Our Ottawa Letter.

the season, which was attended by most of Hugh Blain. the Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and the Senate, and their wives and daughters, and a large number of the leading society people of Ottawa. Over five hundred were present, and the ball was one of the most enjoyable affairs ever held in the Capital. On Saturday evening, the much talked of and long expected Drawing Room was held in the Senate Chamber, and attended by about six hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen, many of whom came from Montreal, Toronto, and other cities specially for the occasion. This was the first Drawing Room held by Lord and Lady Aberdeen, and before the opening of the Session it was talked of as to be the great social event of the season. It was fixed, as is usual, for the Saturday after the meeting of the House; but, on account of the death of Lord Tweedmouth, Lady Aberdeen's father, it was postponed until the 28th April. Rumours that this annual function would be artended with much more than the ordinary display on such occasions have been rife for some time past, and were fully borne out by the magnificent display of Saturday night. The Drawing Room was more distinctly vice-regal in its character than has heretofore been the custom. The vice-regal household were all in Court dress; all the Ministers present wore their official uniform, as did the Judges of the Supreme and Exchequer Court and such of the officers of the Senate and Commons as were present. A large number of the ladies who were presented, were Court dress with long trains, and the "court courtesy" was much more common than usual. It was quite evident to an onlooker that the increased use of this "official bow," as it may be called, was not due to accident, but was the result of careful private practice, and goes to show that the Drawing Room is gradually assuming more of the distinctive features of a State function, such as Her Majesty's Drawing Room in London. Another indication of this is the fact that an unusually large number of debutants were present, and it seems as if the English fashion of young ladies making their first bow in society before Her Majesty, was to be adopted in Canada. The Drawing Room was certainly a very great succees, both in quantity and quality.

PROGRESS WITH THE TARIFF.

Although a fair amount of progress was made during the week, in getting through a large number of tariff items, in Committee of Ways and Means, still the close of the sixth week of the Session does not find the Committee much more than half way through the new tariff, and it will probably take another two weeks before the resolutions assume the form of a bill. The Opposition has not been making anything in the way of the factious fight, but has needed a good deal of explanation on almost every item, and progress therefore has not been very rapid. Several changes have been made in accordance with the notices given by Mr. Foster, all of which have been in the direction of returning to specific duties, the feeling in favor of which seems to be grewing. As soon as the iron items are reached, which will probably be on Tuesday or Thursday, Mr. Maclean will move the resolution of which he gave notice last week, and which will probably cause a general discussion on the general principal of protection. It is not very likely that the Government will adopt the whole of Mr. McLean's resolution but it is quite possible that some further changes in the tariff, in the direction of substituting specific for ad valorem duties may be made. There is a growing feeling amongst the members that a specific duty is the only one which can be depended on to afford any adequate measure of protection, as no matter what the ad valorem duty may be, there are times when the manufacturers of certain classes of goods in the United States would be willing to sacrifice 'their goods at almost anything they could get by auction, in order to obtain money. This was very notibly the case during the late commercia! depression there. Had it not been for the specific duties then in force, under the National Policy, there is no doubt but that Canada would have been made a slaughter market for many lines of goodas it was during the Mackenzie regime. Had the same tariff existed in Canada last year, as we had from '74 to '78, no one who looked calmly over the situation, could for a moment doubt that Canada would have shared in the commercial depression which swept over the United States at that time. This depression iliable to occur again in the United States. and thoughtful Members of Parliament are considering whether it would be wise to lessen in any way the protection, which our manufacturers now have.

THE INSOLVENCY BILL.

The Senate Committee on Insolvency held is first business meeting on Thursday last, when deputations from the various Boards of Trade and also from the Bankers' Association were heard. The two deputations were not quite unanimous in their view of the Bill, but they both Insolvency Bill at all than to have one

trader. The position of the Boards of farmers to be thrown into insolvency while OTTAWA. 30th April.—The distinctive Trade is shewn by the following resolution | waiting for their harvest, which it has been Jeature of the last week in Ottawa was which was adopted at a meeting of the the special object of the Government to more social than political. On Friday delegates held on the morning prior to avoid. The Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, night the ladies of the Russell House gave | their appearing before the Committee, and | Chairman of the Committee, thought that what may be considered the closing ball of | which was read to the Committee by Mr. | the change was so serious that it was not

> be acceptable that does not substantially | No further meeting of the Committee has secure to the creditors the right to say who shall be the liquidator or assignee of the estate in all cases."

> The discussion was mostly on three points. First the appointment of the official receiver; second, composition and discharge, third, the including of farmers and grazers in the Bill. With regard to the official receiver, the merchants were opposed to the Bill in its present form, which provides for the appointment of an official receiver, who shall have charge of the estate of the banker, make up the list of creditors, take stock, and call the first meeting of creditors, at which a liquidator is to be appointed. It was pointed out, that this was in effect only reviving the old official assignee, who proved so very objectionable under the Mackenzie Baukruptcy Act of 1875. It was held that the official receiver should be really very little more than a caretaker or custodian of the property until the creditors could meet, and appoint their own liquidator who should wind up the estate. On the other hand, the bankers were disposed to advocate the appointment of an officer who should have defined duties to perform, and and manage it in the interest of the tail their rights in regard to separate schools and expensive, and that the interest of creditors would be best conserved by placing the companies under the Insol-

COMPOSITION AND DISCHARGE.

In regard to the clauses in the Bill fixing

the minium of composition and discharge at 331 per cent the merchants were disposed to accept this clause, but the bankers took the position that the minium was altogether too low and should be at least 66²/₃ per cent. or 75 per cent. as the minium of composition with the consent of 3 creditors in number and 3 in value. It was heard that the effect of a low minium would be to bring all compositions down to that figure. This had been the result in the United States where the composition was as low as 25 per cent. and it was difficult to affect a composition at more than that figure. This was, of course, hurtful to the honest trader, whose business was hindered by these low compositions. The bankers held that Insolvency should be made as difficult as possible and that a premium should not be set on dishonest trading, by making it easy for any one in business to take advantage of the Act compromise with his creditors for \frac{1}{3} of his liabilities, and start up in business again in opposition to the merchant who was ready and willing to pay 100 cents on the dollar. Mr. Walker, speaking for the bankers, also suggested that it might be well in order to afford protection against fradulent bankruptcy that some officer should be appointed by the Government, as a sort of proctor, whose duty, it should be to investigate cases of failure and to act as protector whenever there was any evidence of fraud; and he suggested that the expense of this office might be paid out of a small tax to be levied on bankrupt estates | which he had acted since his occupancy of THE NON-TRADERS CLAUSE.

There was a little discussion at Thursday's meeting as to the clause including farmers, grazers, and non-traders. The bankers strongly opposed their admission under the law, unless some provision was made that they should not take advantage of the exemption granted under some of the provincial laws, especially those of Manitoba and the North West Territories, where the exemptions are so great, that in some cases, they cover a great deal more than a farmer is at all likely to possess, until he has been a good many years cultivating his land. The Committee met again on Friday morning, when the nontraders clause was considered. Senator leges and of the constitution of authority Scott contended that a bankruptcy bill was intended to relieve only those who were traders, and who might be led into difficulties by causes whom they could not control. He and one or two other Senators held that farmers did not belong to this class, and therefore could not be included in the Act as it might induce them to enter into speculation. Senator Scott moved an amendment to strike out the clause relating to farmers and non-traders. which was defeated. The clause was then amended by a vote of 17 to 9 to strike out the following portion of the clause.

"But no receiving order under this Act shall be made on the pelition of a creditor respect of the estate of a farmer, grazer. or rancher, or of a debtor not being a trader, nor shall a receiving order be made | superannuation fund is 4,408 of whom 865 in respect of the estate of a trader or his belong to the inside and 3,543 to the out-

The effect of the amendment will be to paid is \$3,587,639, of which \$1,023,242 is agreed that it would be better to have no put farmers, grazers and ranchers in the mid to the inside service and \$2,564,397 same position as ordinary merchants and | in the outside service. which would at all tayour the dishonest traders, and will make it possible for Major Ibbotson, of the 5th Royal Scots

advisable to proceed any further with the "That no Insolvency Legislation will Bill until he had consulted his colleagues. yet been called; but it is probable that there will be a meeting early this week The general impression now is that the Bankruptcy Act is not likely to become law at the present session, and that even if the Government accepts the Senate Committee amendment in respect to farmers and non-traders, and the Bill passed in the Senate, it will be allowed lie over for a year so as to get a general expression of opinion on it from the farmers, as well as the business men and bankers, before it becomes law.

NORTH-WEST SCHOOL QUESTION. The debate on Mr. Tarte's motion for papers on the Northwest School case was concluded on Thursday by a very able speech from Sir John Thompson, after which, and a few remarks from Mr. Laurier and Mr. Devlin, the motion was carried. Sir John's speech was in the main an amplification of the report to Council wherein were set forth the reasons why the Northwest School ordinance should not be disallowed. To these considerations the Premier added the testimony of Northwest members given in the House that the who in the case of factories, or other large grievances complained of in the petitions businesses which it was necessary should be for disallowance were based upon fear of kept running, should control the estate, what might be done in the future to curcreditors, until they could meet. In this in the Territories rather than upon any connection, a good deal was said about abridgment of their privileges which had incorporated companies; the tendency of as yet occurred under the ordinance of modern trade to drift into companies, in 1892. He pointed out that there was no preference to firms, and the advisability ground for the pretence that separate of placing such trading companies under schools had been abolished or that the use the Insolvency Act, rather than allowing of the French language in the schools had them to remain under the Winding up been discontinued as Mr. Tarte and other Act as at present. It was pointed out that Quebec agitators had declared. In the the Winding up Act was both cumbersome latter connection, after quoting from the regulations to show that the Ontario Bilingual readers were still prescribed on elimentary instruction, Sir John went on to say that while it would be well if both French and English were made compulsory studies in the schools, if any duty rested upon the state in the matter of educating French Canadian children, it was surely to see that in a country like this, where the English language is nominated, they should be given an English Education; and while speakers in the House had laid great stress upon he unfounded charge that the use of French had been abolished in the schools of the Northwest it was a significant fact that this was not aledged as a grievance in a single one of the many petitions asking the disallowance of the

SLANDERING THE SPEAKER.

When the House met on Wednesday last it was treated to a very unusual occurrene and one which for the credit of the press of Canada it is satisfactory to say has never had but two precedents. This was the passing of a vote of censure by the House of Commons on a newspaper for publish. ing matter affecting the privileges and aignities of the House. On Monday night a little difficulty arose over the Speaker having to call Dr. Landerkin to order twice. The Opposition wanted to play their usual tricks on moving the adjournment of the House, so that the doctor might continue the remarks which were not in order. The Speaker promptly resented this and the incident closed there as far as the House was concerned. On Tuesday the Ottawa Free Press came out with a violent attack on Mr. Speaker White accusing him of partisanship and abusing him generally for the manner in the Speaker's chair. Sir John Thompson, in calling attention to the matter, made a very calm and dignified speech in which he spoke of the necessity of the House maintaining its dignity, and especially of its resenting such scandalous attacks on the Speaker He was very moderate and temperate in his remarks and after the article had been read at the table of the House by the Clerk, the following resolution was carried :-

"That the article published in the news- THE DAILY SUN, paper called the Ottawa Free Press, dated 24th April, 1894, and read by the Clerk of the House at the table is a scandalous, false and malicious libel upon the honor, character and integrity of the Speaker of the House, and a contempt of the priviof the House."

MINOR NOTES.

The question as to whether witnesses before Committees are to be examined under oath, pending the passing of Mr. Mulock's Bill in this respect which has been adopted by the Government has been settled by the House passing a resolution that the Public Accounts Committee should be authorized to examine under oath Mr. Joseph Pope and other witnesses respecting the Behring Sea Arbitration accounts. The Public Accounts Committee will meet to-morrow Tuesday morning and again on Friday

From a return brought down last week it appears that the total number of permanent civil servants contributing to the side service. The total amount of wages

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