

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

Current Comment

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THE CLOSING SESSION

The legislative session the second under the present regime is nearing its close. In many respects it has differed widely from previous sessions. From the outset the government has been on the defensive and necessarily much time was wasted in defence which might more profitably have been devoted to necessary legislation.

Indeed so habitual did reference to the Guardian become that it was remarked that more attention was paid to discussion of the policy of this paper than to that of the government.

In its first session, a year ago, the government had "put its foot in it" by adopting a course directly opposite to that which it had promised the electors to follow and it has been busily engaged ever since in trying to pull the foot out with the result that it has now got both feet in and each successive struggle only serves to plunge it deeper into the mire.

Their charge of extravagance against the former government was followed by a veritable carnival of expenditure including additional indemnities to themselves, greatly increased salaries to those of them who were heads of departments and to such party supporters as they placed in old or newly created offices. With this unpropitious start against them and the country stirred up to the boiling point the work of the past session was very largely confined to a laborious and almost continuous effort to persuade the country that what they had done was for the betterment of the province and an evidence of courage and statesmanship on the part of the legislators. That the party realized the difficulty of the undertaking was evidenced by the efforts made both at the previous and present session to misrepresent the financial condition of the province under the late government, to magnify the invisible and imaginary blessings that were presumed to accrue from the wisdom and sagacity, also invisible of the present administration.

The suppression of the minority report of the Public Accounts Committee at the last session was an act of cowardice and acknowledged guilt which the people throughout the province have not forgiven. The resurrection of this report at the present session and its consequent publication, although voted down by a party majority, did more perhaps than anything else to show the falseness and the absurdity of the charge of extravagance against the late government and the tactics by which Premier Bell and his followers were attempting to justify the carnival of extravagance upon which they had entered. That stuff has been told by the publication of the suppressed document and it is significant that the party made no attempt to deny its accuracy.

Little legislation was enacted, the principal government bill being a "cure all" act intended to blank out the errors of the past session.

Provision for the current year is on a scale which holds out no hope of economy in the administration and little, if any, improvement in the general financial condition of the province.

SEED TIME AND HARVEST

Within a week or so seeding

will be on throughout the province. Already most of the farmers have made their plans as to how they shall divide their acreage, already they have decided upon what varieties to sow and plant, what fields they shall fertilize and what fields will be devoted to pasturage. These decisions will have been arrived at from experience and necessity.

Our farmers need no advice from us but it will not be out of place at the beginning of the seeding season, when operations are being planned which will mean a year's profit or a year's loss, to recall the experiences of former years. It will be remembered that many influenced by the abnormally high prices for certain products, have specialized in these on the following years. When the crop was harvested it was found that so many others had done the same thing that a surplus was created with consequently lower prices. On the other hand surpluses and low prices have had the same effect in the opposite direction. The commodity that slumped in price was short cropped the next year with the result that there was a scarcity and higher prices.

It would appear that for this province mixed farming without too much specializing in any one direction is the safer course. It is not possible to correctly predict prices but experience has proved that the average all round crop is at least the surest and generally the most profitable.

A GOOD ROADS WEEK

It is universally agreed that good roads are one of the greatest assets of a country. It is also agreed that, in this province at least, the proper time to make roads is as early as possible in the spring, that is, as soon as the roads have become sufficiently dry to be worked and before the moist clay has been pulverized into dust. Last year several school districts among them Hamilton, Margate, and Kelvin, turned out en masse on a day or two and split log dragged, harrowed and smoothed the roads with result that throughout the summer these roads were as nearly perfect as clay roads could be made.

Why not have a Good Roads Week for the whole province? Next week, April 25th to 30th, will probably be the last week before farming operations begin. Might we not suggest to the school secretary in each district to lead in this matter? We feel assured that all progressive farmers would in their own interests and for the benefit and credit of their communities join willingly in such a movement. One or two days would suffice to repair all the roads in the province and put them in good shape to stand the wear and tear of the summer and fall.

This would in no way interfere with any undertakings under the Canadian Highways Act and would certainly prove a benefit not only to the community but to the province.

We shall be pleased to record any efforts that may be undertaken along this line and hope that every school district in the province will take part in what we feel assured, if begun, will become an annual event hereafter. Each school secretary can set the pace and get the leaders in his district to agree to it and go ahead. Next week will be an ideal time for it. Let us have a Good Roads week.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Whether the present session ends this week or next it will go down in history for at least two distinctive features, mutual admiration and abuse of the Guardian. The instability of their case is clearly evidenced by both.

Under all former governments a notable feature of the sessional debates consisted of a detailed description of some of the principal operations of the year, and this more particularly in connection with the public works of the country. In this the present ruling powers are almost barren, and the history of their labors along these lines almost an empty and colorless page. They have had much to say on the work done under the provisions of the Highways Act, for which all primary credit is due to the Dominion Government but when it comes to the ordinary works, those which have been carried on ever since the Island had a government, the lips of Hon. Mr. Crosby were almost silent, and the rest of the Government in so far as pointing to any specific works being done, were as silent as the churchyard. More particularly during the preceding eight years of Conservative Government there was the annual record of PERMANENT STEEL AND CONCRETE BRIDGES, their history, method, and cost of construction, and their great advantages to the people, always related to the members of the legislature in the budget and the debate thereon. And it was so frequently referred to with pride that these great works were being built, not borrowed capital or federal grants, but out of the current revenues of the province.

To make the matter clearer let it be observed that with a revenue of more than a quarter million dollars less than the Bell Government now have at their disposal the late Government expended the HANDSOME SUM OF TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERMANENT STEEL AND CONCRETE BRIDGES a living and lasting monument to their ability and wisdom, for years to come. And side by side with this record put that of the present Commission of Public Works speaking from his place in the House with, excepting the Federal Highways work, and the few annual and customary repairs to Falconwood and the Infirmary. The late Government who did this marvelous amount of permanent work out of a \$500,000 revenue were denounced in the House and through the country, as a wasteful and extravagant, by these men who come with the record of seven hundred thousand dollar expenditure, and many unpaid bills besides, without being able to boast of a single work of this kind. No wonder the Hon. Mr. Crosby labored most painfully in his speech on the budget, and no wonder that all the other speakers were empty of material upon which to compliment his department, and had to cast their floral wreaths of soft-soap praise upon his automation operations under the provisions of the Dominion Highways Act.

Daily Selections Guardian Readers

Furnished by W. S. Louson

THE PAWN

A man must ever hold himself in readiness to be played. He must take with great grace the fact that he must at times become a mere pawn for an idea. Yet may he rank among the immortal worthies of the world—for in Life, as in the game of chess, the pawn often holds the key to the winning play. Only as you are able to link your own noble aims and efforts with the larger ones of Time, are you able to feel working within you the "conscious pursuit of a great purpose," as Aristotle has so finely put it—meaning, I believe, that the machinery of high achievement which Nature has given to Man begins its motion the minute that he sights his ideal.

With such a feeling breeding within one's mind and heart, who can hesitate before a great chance? Who would not be willing to lay down his very life and ask that it be traded in for an ideal? Napoleon walked thru pest houses without fear. Roosevelt evaded his guards, while president for it was distasteful to him to be sacrificed, if his body was to be sacrificed, it would not well serve its end. Greatness stalks out in the open! But this big business of pawning is not confined to the future of fame. The men or women behind their desks and machines, doing the day's work well, are as truly spending their lives to a fine purpose—pawns for the chronicler of a passing time to note with pride. So let us talk to our tired bodies and to our oft-discouraged hearts, and tell them to remember that what they give out is the only thing of permanence about them. Be glad to give, to serve, to sweat, to fight, to sacrifice, to stand smilingly ready—to be pawned.

Because Mr Crosby has a very large public confidence for sincerity his utterances carry considerable weight, and for this reason he should be the more careful about placing his imprimatur upon scandals issued by his colleagues. Statements made by some of these have little or no weight in the country and do but little injury, but coming from Mr. Crosby, even if fabulous, they might be inclined to be believed, and thus perpetrate irreparable wrong. The expenditure of colorless page. They have had much to say on the work done under the provisions of the Highways Act, for which all primary credit is due to the Dominion Government but when it comes to the ordinary works, those which have been carried on ever since the Island had a government, the lips of Hon. Mr. Crosby were almost silent, and the rest of the Government in so far as pointing to any specific works being done, were as silent as the churchyard. More particularly during the preceding eight years of Conservative Government there was the annual record of PERMANENT STEEL AND CONCRETE BRIDGES, their history, method, and cost of construction, and their great advantages to the people, always related to the members of the legislature in the budget and the debate thereon. And it was so frequently referred to with pride that these great works were being built, not borrowed capital or federal grants, but out of the current revenues of the province.

The Hon. Jas. A. McNeill, the former Commissioner of Public Works, is a man of the highest standing in this province, against whom neither in public or private life, NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE, AND VERY FEW WILL, TO POINT THE FINGER OF REPROACH. He and Premier Bell have practically passed the great portion of their lives in the same business centre, Summerside and there, where they are both well known, the REPUTATION OF MR. McNEILL FOR PROBITY AND HONOR WILL NEVER SUFFER WHEN PLACED IN COMPARISON WITH THAT OF MR. Bell, in any test before the tribunal of the people. And yet Premier Bell, made and repeated the charge that Mr. McNeill, OUT OF HIS EXPENDITURE OF ONLY \$183,000 "improperly" and "illegally" expended \$110,000 for no other purposes than carrying the election. And here was the golden opportunity for Mr. Crosby to do the right thing, and to rebuke his leader for this unwarranted scandal. He had all the transactions of the department and the books of the province before him.

(Continued on Page Five.)

Our Ottawa Letter

OTTAWA, April 11—The railway question continues to transcend all other political problems. It developed an acute stage this week when the Grand Trunk Railway, unable to do its own financing, yet persisting in keeping control of its road, practically in violation of an agreement with the Government, defaulted on its bonds and brought about a deadlock with the Government. Briefly, the position is this: Under the legislation providing for arbitration to determine the price which the Government should pay for the preferred and common stock of the railway, it was provided that the arbitrators should report within nine months, the railway meanwhile to remain under control of the Grand Trunk directors but operated by a board of management upon which the Government, through the Canadian National Railways, would have representation.

Now nine months ought to have been ample time for both parties to the arbitration to submit their case, but despite the fact that the Government long since completed its case, the Grand Trunk has been guilty of what the Prime Minister characterized as "inexplicable dilatoriness." The result, as was inevitable, was that when the time specified to conclude the arbitration elapsed the Grand Trunk was still in the middle of its case, and pleading for more time. This was both unjust and, from the country's standpoint, calculated to prove injurious. It was unjust, because, as there was evidence to prove, the Grand Trunk was guilty of unjustifiable delay; and it was calculated to prove injurious because the Government, pressed hard financially and anxious for vital reasons, to get control of the Grand Trunk and co-ordinate it with the National System could not afford to grant more delay. Hence it said, in effect, to the Grand Trunk: "We cannot agree to prolong arbitration except on this condition: that you hand us over control of the railway, pending the arbitrators' report, so that we may get to work in putting the system into shape; otherwise it is up to you to do your own financing."

The Grand Trunk's reply was evasive. It took the ground that it

could not be expected to hand over its stock unless and until it knew what price it was to receive, and then, after being assured that it was not stock which the Government wanted, but merely control of management, first accepted and then refused under cover of a legal technicality.

The situation as a consequence is this: The Government simply says to the railway: The arbitration, as agreed, is over. If you want an extension, let us have the road. If you don't want to let us have the road, want to keep its control then do your own financing. We are tired of putting up money for other people's benefit." And so the Grand Trunk faces the alternative of climbing down from its high position and getting a fair arbitration award, or persisting in its present attitude and seeing the railway go under the hammer into liquidation.

Meanwhile, after futile attempts on the part of Mr. King to play politics, a committee has been appointed to look into the question of establishing a link between Parliament and the Management of the National Railways. Briefly, the duty of this committee will be to determine just how much of its business can the National Railway Board make public in Parliament without placing it at the mercy of its competitors and injuring the public interest. Manifestly, there are many matters which cannot be made public, seeing that the National Railways have a mighty competitor in the C.P.R., but, on the other hand, it is felt that Parliament, which is called upon to pay the shot, should have as much knowledge as is consistent with public safety in regard to just what it is that it is paying for. Mr. King as is his wont, demanded the impossible. He wanted a committee that would compel the National Railways to lay all of its cards on the table,—to divulge all facts and figures in its possession every time an Opposition member desired to go on a muckraking expedition or to satisfy a whim for an inquiry. Fortunately, the good sense of the House, prevailed over this, and the Government's position was sustained by a substantial majority. As a result the new committee, composed of the best brains of the House, will be soon at work charged with what is unquestionably

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PATONS PATONS

while in attendance or leave Canada before prorogation, the end of is now almost sure to be delayed the session may be looked for early until after the Premier's return.

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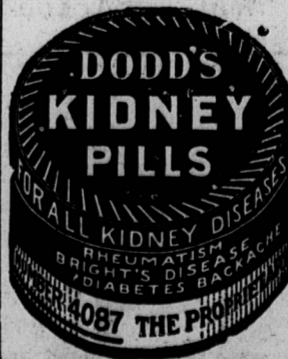
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CHARLOTTETOWN

The Old Gardener Says

By all means set out some raspberry plants this spring. It is impossible to get any such raspberries in the market as you can grow at home, because this is one of the fruits which does not stand shipping well. It is well to have a good spring fruiting raspberry, like Cuthbert of King, but you should not omit the late summer ones which also bear well in the spring. They include St. Regis, the best known, La France and Erskine Park.



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