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OTTAWA LETTER.

OTTAWA, 6th April, 1900.—The real business of Parliament still remains to be done, although there was a Royal Assent on Wednesday last so that the Bill affecting the pay of the contingents might become law. The Senate, having no work before it, has adjourned until the 24th inst. At the present time there is hardly a reasonable prospect of any considerable volume of business being ready for the Senators when they return from their vacation. The Easter holidays will make a further hole in the time of Parliament, and once the warm weather sets in a general disposition toward indolence seizes the members.

Outside of the House there has been very little going on in social circles. The season in that regard has been quite exceptional. Last winter and the winter before the Capital was gayer than for a great many years. Balls and parties and dinners and entertainments generally followed one upon another in rapid succession, and the whirl of gaiety was kept up until the very close of the House in mid-summer. It is said that some of the young ladies of Ottawa, as well as some of the visitors, suffered quite a bit from the strain. This year the pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and Ottawa has been unusually quiet.

Another feature of Ottawa life which one does not see now is the incoming of large deputations just before the budget speech is delivered. During all the Tory regime these delegations poured into the Capital in great numbers. Nearly all the leading industries felt it to be necessary to be represented at the Capital before the budget was brought down, for the purpose of either insisting that the duties affecting them should be retained or that additions should be made. There was no sense of certainty about the tariff, and men who had money invested in manufacturing enterprises were in a state of constant unrest. The Tories never let a session go by without doing more or less tinkering with the tariff. They took off some duties and put on others. At the same time they persistently kept up the cry that if the Liberals came in the tariff would be smashed. Unfortunately, a great many timid people believed them.

A very happy change has now come over the country in respect of the tariff. The anxiety of past years is no longer felt. The conviction is general that the Liberals, having made one through re-adjustment of the scale of duties are not disposed to interfere further. The results of that adjustment have been so satisfactory that there is no demand whatever from any of the industries of the country for a change. This is an exceedingly happy state of affairs, and to this the prevailing prosperity of the country is in some measure due. Investments are made with a sense of security, and enterprise is encouraged. The Liberals are not so foolish as to claim that all of the prosperity which has characterized the past three or four years is due to them; but it may be fairly and properly said that they have helped materially to the bringing about of these conditions.

The Conservatives have put themselves fairly and squarely on record in relation to preferential trade. Sir Charles Tupper has moved that no preference will be considered satisfactory which does not involve a corresponding concession by Great Britain, and which does not also secure the adequate protection of our manufactures. This attitude is strikingly inconsistent with that which they presented a few weeks ago. Then they were concentrating all their energies on the disloyalty cry. They did not hesitate to charge the Government with being directly hostile to Imperial interests, and their

papers teemed with the most offensive allegations and innuendoes in that regard. As for themselves, they claimed a practical monopoly of about all the loyalty there was in the country.

The boot is now on the other foot. They are reproaching the Government with being too Imperial in sentiment, and too much disposed to help Great Britain. They are not willing that England should have anything for which she does not pay one hundred cents on the dollar. In so many words they have declared that sentiment is all right in its place, and that they are willing to stand by the Mother Country in her hour of need, but "business is business" and John Bull is not entitled to any more consideration in trade than anybody else. With a cold-bloodedness that is shameful to see they insist that the sacrifices made by our soldiers in South Africa should be used as a leverage on the Old Country to squeeze her into doing that which under other circumstances she might not be disposed to do.

At the same time they are raising a cry of alarm as respects our industries. They say there is a great danger of serious competition from England under the new tariff. It will be seen that this is a thing which the Conservatives must have clearly had in view when they themselves were advocating preferential trade. Any concession which England might make to us could not possibly affect the competition which her manufactures might create in Canada. So that, there is room to suspect that the Opposition have merely raised this cry in order to mount again the old National Policy horse and ride it at the head of their campaign processions. They have worked the race and disloyalty cry to death, and it would suit them very well to have an opportunity of appealing again to selfish considerations on the basis of protection.

This change of front really puts the Conservatives in the position of opposing preferential trade; for there is no hope that the thing can be made absolutely mutual. England is not disposed to throw free trade overboard and adopt protection, after having reached the commercial and industrial status which she now enjoys as the result of her fiscal policy of the past sixty years. It may, however, be fairly argued that Great Britain is already giving us a substantial quid pro quo. She buys nearly three times as much from us as we buy from her. Her sales to us were slowly and surely declining, while what she bought from us had far more than doubled within ten years. As a matter of fact, our imports from Great Britain in 1898 were not half as large as our imports in 1873. What was required, therefore, was something which would help the exports of the Mother Country to Canada, and the results of the past three years clearly prove that a preferential tariff is calculated to do this. Our imports from England have increased by 26 per cent since the preference was applied in 1897, and coincident therewith England enormously increased her purchases from us.

There is really no danger to the industries of Canada under the preferential trade policy which the present Government has adopted. The things which we buy from England belong almost wholly to classes which are not produced in Canada, and probably will not be for many years to come. I have looked carefully through the list of our imports for years past and confidently state this to be the case. It would be quite impossible for the Tories to point to any single industry in Canada which will be affected disadvantageously by the new tariff. And it must be remembered that even at the reduced rate there will still remain an average duty of more than 20 per cent against all the staple lines of manufactures which England supplies to us. The country which will chiefly be affected by the preference is the United States, which buys about half as much from us as we buy from it. The Americans have closed the door utterly against free trade relations, and it behoves us to cultivate that market in which all our hopes practically rest.

In the present disorganized state of the Conservative party their leaders are disposed to spread their sails to catch every passing breeze. Consistency has no place

in the programme. Two things have occurred during the past week to emphasize this criticism. Sir Charles Tupper has got it into his head that there is a feeling in Quebec against the cost of the contingent sent to South Africa, and the other day when he was at the ancient Capital this was the burden of his Address. Such a speech from the man who in Ontario claims all the credit for the assistance rendered the Empire by Canada does not place him in a very enviable light. The other matter which casts a reproach upon the Conservatives relates to taxation. They have persistently accused the present administration of increasing the burdens of the people, and yet they are opposing the new preferential tariff. Whatever may be said against the preference being given to England it cannot possibly be denied that the movement is directly on the side of reduced taxation. It lowers the tariff just so much on all goods coming from England, and to that extent is a benefit to the consumer. Perhaps too much should not be made of these inconsistencies, seeing that the Tory party is really in a desperate plight at the present time with a general election staring them in the face.

THE CHARGES WERE GRUND-LESS.

(Continued from page 6)

was present all the time as the representative of the government, namely: "The result showed the actual cost of these three bridges, delivered at Moncton to be 63 cents per pound. At this time the company was not well equipped with bridge building machinery, and the cost would no doubt be somewhat greater than after this was remedied and after workmen became more acquainted with the work."

"Subsequently in 1895 an order was given for three small bridges, namely: The Grand Manan, Dingee, and Saunders Brook bridges. Under pressure from the chief commissioner, and in view of the experience which the company had acquired they agreed to construct these bridges for 6 1-2 cents a pound, delivered at Moncton or at 1.4 of a cent per pound less than the actual cost of the three preceding bridges.

The next bridges constructed by the Record Foundry and Machine Company were the Petitcodiac and Port Elgin bridges, built in 1895 for Mr. Willard Kitchen, and for which he paid the company at the same rate of 6 1-2 cents per pound.

Next in order in bridge construction so far as the Record Foundry and Machine Company are concerned were the Campbell, Lefebvre, Blackville, Nepisquit and Tabor bridges, which completes the list down to the close of 1898, of the bridges constructed by this company. Mr. Emmerson, when arranging for the construction of these bridges, again insisted on a reduction in price, claiming that by reason of the thoroughly equipped plant which the company had acquired, and in view of the magnitude of the order, they should be able to do the work cheaper. He also urged that they should undertake to erect the bridges as well for a stated figure. The company declined to undertake the erection of the bridges, and finally the contract was given to Mr. A. E. Peters at 6 1-2 cents per pound, which was to cover construction of the bridges, freights, erection, painting, laying the floor, and in fact everything but the lumber. It will thus be seen that there has been a gradual reduction in price of the bridges constructed at the Record Foundry and Machine Company's Works.

"The bridges and cost are as follows: "First series—Cusack, Elgin, Douglas-town, built by the day and charged for at actual cost, 63-4 cents per pound, delivered at Moncton. Total cost (exclusive of erection) \$ 3,631.22.

"Second series—Grand Manan, Dingee Stream, Saunders Brook, (constructed under contract at 6 1-2 cents per pound) delivered at Moncton. Total cost (exclusive of erection) \$1,676.45

"Third series—Petitcodiac, Port Elgin (constructed for Willard Kitchen under contract at 6 1-2 cents per pound) delivered at Moncton. Total cost (exclusive of erection) \$4,649.64.

"Fourth series—To the close of 1898, Campbell, Lefebvre, Blackville, Nepisquit, Tabor, (constructed under contract with the government for 6 1-2 cents per pound) completed, erected and painted and ready for traffic the government finding the lumber. Total cost (including erection) \$52,320.97.

"It will thus be seen that by far the larger portion of the amount paid for the bridges constructed at the Record Foundry and Machine Works has been at the rate of probably 1 3-4 cents per pound less than was paid for the first three bridges constructed by the day. This is accounted for by the introduction of a complete bridge plant, and probably somewhat by the reduction in the cost of material, of both of which factors the province has got the benefit.

"The committee deem it proper in this connection to refer to the three bridges, namely, Mill Cove, Trueman's Pond and two spans of the Blackville bridge, built by Mr. Ruddock, of Chatham, and in respect to which the charge is made that the prices paid were excessive.

The Mill Cove bridge, as originally contracted for, was a long structure, having a span of 64 feet across the channel, and approaches to be made of steel bents, the total length being upwards of 500 feet. Mr. Ruddock had tendered for the steel superstructure, but his tender was considered to be too high and after an estimate of actual cost had been made up by the chief engineer of the department at \$3,837, Mr. Ruddock was given the contract for this amount. After he had begun the construction of the bridge and had all the material on hand it was, on the advice of the chief engineer, decided not to utilize the steel bents for the approaches, but to make a solid embank-

ment and roadway, so that only the truss span over the channel was utilized. Your committee are satisfied that the decision to make the alteration was a judicious one and in the public interest. The contract with Mr. Ruddock being thereby necessarily broken by the department, an equitable arrangement was come to whereby he was paid \$1,230 for the centre truss span of 64 feet, completely erected, and was allowed for the extra steel and other material on hand, which became the property of the government. Most of the metal left over was subsequently used by Mr. Ruddock in the Trueman's Pond Bridge, when he was charged with it at exactly the same price as that at which he had been paid for it.

"The price of \$1,250, or \$20 per foot, allowed for this, would seem to your committee to have been reasonable under the circumstances. The span was a light one and the labor would be very much greater relative to the weight than in a heavier truss. Therefore the fact that the cost of this bridge was nearly 10 cents per pound is no criterion of whether the price was a reasonable one. The bridge had a 19-foot roadway. In the statement produced by Mr. Roy, your committee find a riveted bridge, No. 1074, being a 63 foot span and only 14-foot roadway, the weight of which was 23,670 pounds, and at 5 1/2 cents per pound this would come to \$1,301.55, and would be a much more costly bridge than the Mill Cove bridge at \$1,250, having a span of 64 feet, and a roadway of 19 feet, of five feet wider. It is evident that the Mill Cove bridge, being made of light material, so designed, as to be equally as strong as the heavier bridge, must have required relatively a great deal more of labor. These observations will apply to the Trueman Pond bridge. The evidence shows that Mr. Ruddock only realised a fair profit out of both bridges.

"The remaining bridge constructed by Mr. Ruddock was the two outer spans of the Blackville bridge, and upon these he says his profit was \$250 on each span, which was certainly only a moderate amount. In this connection your committee would say that they are of opinion that the decision come to by Mr. Emmerson to have the price per pound include the erection of the bridges, and under which all the bridges more recently built under the contract with Mr. Peters were erected, was a prudent one, and your committee understand that this is the course which has since been pursued.

"It affords your committee much pleasure to report that in their opinion the charge that Mr. Emmerson 'paid out of the public moneys of the province twice as much and in some cases more than twice as much as the then current market rate for the construction of said works and supplying material therefore,' has not only not been sustained but has been completely disproved. That with regard to the charge that he 'paid double and in some cases more than double per pound what was paid by railway companies in Canada, the Intercolonial railway and other governments in Canada, during the same period for steel bridge superstructures equal in every respect in material and workmanship to the steel and iron superstructures erected in this province,' your committee desire to say that very early in the investigation it appeared that by reason of railway bridges being much heavier—ordinarily four or five times than highway bridges, the cost of the latter by reason of the increased cost of workmanship relatively to the pound, this statement would necessarily be true.

"Your committee, therefore, have only to report that in their opinion the charges which they were appointed to investigate have not only completely failed of proof, but have been wholly disproved.

"In conclusion, your committee desire to say that while the expense to which the province has been put by reason of this investigation has necessarily been very great, yet the money will not be wholly lost if the result should be to confirm the legislature and the people of the province in their determination to continue to have the steel bridges well designed, thoroughly constructed under careful inspection, and to have the work done, so far as may be consistent with prudent and economical expenditure, within the province, and so keep in circulation among our own people the moneys to be expended for labor in connection with these important public works.

"Respectfully submitted,
"Frank B. Carvell, Chairman.
"C. E. Fish.
"Alex. Gibson, jr.
"P. H. Leger.
"John Young."

The report was adopted.
Mr. Mott gave notice of the following resolution:

"Resolved that this house do concur in the report of the special committee to whom were referred the charges made by Mr. J. Douglas Hazen, a member for the county of Sunbury, against the Hon. Henry R. Emmerson, premier and attorney general, on the 12th day of March last past, and submitted on the 7th day of April instant."

By unanimous consent this motion was made the order of the day for Monday.

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At a meeting of the director of the Bank of England on Tuesday, Mr. Samuel Stewart Gladstone was re-elected governor.

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