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WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1922

LAND SETTLEMENT

The special committee of the House of Commons on Soldiers' Re-Establishment, has concluded the taking of evidence and will shortly submit its report to parliament. The Secretary of the G. W. V. A., Mr. C. G. MacNeill, placed before the committee joint proposals from the alliance of returned soldiers' bodies with regard to land settlement. The proposals included: (1) Revaluation of land, (2) revaluation of stock, (3) Exemption from interest for a period of years in addition to the exemptions already allowed, (4) the spreading of the stock and equipment loans over a longer period, (5) reduction in the rate of interest.

Evidence was submitted bearing upon these points and in the course of the discussions which ensued much valuable information was elicited with reference to the history of soldier settlement. Just what view parliament will take of the demands made remains to be seen but the evidence all points to the fact that concessions might be made with advantage not only to the soldier farmers but to the country at large.

It was shown that over 600,000 acres of unimproved land has been brought under cultivation by soldier settlers. This alone is a great national asset.

There were 1,357 men to whom the Board had given training in farming. They were not farmers; 3,300 men had completed training, but some of these had not taken up land.

The number of men to whom loans were given for land settlement was 21,000. Of these eleven per cent abandoned their farms and took up other occupations.

The first of the heavy payments came due this year and at the 31st of March 30 per cent of the loans was paid up. This, it was pointed out, was as good a showing as was made in connection with straight line loan companies. The amounts due during the year were very large in comparison with the amounts due the two previous years. Then there was an abnormal drop in the prices of agricultural products which placed a very heavy handicap upon the new farmers, struggling as they were against heavy loans. On this showing the plea for a longer time for payment and a lower rate of interest, was strongly emphasized.

It was also shown that last year some 12,000 settlers had their first large payments to make and 10,000 of them paid their obligations in full, a most remarkable showing and a very creditable one.

There were some failures of course. These the principal witness, Major Barnett, did not attribute wholly to the heavy payments; some of them, he said, were due to the land, some to the men, some to domestic troubles. There were a few cases of fraud but so few in such a large number as to be almost negligible.

Summing up the evidence submitted, which is very voluminous, the conclusion is inevitable that the scheme was a real success; that Canada has been very considerably enriched by the soldier settlers and that many hundreds of soldiers have been saved from a life of practical drift to useful and happy citizenship.

The idea could very well be worked out in this province for the re-occupation of our vacant farms not necessarily, although preferably, by returned soldiers but by worthy immigrants or by our own sons who otherwise must go abroad.

SOME TAXES

It is estimated, based on present prospects, that the lobster catch this season will bring the fishermen a million and a quarter dollars. This amount the packers will pay directly or indirectly by checks. A packer in a position to know informs us that operating expenses, wages, etc., will amount to another million and a quarter which also will be paid by check either directly or indirectly.

The new Fielding taxation imposes a tax of two cents on every check of \$50 or fraction of \$50. On the lobster business alone of this province the stamp tax will amount to at least \$900 and probably calculating the many checks for parts of \$50 on which the same tax will be paid, to \$1,000. This is some tax on an industry that is struggling for existence. Who pays it? The fishermen and the factory hands.

The Ottawa correspondent of the Toronto Mail and Empire gives some concrete examples of how the new tariff works out. For example, a farm implement valued at \$100 was formerly subject to 12 1/2 per cent duty and 4 per cent sales taxation, which brought the value to \$117. It is now subject to 10 per cent duty and six per cent sales taxation, which brings the value to \$116.60. An implement or an invoice of grey cottons or linen, unbleached, valued at \$100 was formerly subject to 15 per cent duty and 4 per cent sales taxation, which brought the value to \$119.60. It is now subject to 12 1/2 per cent duty and six per cent sales tax, which brings the value to \$119.35. An invoice of underwear, flannels, lustrous, mohair or Italian linings valued at \$100, was formerly dutiable at 22 1/2 per cent. The old duty and the old sales tax brought its value to \$127.40. The new duty of 20 per cent and the new sales tax bring the value to \$127.20. The old duty of 25 per cent and the old sales tax raised the value of a \$100 invoice of printed, dyed & colored cotton up to \$130. The new duty, 22 1/2, and the new sales tax account for an increase to \$129.85. A shipment of white cotton, fabric or linen, bleached, towelling of linen or cotton in the web, valued at \$100, was subject to 17 1/2 per cent duty and 4 per cent sales tax which accounted for an increase in value of \$122.20. The same shipment, subject to 15 per cent duty and six per cent sales tax, is raised to \$121.90.

The Liberal press which finds it necessary to say something favourable to the new taxation and the reduced tariff, places the emphasis on the fact that the duty on agricultural implements has been reduced by 2 1/2 per cent.

While saying nothing about the increased sales tax more than offsetting the reduction in duty. The farmer buys an agricultural implement once in twenty years and even if he saved \$2.50 in that time he pays the increased sales tax every time he goes to the city on everything he buys.

The Fielding tariff and taxation has not even the merit of pulling the wool over the farmers' eyes. They see in it only another violation of pre-election promises.

THE NEW EDUCATION

The Patriot takes umbrage at our remarks yesterday on Premier Bell's suggestion re the granting of teachers' licenses to persons without the necessity of attending college. What Mr. Bell said and what the Patriot thinks he meant are apparently different. Here is what Saturday's Patriot says the Premier said:—

"Let us offer a teachers' license and school privileges to all especially to those boys and girls too poor to pay for their board and maintenance in Charlottetown. Let us invite them to study at home, make use of their spare hours, prepare themselves to pass the examination for 3rd class give them a third class certificate without the necessity or the expense of attending the college. If afterwards they teach a couple of years they can lay by money enough to attend college and get a second class license."

This would start many a young man or woman in life. Self-education is more important than college education.

After The Guardian had in the mildest and kindest manner possible pointed out both the merits and the absurdity of Premier Bell's suggestion, yesterday's Patriot thinks this is what the Premier meant:

The Public Forum

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by its correspondents.

Kept Busy

Sir.—The Hon. Mr. Hughes, the farmer economist, now seems to be quite proud of the fact that the Government has increased the number of officials in the Provincial Treasurer's department, and says they are all kept busy. Just think of it, a certain number of officials in this department under the Conservatives, with nothing to do, and half as many more under the Liberals and all kept busy! A miracle, is it not? Let us see how it is done. There is a land tax, a poll tax, and an income tax to be collected. Will they have a few thousand notices printed stating that you and I are in arrears for poll tax. These are addressed and mailed to the delinquents. In a short time they give the printer another order, and this time the notice informs us that we owe the government so much income tax. A year or so later, the printer is called upon and this notice tells us that we have not yet paid our land tax. Now some of these notices take effect, others do not, and so this independent collector, of whom Mr. Hughes boasts, gives the order "repeat the dose," and again the printer, the clerks and the stamp vendor are kept busy. Even then, some stubborn cases do not yield to this treatment, and again the independent collector says "repeat, and add Henry Smith to the prescription," and again all are busy. A great scheme, is it not? A little expensive, as a comparison between the printing and postage accounts for the year 1919 and those for 1920 and 1921 will show; but what matter? They are all kept busy. Now that the secret is out, we may expect our merchants to increase their staff and, when we order flour, tea and sugar, or a shirt, collar and tie, send us separate bills for each article. Who says there is nothing new under the sun?

I am, sir, etc.

ONE WHO GOT ALL THE DOSES

and school privileges to all especially to those boys and girls too poor to pay for their board and maintenance in Charlottetown. Let us invite them to study at home, make use of their spare hours, prepare themselves to pass the examination for 3rd class give them a third class certificate without the necessity or the expense of attending the college. If afterwards they teach a couple of years they can lay by money enough to attend college and get a second class license.

This would start many a young man or woman in life. Self-education is more important than college education.

After The Guardian had in the mildest and kindest manner possible pointed out both the merits and the absurdity of Premier Bell's suggestion, yesterday's Patriot thinks this is what the Premier meant:

"Why not offer for instance a 3rd class license to young men and young women who are ambitious and who would undertake to study at home and who would qualify themselves to pass and would pass the usual examination for 3rd class teacher?"

The expense of board and maintenance in Charlottetown and at the college is great, the Premier pointed out. Why not try to avoid that expense. There are those who would gladly spend their evenings and spare hours in study rather than in idleness or frivolity. Why not give encouragement to these? Why not try to develop in the young the habit of studying and working for themselves? Why not give to the young and ambitious a start in life? By this method you would put them in the way of getting funds to enable them afterwards to attend college and get a first or second class license." And the Patriot pettishly adds:—"Surely these are worthy objects. But the Guardian finds in them only subject for ridicule."

We would suggest that hereafter the Patriot, when quoting Premier Bell or any other person with a new idea, first find out what it meant before telling the world just what he said. There is generally a difference; there certainly was in this case.

Notes By The Way

(From the Examiner)

Formerly, within the easy memory of older persons, Prince Edward Island had highways and by-way roads extending from end to end of its area and connecting all its principle towns and settlements. These roads were then the only avenues for inland travel and transportation that the province possessed and at all seasons of the year people who travelled, whether for business or pleasure used these roads. All the products of the farms were brought to the towns for local consumption or for shipment abroad passed over these roads, as did also the goods and merchandise received in exchange therefor.

Much of the traffic was heavy both ways—loads of potatoes, hay, oats, pork, beef, mutton and butter seeking a market or a port; casks of molasses, loads of iron and hardware and weighty packages of merchandise returning, all passed over the roads which at the busy seasons of the year were thronged with traffic. In those days the importance of our highways could scarcely be overrated, and new roads were built from year to year making a total mileage which now covers some 3,500 miles and which if placed end to end in a straight line would cover the distance from Charlottetown to Vancouver.

Then came the era of railway building. Today we have some 275 miles of railway running from end to end of the Island, connecting town with town and shipping port with shipping port. Charlottetown, Borden, Summerside, Alberton, Souris, Georgetown, Montague, Cardigan, Murray Harbor, Vernon and Kensington are all railway towns now and all but Kensington are shipping ports also. And all of the freight traffic and passenger traffic now done by the railway has been taken off of the highways, thus greatly reducing their importance as avenues for the carriage of passengers and freight.

Now it is apparent that just as all of the people of Canada have paid for, or owe the cost of, all the railways in Canada, so the people of Prince Edward Island have paid or owe the cost of the railways in this province—that is, if we get fair play in such matters, which we don't. But let that go. Those 275 miles of railway have cost the people of this province at least \$50,000 per mile, including change of gauge and betterments, a total of \$13,750,000. Of course, the Island Railway is not paid for, no more than other Canadian Government Railways. Its cost was added to our share of the Dominion debt.

It will be seen from the facts above stated that it was at great cost to the people that the change was made by which the transfer was made of so large a share of our inland freight and passenger traffic from the highways to the railway lines. How large the proportion of such traffic may be we cannot precisely tell, but it is safe to say that more passengers and more freight are carried more miles on the railways than over the public highways. Much of it all was carried part of the way over the roads and part of the way over the railway. Of course, we cannot do without roads or without railways. Our argument is that the railway has taken away half the traffic which fifty years ago was carried over the common roads.

It will be readily admitted that more people make more traffic both for common roads and for railways. But it must be remembered that the population of the province is very little more than it was fifty years ago before we had any railway. Our people follow mainly the same callings as they did then and as we have no mines, no lumbering industry, and very few factories, there is not much more travel or freight to be carried by both the railway and the roads together than was formerly carried over the public roads alone. Unfortunately, too, our population has diminished sadly within the past thirty years and is still decreasing.

It is under these conditions and circumstances that the Bell Government has launched its scheme for improved highways. Roughly speaking it is proposed to spend about \$1,000 per mile on about one-sixth part of the highways of the province. Sixty per cent of the money is being borrowed on the credit of the pledged revenue of the province and 40 per cent, comes from the Dominion treasury and the people have been led to believe that this is so much clear gain. It is anything but that. The 40 per cent, is also borrowed money which is added to the Dominion debt, of the interest upon which we must pay our full share along with the other provinces.

It is claimed that this road improving work gives employment to labor. The claim is deceptive. There is no lack of employment in this province during the season in which work on the roads is done. It is an untimely undertaking because the cost of labor is twice as great as it was before the war and twice as great as it will probably be a year or two hence. It is not work that is now urgently needed. It is done at the cost of neglecting the remaining five-sixths of our road mileage, as is shown by the lessened grant for the up-keep of all other but the so-called improved sections. At best, moreover, these so-called permanent roads are no better than they formerly were during five months out of the year.

To sum up, our 88,000 people are called by the Bell Government to shoulder a load of half a million dollars to improve one-sixth part of their roads during a little more than half the year. Whether this is a scheme for the public good, or a scheme to get more money for a spend-thrift Government to squander, is for you to judge.

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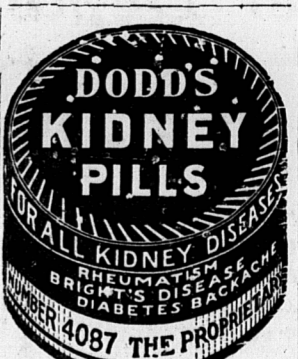
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der let the people judge. We submit the question especially to the large majority of our country people who live and drive on the roads which are not improved.

FINE CHEMICALS—The Special Purposes Committee of the Institute of Chemistry reports that British manufacturers are now able to produce about 2,000 substances in the class of "Pine Chemicals," and are making every endeavour to extend their list. The supplies of British analytical reagents are generally acknowledged to be quite as good as those obtainable before the war. Generally the Committee finds that steady improvement is being made by British manufacturer.



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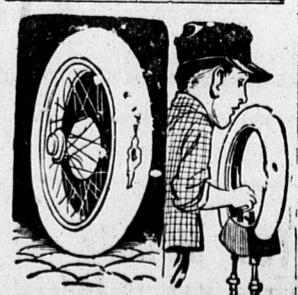


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