OTTAWA LETTERS.

Prince Edward Island's Claims Forcibly Presented by Mr. Martin.

The Government Will Send Militia Supplies for the Yukon Expedition Over United States Railways.

Mr. Quinn Asserts that Canada's Judges are Nearly All Deep in Debt—Set Up a Private Altar in His Own House and Then Refused to Pay for the Marble.

OTTAWA, May 3.—The claims of Prince Edward Island were presented by Mr. Martin yesterday in a motion for a return of correspondence concerning branch railways in that province. Mr. Martin is pretty thorough in his work, and when he presents a case it is sure to be well worked out in the details. He began by showing that the late government had arranged for a fair measure of justice to the island by preparing a list of branch railways for which appropriations were to be made. These were lines necessary for the development of the local and general trade, connecting the main system with various ports in the province. These railways would have cost the dominion a little over one million dollars.

Mr. Martin regretted that the proposition had been criticized in some places where better things might have been expected. Especially he was surprised, and of course not very well pleased, to observe that in the late election campaign Sir Louis Davies went over to Nova Scotia and denounced the whole programme as an attempt to buy up the island with railway subsidies. He was reported as having made the extraordinary statement that the railroads proposed would cost no less than four and a half million dollars. Afterwards, when it was too late to do any good, Sir Louis had written a correction cutting the figures down to two and a half millions. This correction left it still twice as high as it ought to be, and was not given nearly the same circulation as the original estimate. Meanwhile the first Nova Scotia story was getting in its work. The secretary of state told the people of Ottawa that the Prince Edward Island grant would mean a gift of $125,000 to be paid by the people of Ottawa alone. On this basis the total amount would be, according to Mr. Martin, five million dollars, but as the population of Ottawa is only 50,000 it would appear that Senator Scott had raised the appropriation to $2.50 a head, or say twelve and a half million dollars altogether. This gross misrepresentation of a modest appropriation, much less than that to which the Prince was entitled, was very unfair and injurious. Mr. Martin regrets that the Toronto Mail, otherwise an able journal, has fallen into the mistake of supposing that Prince Edward Island railways, such as they are, have all been provided at dominion expense and chiefly at the expense of Ontario.

The Prince Edward Island member does not accept the theory that Ontario is "the milch cow of the dominion." It seems to him that Ontario gets back from the revenue in proportion to what she pays very much more than Prince Edward Island. He would rather say that Ontario is the stout Durham calf growing fat from the milk of the little Jersey cow which represents Prince Edward Island. Then he goes on with his proofs.

According to Mr. Martin's contention, the cost of the Prince Edward Island railway was entirely paid by the province. The road was under construction at the time of the union, and the cost of it when completed was charged against the debt allowance. Since the island became a part of Canada in 1873 the dominion expended on railway construction and railway subsidies over $100,000,000. Of this amount Ontario received in round numbers thirty millions, or over $14 per head; Quebec fifteen millions, or nearly $10 per head; Nova Scotia, fourteen millions, or some $28 per head; New Brunswick nine millions, or $32 per head; Manitoba eight millions, or $53 per head; the Northwest seven millions, or $77 per head, and British Columbia twenty-one millions, or $216 per head.

Now, Prince Edward Island received in all, during that period, only $635,000, or $5 per head.

While the distribution was made from the dominion the other provinces contributed out of their own money the following rate: Ontario a little over $8 per head, Quebec nearly $9, New Brunswick $14, Nova Scotia $8, Manitoba $9, British Columbia 76 cents, the Northwest Territories 25 cents, while Prince Edward Island comes in with a local expenditure of $28.82 per head. Thus, according to Mr. Martin's calculation, his province has received from the dominion only about one-quarter as much per head as the average of the dominion, and has contributed from the provincial treasury nearly twice as much as the average paid by the other provinces out of their own revenues.

The finance minister suggested that the Prince Edward Island railway ought to be credited to the dominion in the same way that the other provincial railways were which had been taken over. Mr. Martin insisted that this road had been built out of the debt allowance of the province, and was handed over as a free gift to the dominion. Sir Richard interrupted with the question "Will you take it back as a free gift?" To this Mr. Martin replied "Yes, we will take it back if you will take back the canals of Ontario and Quebec and maintain them at the expense of the provinces." He went on with the argument to show that while some of the western politicians kept in and made a great deal of the cost of the government roads they never made any complaint of the expense of the canals which practically yielded no revenue. Scores of millions had been spent on these canals since confederation, and yet the revenue collected from them was no more than 30 years ago. Mr. Martin observed that when Mr. Tarte was campaigning in the by-election at Levis he asked the people: "Do you want railways," and "do you want canals?" He thought that the question might with greater appropriateness be asked in Prince Edward Island. Two years ago Sir Louis Davies appeared to be quite concerned about the matter, so he explained then that it was necessary to have some survey. Last year he still wanted a survey, but this year there was nothing at all in the estimates either for railways or surveys. And now the minister of marine was off to Washington, and he feared that he would not be able to give the attention to the matter that the subject demanded. Wherefore Mr. Martin begs Sir Louis to have the appropriation put through council before he goes away. When six o'clock came the member for Prince Edward Island was still presenting his case, and the discussion will be continued at some future day.

The argument which Mr. Martin makes in regard to the appropriation made by the provinces out of their own money is perhaps not strictly fair in regard to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. To make it exact he ought to go back to the date of confederation, between which time and the date when Prince Edward Island became a province of Canada a very large sum was expended in Nova Scotia from the provincial revenues and a considerable sum in New Brunswick. The whole calculation is a little difficult to make with absolute fairness, but there can be no doubt of the justice of the claim of Prince Edward Island to additional railways.

Mr. Richardson of Manitoba won a victory yesterday. His garnishee bill was opposed by Mr. Blair on behalf of the government, and did not obtain any ministerial votes. It was also opposed by two of the members in the front opposition bench, but it was carried nevertheless by a large majority, which shows that once in a while the private members on the government side are not to be suppressed by the ministers. The vote was 50 to 23. The premier, Mr. Blair, Mr. Mulock, Sir Henri Joly and all the other ministers, except possibly one, voted with the 23. Mr. Blair spoke strongly against the measure. He was not sure that it was constitutional. He was sure that it would impose an unpleasant duty upon the ministers. It would be necessary for them to establish a new department, if they could be served with attachments on the salaries of all the public officers and be compelled to pay the money over to creditors instead of the civil servants.

Mr. Casey could not see it in that light. He thought that the two great railway corporations in Canada whose employes were liable to attachment were managing in some way to struggle along without establishing a new corps of accountants. He observed that the Ontario government and the Quebec government did not find themselves paralyzed by the fact that their employes were liable to garnishee process. Mr. Quinn came out strong for the public employes, and especially for the judges. He is of the opinion that nearly all the judges are in debt and that if their salaries should be seized in advance by the creditor the wheels of justice would be stopped. It seems intolerable to Mr. Quinn that the Queen's process should run against the Queen's own servants to prevent them from getting the Queen's money. But at last accounts Her Majesty did not appear to be terribly worried over the circumstance.

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Quinn established strained relations. Mr. Richardson told an interesting story of an official in Winnipeg who built a private altar in his own house, so he could worship all by himself, and afterwards refused to pay the man who furnished the marble. The marble man could not collect from the debtor's salary because he was a public servant. So, according to Mr. Richardson, the pious official enjoys "his own soft snap" in his own chapel without paying for it. Now Mr. Quinn throws doubts on the story and recalls Mr. Richardson's career when the latter was an alleged war correspondent at the time of the last Riel rebellion. It is suggested that Mr. Richardson established a good business, sending despatches to United States and English papers from the seat of war, he himself remaining in Winnipeg and inventing the facts. Mr. Richardson says it is not true and he can prove it to the hon. gentleman, at the same time expressing regrets that the rules of the house require him to call Mr. Quinn an honorable gentleman. Mr. Richardson throws in a suggestion that Mr. Quinn would be willing to be a judge, to which the member for Montreal replies that he is so much in debt that he could not possibly afford to be a judge under the Richardson dispensation, for the creditors would come in and take away all his salary. He hopes to pay his debts honestly and patiently, but he cannot possibly pay them all at once.

And so, in spite of the minister of railways and Mr. Quinn and all the rest, the Richardson bill is reported from committee, but it has a third reading with many attendant perils before it. The same thing stands in the way of Mr. Casey's bill for the protection of railway employes, which Mr. Blair is also impeding, but with only moderate success. Mr. Casey is stirred to extra exertions, and says that he will have no more fooling over the matter. He has yielded too often to the request of the minister of railways, and will now force the bill through as fast as it will go, if he can only get votes enough.

The uncommon favor which this government is showing to the Grand Trunk railway is exhibited in a reply made yesterday by Mr. Borden to Mr. Davin. The minister of militia admits that a contract has been given to the Grand Trunk to carry a part of the militia supplies for the Klondyke expedition. The larger part, he says, goes by the C. P. R. Now this seems to be an extraordinary development. Only the other day the ministers were declaiming about the necessity of an all-Canadian route to the Yukon, particularly because it would be impossible to ship troops or supplies of a military character by American routes. Here we have the government sending supplies to the Pacific coast by way of the United States railways. The Grand Trunk is only a Canadian road for a short distance. All the rest of the rail transport is by the Northern Pacific. These supplies must then be taken from the American port of Seattle, presumably by a United States ship, to Skagway or Dyea. This is the kind of all-Canadian business we have now.

Mr. McNeill is having a time with the premier. Mr. McNeill has a resolution in favor of imperial preferential trade, not of the Laurier pattern, but one that gives a preference both ways. For the convenience of the government and at the request of ministers he withheld his motion until after the budget speech, and now towards the end of the session the premier seems reluctant to assign a day to the discussion. But Mr. McNeill is a persistent man, and if he cannot have his motion considered otherwise he will move it as an amendment to the government motion for supply.

S. D. S.

OTTAWA, May 4.—Yesterday was prohibition day in the house of commons and also in the Dominion Methodist church, to which building a considerable portion of parliament adjourned in the evening.

Whatever charges the ministers and their supporters may make against the opposition they cannot accuse them of endeavoring to obstruct the plebiscite bill. The measure was brought up in the afternoon for a second reading, and not only passed that stage but made the complete journey through the committee of the whole before the members went to bed. The only criticisms that were offered were directed to the improvement of the bill and to an attempt to ascertain what the government proposed to do in case the people voted for prohibition. The despatches have given a pretty full account of the discussion, from which it will have been seen that the attempts to remove the uncertainties from the bill and to clear up the uncertainty of the government's position were all failures.

Three different matters were chiefly discussed in the short controversy. The first and most important was the attempt to elicit from Sir Wilfrid Laurier or the minister in charge of the bill a statement as to what the government would accept as a mandate in favor of prohibition. Mr. Foster put the question straight enough, and the premier understood it. "All I ask," he said, "is that when the government take the first step, which involves the expense and requires a contest, the government will let the people know whether they will follow with the second step if the people tell them to do so." Sir Wilfrid's reply was given in these words: "I have often said, and I can only repeat it, that when the will of the people has been affirmed then the government—every government—must be prepared to abide by the consequences."

Mr. Foster rose to ask what was meant by the undertaking to abide by the consequences, but the government supporters would not listen, and Sir Wilfrid declined to give way. But after a time Sir Wilfrid said this much: "I have only to say that if the government should be recreant to the duties that would be imposed upon them by the people my hon. friend will be there to remind the government of it and to abide by the will of the people." Then Mr. Foster got in another question: "For the sake of clearness we want to know just where we stand. The hon. gentleman has said that whatever the will of the people is he will carry it out. I want to ask if that means that if there is an affirmative vote for the principle the government will straightway introduce a bill to carry out the will of the people?" This seemed to be a straight question and afforded the premier a fair chance to state his position. But this is the answer: "It means nothing of the kind. It means that the government when they have the will of the people before them will have to take such steps as will give effect to the will of the people. There is the question of revenue to be considered. There is the question of compensation. There is the constitutional question. There are different questions which will have to be considered." Lastly Sir Wilfrid said: "I do not know what the vote will be. I do not care. I simply claim this for the government, that they would endeavor to obtain without favor to anybody an honest expression of the opinion of the people on this important question."

This is all that could be obtained from the premier. He was asked whether a majority vote would be regarded as expressing the will of the people, or whether he would require a two-thirds vote, or a majority of all the people on the list, but not an item of information was given on any of these points. It was pointed out to him that if the vote was merely academic, for the instruction of the government, there had already been taken a vote of the people in Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. All these provinces have given a large majority in favor of prohibition. It will cost a quarter of a million dollars to take this vote, counting the expense by the treasury alone. It will cost the temperance people in time, labor and money three or four times as much, and the cost in money at least on the anti-prohibition side will probably be still larger. The loss of time on election day alone will probably be worth a million dollars to the people of Canada. This expenditure may be well worth while if anything is to come of it. But it appears to be a reasonable request on the part of Mr. Foster and his friends to know what action, if any, is to be taken in the event of the prohibitionists carrying the country. On this point, however, the government entertains the opposite opinion, and what the government say goes in the house of commons. It is interesting, however, to notice that on the discussion of the main question not a single government supporter outside the ministry had a word to say, with the exception of Mr. Casey. Mr. Casey rose to remark that he did not approve of the system adopted for obtaining the public opinion. He would vote for the bill because it was on the Ottawa platform, but he did not like it.

Two other matters of criticism may be mentioned. The ministers persist in making the voters' list on which the plebiscite is taken the lists of the franchise bill now before the house. Various suggestions were made by way of amendment. It was pointed out that the franchise bill might not pass both houses, and therefore some provision might be made for the vote in the event of its failure. The simplest suggestion made was that the vote should be taken on the franchise for the time being, whatever it might be. This would bring into use the act of 1898 if it passes and give the plebiscite a chance if the act did not pass. Mr. Blair says that in case the franchise bill is defeated "any lawyer knows" that the plebiscite act would still be in force, and that the vote would be taken on the current law, whatever it is. There were some lawyers, however, who did not appear to know this, and later in the evening, when Sir Louis Davies was asked whether he would confirm the legal opinion of the minister of railways, he declined to do so or to express any opinion on the matter.

Dr. Montague made what appeared to be another reasonable suggestion by asking that no man should vote more than once. As the bill is professedly intended to secure an expression of the popular will, it seems fair that all men should count alike. It is said that in the city of Montreal alone there are 2,000 electors who have votes in five constituencies. Within a very few miles of the centre of Montreal there are no less than eight or nine constituencies and some eighty thousand voters. Probably from 10,000 to 20,000 votes could be cast legally in Montreal in addition to one vote for each man. If there are 2,000 with five votes, there are still more with two or three votes. The same condition exists in Toronto which has three constituencies in the city and three others in the county of York, which contains Toronto. The proposition of Dr. Montague is that one man shall vote in one place and not go on to offset the votes of four or five other people by casting his ballot in different places. But this proposition was not accepted.

One other topic in which Mills of Annapolis took the leading interest is the cider question. The question to be submitted asks the people whether they are in favor of passing a law prohibiting "the importation, manufacture or sale of spirits, wine, ale, beer, cider, and other alcoholic liquors used as beverages." Now, Mr. Mills says that many farmers in his neighborhood are in the habit of making cider that is not intoxicating, and that many of them who are prohibitionists may not want to vote for the prohibition of this business. Mr. Taylor of Leeds and Mr. Moore of Stanstead say the same thing. The reply of Mr. Fisher is that sweet cider is not included, or meant by the words in the ballot, and that hard cider is alcoholic. Yet he steadfastly refused to have the bill changed so that instead of using the word "cider," pure and simple, the words "alcoholic cider," or "hard cider," or "fermented cider," might be used.

So the bill passes as drafted, and Sir Wilfrid announces that the vote will be taken late in the summer, or early in the autumn, and the government will abide by the consequences. Sir Louis Davies was invited to explain his letters to Charlottetown, in which he declared that the ministers were of the opinion that the ballot ought to include questions as to revenue and taxation, but he said nothing for reasons that are no doubt good and sufficient. Mr. Mills, the minister of justice, is now in the other chamber, and therefore could not be asked to explain his letter in which he strongly condemns a plebiscite on the lines adopted. Senator Ferguson may perhaps have something to say to him at the other end of the house when the right time comes.

The W. C. T. U. demonstration at the Dominion church in the evening was an interesting proceeding. The world's petition for prohibition has been mounted on muslin through two years' labor of one patient woman, and was in part draped around the large auditorium of the church. It is an immense affair, displaying seven million names and covering space that might perhaps be measured by fractions of an acre. The ladies in charge of the proceedings performed their functions with dignity and cleverness. Mrs. Rutherford, who presided, is a singularly attractive lady of not many words, but with a gift of reaching the point. Mrs. Atkinson of Moncton, whose lot it was to address the premier, spoke briefly and clearly, with a voice that could be heard through the building, but in a very natural manner. The petition, of course, without the names, was read by Miss Alexander of Ottawa and handed to the premier, and an address in a more oratorical manner was made by Mrs. Stevens of Portland, Maine, representing the unions of the United States.

Sir Wilfrid was there with his political manner on. He was exceedingly agreeable and complimentary. He told the ladies that he was not a total abstainer, but was moderate in his use of liquor. He had yet to be converted to total abstinence, but recognized the great evils of intemperance, though he said they were much less than they used to be. He made no promises as to prohibition, not even giving an assurance as distinct as he did in the house, but, he remarked incidentally that he did not think the plebiscite vote would carry in the affirmative in the province of Quebec. The people there, he said, clung more than elsewhere to the traditions of their fathers in wine drinking and wine producing France. All the same, Sir Wilfrid recognized the great usefulness and influence of the women represented by those who appeared before him, and said a great many charming things in that behalf. Mr. Fisher, who spoke afterwards, said that he was a strong prohibitionist, and always had been, and that if he had time he would be glad to make a prohibitionist speech. As it was, parliament was engaged in a measure which, he believed, was a step in the direction of prohibition, and it was his duty to go back to the house and attend to it. Mr. Fisher's remarks appeared to be more satisfactory to the ladies than those of the premier, seeing that Mr. Fisher is not a moderate drinker, and has behind him a record as a prohibitionist. Senator Scott briefly referred to the law that bears his name, stating that he had always been in favor of a local option measure. He was of the opinion that the Scott Act had been fairly successful in the maritime provinces, where it was allowed a fair chance, and that if it had received the support of the authorities whose duty it was to enforce it in Ontario, it would have remained in existence in that province and would have led the way to prohibition. Mr. Foster and Senator Vidal, who have been in the past the leaders of the temperance party in the house of commons and the senate respectively, had places on the platform, but did not take part in the discussion. Mr. Foster was obliged to withdraw to assist in the discussion in the house, and Mr. Vidal, when called upon, concluded that the hour was too late for any further speaking.

The stranger who wanders up the slope of Parliament Hill and walks around the building perceives that the asphalt walks have been extended. Down in the town around the post office an excellent pavement has been provided by Mr. Tarte. This would be assumed to have cost a good deal of money, but there was some astonishment in the public accounts committee yesterday when it was ascertained that the bill had reached the snug sum of $40,000. The Sicilian Asphaltum Company of Montreal set out to do work to the extent of about $14,000, but the minister gradually extended the operations until the bill has reached the size above mentioned.

S. D. S.

OTTAWA, May 5.—The matter brought up by Dr. Montague yesterday was called an old story by the minister of marine. As a matter of fact, it was entirely new in its present form. There has been plenty of discussion over the case of the recommendations made by the late retiring government which the governor general refused to sign. This discussion of yesterday dealt with those cases which he did not refuse to sign but accepted as proper to be made. One year ago exactly the case of these appointments was discussed in the house. It was explained that out of ninety-two recommendations forty-seven had been objected to by his excellency. As Sir Charles Tupper showed yesterday, the appointments made by the Mackenzie government after its defeat at the polls numbered 133, or 41 more than those recommended by Sir Charles Tupper's government after the election. Mr. Mackenzie was not hampered by any objections of Lord Dufferin; he simply signed them all, following the English precedent. Lord Aberdeen thought another course was proper for him, and took it. He accepted, however, all the appointments except those to the senate and those contained in three classes as set forth in his memorandum. These classes were (a) the appointments to new offices, (b) appointments to offices which had been vacant for a year and for which no salaries had been provided, and (c) appointments in the place of other officials who had not asked for superannuation. Lord Dufferin, who was perhaps the ablest of the Canadian governors-general, allowed the retiring Mackenzie government to fill positions in all these classes.

But the present discussion deals with appointments which did not belong to these categories and which were accepted by the governor general. There were 45 of these, or one-third as many as Mr. Mackenzie was allowed to make. The government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier came into power in July, 1896, and Sir Wilfrid at the next session, in August, announced his acceptance of responsibility for all that Lord Aberdeen had done. In the following May he declared in the house that the appointments which had obtained Lord Aberdeen's assent would be respected. He was reminded that some of the men appointed in that list had not been called to perform their duties at that time, and made a declaration concerning them. He declared, "We have approved all except in a few cases," and again, "There may be a few cases, but the papers will show when they are brought down that there were good and sufficient reasons." The premier went on to explain that in some cases an enquiry had been held and no conclusion had then been reached. These cases, he said, were "very few indeed." He promised to bring down the papers at once, as they had been moved for some time before. As a matter of fact, they were not brought down for a year after that time, and they show that the premier was at the time deceived himself, or else was attempting to deceive the house.

Of the 45 appointments which the premier promised to treat as valid, all but two had apparently been disposed of when he spoke last May. Ten had actually been cancelled in 1896 and three before May in 1897. In the case of 24 the record only says: "No action is taken, it not being in the



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