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DAILY HERALD

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1905.

AN EMPTY HONOR.

Parliament meets on Wednesday, and today the Tory party meet for the purpose of settling the question of the leadership of the party. The position is an honorable one and if properly used a successful one. The Tory party, however, have never bothered themselves much about the useful part of it when in opposition but have bent all their energies to make political capital, without any effort to assist in the moulding of legislation. When the Hon. Edward Blake was leader of the Opposition Sir John Macdonald used to introduce measures in the most crude state, knowing that Mr. Blake would not allow them to pass the House until they had been perfected, and while Sir John was enjoying himself with passing pleasures, his opponent was burning the midnight oil in order that the legislation produced should be credit to the Parliament of Canada. There are extremes in all things, and Mr. Blake was blamed by his party for his too conscientious regard for his duty as a legislator. Had he been less scrupulous he might have been successful in becoming the leader of the government, instead of remaining in the cold shades of the Opposition, while his opponent took the credit of the legislation moulded into shape by his great mind.

It would seem scarcely possible that there would be much competition for the position. The keenness of the contest is naturally tempered by the thought that it is scarcely possible that any member of the present parliament will be living when the Tory party are again called upon to assume the reins of power.

The country is about entering upon a great work in which its future is bound up, and which will scarcely be completed at the close of this parliament, and it is not likely that the people are going to entrust the initial of its operation in the hands of its bitterest enemies. The success of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, of which there is no doubt, means a long lease of power to the Liberal party.

Perhaps there is a view point from which the choice of a leader of the Opposition might be of some importance to these provinces. It is a fact that previous to 1896 the maritime provinces received but shabby treatment from the government. Grants were grudgingly made and then only for the barest necessities. The advent of the Liberal government brought into the Cabinet such strong maritime men as Sir Louis Davies and the Hon. Messrs. Fielding and Blair. They soon made their influence felt and as the result we have the national railway from Halifax, Sydney and St. John to Montreal in a condition that is a credit to the country; we also have our own city connected with the system. Again, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, instead of stopping at North Bay in Western Ontario, and connecting thence with Portland, Maine, which a majority of the Tory party clamored for, or stopping at Quebec, as at first contemplated, is to be brought down through our own province to our own ports of St. John and Halifax. During the past eight years the attitude of Ontario and Western Liberals towards the maritime provinces has entirely changed in the direction of fair play, but not so with Ontario and Western Tories. When appropriations for the government railways, the Maritime Department or for wharves are brought down it is the signal for an onslaught on these services by the Haggarts, Oslers, Clarkes, McLeans, and all the Tory fry small and great, and to their shame be it said some of the Maritime Tories have not been above joining in the cry for the purpose, or in the hope, of making a little political capital.

Is it too much to hope that if a Maritime man was chosen leader of the Opposition he would devote some of his energy towards educating his party to do fair play to these Provinces as the Liberals have been taught? It can hardly be said

that Mr. Borden was a success in this respect and Mr. Foster is too narrow for anything, except it has party advantage in it, and of that he is a poor judge.

Whoever may be chosen leader of the Opposition he can lay down to his rest without being haunted by the fears which are supposed to possess those of whom it has been said "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

COAL-MINING ACCIDENTS.

Returns for Canada and the United States show that during 1903 there were 1,760 people killed by accidents in and about coal mines. The returns are incomplete, as the figures for Kentucky and Maryland have not been published. The fatal accident rate during 1903 was 3.19 per 1,000 employees, against an average of 2.94 for the ten-year period, 1894-1903. The rate was somewhat lower than the rate for the preceding year, which was 3.49 per 1,000. The rates remain unreasonably high, and the loss of life incident to coal-mining operations is much greater than it ought to be in the light of increasing knowledge regarding the true causes of coal-mining accidents. The chief cause of fatalities is the falling of the roof where the miners are working. In the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania 49.3 per cent. of the fatal accidents are due to falls of coal and slate. According to the report of the Chief of the American Bureau of Mines more than 50 per cent. of the fatal accidents were due to this cause during the past twenty years. There is no reason why the number of accidents from this cause should not be reduced by at least 50 per cent. If as much care were taken to guard against falls of coal roof and sides, as is taken in regard to ventilation, for the purpose of keeping the mines clear of gas, a stringent rule would be adopted against the more deadly falls. In the last twenty years, for every person killed by an explosion of gas, six persons have been killed by falls.

During the year 1902 there were 1,351 persons acting as fire-bosses in the American mines, whose duty it was to see every day that the mines were kept clear of gas; but there was no person engaged to look after the men doing the actual mining of coal. The law provides that the mine foreman, or his assistant, shall visit and examine every working place in the mine at least once every alternate day, while the men of such place are, or should be, at

work and shall direct that each and every working place be properly secured by props or timbers. He is required to see that safety in all respects is assured by directing that all loose coal or rock shall be pulled down or secured, and that no person shall be permitted to work in an unsafe place, unless it be for the purpose of making it secure. Evidently there is need of provisions for enforcing this law. Returns for the past five years from leading coal producing countries give the death rate as highest in British Columbia, with 14.69 per 1,000, and lowest in India with 0.83. It is estimated that the annual death list in the world's coal production is 5,000, a record sufficient to warrant enquiry as to the leading causes and the possibility of prevention.

THE NEW COMMISSIONER.

The Department of Agriculture is fortunate in being able to call to the service of the dairy industry so competent a man as Prof. J. A. Ruddick whose appointment as Dominion Dairy Commissioner, is announced. Mr. Ruddick has the advantage of wide personal acquaintance among dairymen of all parts of the country, and by reason of his long and intimate connection with the industry in Canada is peculiarly fitted for the position. He has already done much valuable educative work among dairy men and the marked improvement in cheese and butter making, in methods of packing, and improved transportation, etc., have been in a measure due to his foresight and energy. Mr. Ruddick brings to the discharge of his new duties the fruits of long years of study of the requirements of the industry both locally and as affecting the export trade, and with a valuable experience gained as dairy commissioner of New Zealand for some years, his administration may be expected to be progressive and energetic.

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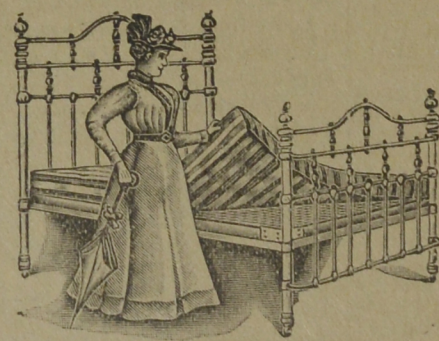
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