEW YORK, Dec. 29—Four men today held up Nathan Goldstein, proprietor of a Brooklyn billiard hall and escaped with $110 after yielding to his plea not to rifle the pockets of 26 pool players, because, he said, "they are very poor."

When the holdup men lined his patrons against a wall Goldstein protested.

"Okay," one of the robbers said, "That's all," and they fled to their waiting automobile.

Temperatures Near Zero Mark In Many Maritime Centres

(C. P. by Guardian's Special Wire)

HALIFAX, Dec. 29—The Maritimes were gripped today by the longest cold snap of the winter, and the temperature dropped to the zero mark in many districts.

Following a storm that swept in from the west, the mercury dropped rapidly in New Brunswick and sub-zero readings were headed by the report of five below in Fredericton. In Prince Edward Island, the temperature dropped to six above, and a cold, 30-mile an hour wind swept the Island. Nova Scotia also suffered a sudden drop in temperature after the storm, and thermometers registered zero.

Clear skies were reported tonight and a slight general moderation was noted, with temperatures ranging from 10 to 20 degrees above zero.

SECOND COLD WAVE SWEEPS UNITED STATES

30 Deaths Recorded As Sub-zero Weather Grips Many States.

CHICAGO, Dec. 29 —(AP)—Middle westerners stoked up furnaces and tossed more blankets on their beds tonight as the second cold wave in four days spread out of Canada.

By the time the chilling spell, part two of the wave that came earlier in the week, reaches New England and the Atlantic seaboard, probably over the week-end, light snow will bring rising temperatures to the midwest, forecasters said.

At least 30 deaths from exposure or other causes attributed to the week's cold were reported. Fatalities occurred as far south as Georgia and North Carolina.

The subzero spell that struck the Plains states and Minnesota yesterday morning was expected to spread over the North Central states tomorrow morning and continue eastward.

Warroad, Minn., a Canadian border town and icebox of the United States this week, reported 45 below yesterday morning. Readings under 30 below were taken elsewhere in Minnesota and North Dakota.

A "Hard freeze" to 10 below zero gripped New England yesterday, with 8 below at Portland, Me., the coldest reading in that city this winter. Other Maine cities had 14 below and in the Adirondack mountains of New York it was as cold as 22 below.

Nine of the deaths laid to the weather have occurred in Michigan. Three fourths of the roads in the lower Peninsula were banked with snow.

Hope Abandoned For Entombed Miners

KIRKLAND LAKE, Ont., Dec. 29 (CP) —Hope was all but abandoned tonight of finding alive two miners entombed behind a wall of rock deep in the Lake Shore Gold Mine but rescue crews, working in half-hourly relays, continued without cessation their efforts to release them.

The miners, 33-year-old John Holubec and Vito Vlaisevgevich, 40, were imprisoned late Tuesday night when an air blast caused the collapse of the stope in which they were working more than a half-mile underground. As drilling crews dug and tore at the huge pile of debris, it was admitted there was "little chance" of finding the men alive.

A slim hope that Holubec and Vlaisevgevich had taken shelter under an electric locomotive near which they were working was all that kept the rescuers at their task. It was thought barely possible the heavy steel of the engine would protect them from the thousands of tons of rock that jammed the stope.

Ticket-Selling Ring Exposed

NEW YORK, Dec. 29 —(AP)—The government aimed a body blow at the tremendous sale of Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes chances in the United States today by obtaining indictments against eight persons described by officials as heads of the nation's biggest ticket-selling ring.

The indictments handed up by a federal grand jury climaxed a two-year investigation by postal inspectors in 12 states scattered from coast to coast and carried charges new to the government's attack on foreign lotteries.

PROMINENT CITIZEN OF CITY PASSES

Death Yesterday Of Mr. Benjamin Bremner In His 88th Year.

Mr. Benjamin Bremner, 87, well known and highly respected citizen of Charlottetown died at the home of his daughter here yesterday morning.

Mr. Bremner, who was nearing his 88th birthday, was before his retirement prominent in business circles in this Province. Born in Charlottetown he was the son of the late John Bremner and Sarah Beer, one of this City's pioneer families.

For a number of years Mr. Bremner was a member of the firm of Bremner Bros. who conducted a printing and stationery business on Lower Queen Street. After this firm gave up its business Mr. Bremner became travelling salesman for Carter and Company here and in 1902 became a partner in the firm. He retired about 11 years ago.

Since his retirement Mr. Bremner has published several books dealing with the history and traditions of Prince Edward Island. One was entitled "Memories of Long Ago", another "An Island Scrap Book", while his third and last work was "Tales of Abegweit." These books contained many interesting sketches by the writer and extracts from old records. These books written in a graceful literary style constitute a readable record which will become more valuable as time goes on.

Mr. Bremner was a man of splendid character, a life long member of Trinity Church.

He belonged to the Oddfellows and Masons, having reached the highest office in the former and had also received the Veterans Jewel for long service. He always took a deep interest in every measure tending for the uplift of the community. By his death Charlottetown has lost one of her best citizens and his memory will be deeply cherished by a devoted family.

Surviving are three daughters, Mrs. MacKinnon, wife of Lieut. Col. D. A. MacKinnon of this City at whose home Mr. Bremner passed away; Mrs. J. DeCastella, Cape Town, South Africa; and Mrs. G. Burton Lord, Fitchburg, Mass.

Mr. Bremner's wife, who before her marriage was Mary Jane Webster of Marie, this Province, predeceased him 12 years ago.

The funeral will be private.

Steamer Will Try Again Today To Reach Sable Island

HALIFAX, Dec. 20 (CP) — Transport Department officials tonight received a wireless report from the Canadian Government Steamship Lady Laurier she was at Liscomb Guysborough County, about 90 miles up the coast from Halifax, awaiting favorable weather to go to Sable Island and bring to the mainland a man with a fractured leg.

Rough weather forestalled two attempts to land a small boat on the dangerous island off the Nova Scotia coast to pick up Staffman Savage but heavy seas tonight showed some signs of abating.

Officials said the Lady Laurier probably would start at midnight for the Island, about 90 miles from Liscomb, and would arrive there early in the morning

A Royal Canadian Airforce plane failed today to take off today for the Island. The plane will be available tomorrow if the Lady Laurier fails to effect a landing.

(Continued on page 9, Col 1)

Armed Strength Cited Safeguard For Fair Dealing

Ready To Discharge Obligations To Our Allies, The Empire And Ourselves Says Premier In New Year's Message.

LONDON, Dec. 29—Prime Minister Chamberlain today called upon the Conservative Party to prepare for the elections which are "inevitably approaching," in a New Year's Day message in which he said he would make "no concessions to force."

His message was published in "Home and Empire," Conservative Party publication. In it he coupled his statement that Britain will meet all peoples in a spirit of "reasonableness and fair dealing," with the declaration that "we have already made such progress with our rearmament plans that we are today in a position . . . to discharge our obligations to our allies, the Empire and ourselves."

Asserting 1938 saw decided gains for British policy, despite anxieties, the Prime Minister hailed the Anglo-Italian accord, the Anglo-German declaration, the Munich agreement and the Franco-German declaration as the year's peace landmarks.

Hopeful But Prepared

"Our armed strength enables us to say in the councils of the nations that, seeking friendship with all peoples, we will meet them in a spirit of reasonableness and fair dealing but we will not make concessions to force," Mr. Chamberlain wrote.

"Rejecting the view that war is inevitable," he went on, "and that our only task is to prepare for it, I have consistently sought to remove the possible causes of war and by direct consultation and discussion to secure a new and fuller measure of confidence and understanding between nations."

The Prime Minister spoke of the confidence and devotion shown him by the Conservative Party. The party, he said, "has been a constant source of satisfaction and strength" and he added it must be ready now for a general election "which is inevitably approaching nearer and nearer."

Foreign Affairs

Concerning consultation and discussion among nations, Mr. Chamberlain said:

"It is my hope and aim that by this means international problems of our time may be settled in a spirit of conciliation and cooperation. I have never persuaded myself that this was a very easy task. I know from the outset that we should meet with difficulties and disappointment, but at the same time we have met with successes which are not only an encouragement to renewed effort but are also in themselves notable contributions to the betterment of international relations."

He summarized his Government's achievement as follows:—

"We have negotiated and brought into operation an agreement with Italy which has cleared away a dangerous body of suspicion and misunderstanding and restored the old friendship between the two nations.

"The Munich Agreement which averted the danger of war with all its modern horrors was followed immediately by the Anglo-German Declaration and more recently by a complementary Franco-German declaration, two solemn avowals to the effect that between France and Germany and between Germany and ourselves war is not envisaged as an instrument in settlement of any problems that may arise.

"It is a measure of the progress expressed in these instruments of appeasement with their mutual undertakings and obligations that in the growing antagonisms and declining confidence of a year ago

EARLY START TO TOURIST SEASON SEEN

Royal Visit Expected To Stimulate Travel To Canada Early Next Summer.

MONTREAL, Dec. 29 —(CP)— The visit of the King and Queen to Canada in May will start Canada's 1939 tourist season six to eight weeks earlier than usual, travel executives here said today.

The tendency of tourists to stay on this side of the Atlantic will combine with the visit of Their Majesties to stimulate travel throughout Canada, tourist officials said, but they are undecided whether the New York World's Fair will be a serious deterrent to Canada's holiday visitors.

Special trains for the New York Fair are being routed through Canada from Chicago and other western United States points as an added inducement for fair visitors. Campbell Carroll, Quebec Tourist Bureau Publicity Director said today this development would bring thousands of travellers to Canada and result in many of them remaining here for part of their holidays.

Canada's attractions will be ad-

(Continued on page 9, Col 1)

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE, Toronto, Dec. 29 —(CP)—Minimum and maximum temperatures:

Dawson	54 below	48 below
Victoria		42 44
Edmonton	40 below	20 below
Regina	38 below	22 below
Winnipeg	34 below	20 below
Toronto		15 31
Ottawa	12 below	12
Montreal	zero	24
Quebec	10 below	10
Saint John	2	16
Halifax	10	18
Charlottetown	6	12

Maritime east, Southerly winds increasing in force; cloudy followed by snow.

High tide this afternoon at 4.18 and tomorrow morning at 5.06.

Sun sets this afternoon at 4.27 and rises tomorrow morning at 7.38.

Full moon Jan. 5, 5.30 p.m.

Summerside tide 18 minutes later than Charlottetown.

THE CAR FERRY SAILINGS

Leave Borden 9.45 a. m. 1 p. m
Tormentine 11 a. m. 3.45 p. m.

Parliament Building Groomed For Opening On January 12

(C. P. by Guardian's Special Wire)

OTTAWA, Dec. 29—The Parliament Building, comparatively silent and deserted except by tourists and a handful of regular workers since last July, is springing to life in readiness for the parliamentary opening scheduled for two weeks from today.

Some members have already taken up residence in Ottawa for the coming session and next week they will arrive by every train. The House of Commons is at full strength but there are seven vacancies in the Senate and it is not expected many of them will be filled before the opening.

It will be an earlier opening than customary because of the Government's desire to prorogue within four months so that members and ministers may be in their own ridings to greet King George and Queen Elizabeth when the Royal tour of Canada starts next May.

Parliament's maintenance staff will be busy from now to Jan. 12 polishing and cleaning, and the huge canvas coverings which have hidden the new carvings about the centre entrance beneath the Peace Tower will shortly be removed.

For several reasons the 1939 session will be of extraordinary interest. Apart from the fact that it may have to adjourn, if the sessional work is not completed in time, to make way for the Royal visit, it is expected to be the last Parliament before a general election and will furnish the first opportunity to discuss Canada's attitude toward the Empire during last September's international crisis.

Another interesting feature of the forthcoming session will be the appearance of Hon. R. J. Manion for the first time in the House of Commons as leader of the official opposition.