

OUR OTTAWA LETTER

Inconsistency Displayed
by Conservatives in the
Budget Debate.SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT'S
SEARCHING EXPOSE OF 1891
CENSUS FRAUDS.Session Will Probably Close the
Middle of May.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Ottawa, Mar. 28.—Parliament knocked off work on Wednesday and the members went home like a lot of school-boys to enjoy the Easter holidays. It is not surprising that they should have felt some sense of relief over the surcease from labor, for the week has been characterized by a good deal of monotony. The budget debate has been going on, and there has been little of novelty in it. Conservatives have done most of the talking, and what they have said has been marked by at least one glaring inconsistency. This, however, is not novel. The house has grown accustomed to these exhibitions, and they are largely the result of necessity. The Opposition have the short end of the debate in so far as they may attempt to show that Liberal rule has been a failure.

The particular inconsistency of which they are now guilty is in endeavouring to reconcile their claim that the National Policy is responsible for the present prosperity of the country with Mr. Borden's resolution. In that resolution the leader of the opposition distinctly declares that the existing tariff is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it does not afford adequate protection. This is but another way of saying that the Liberals have cut down the old scale of duties very considerably, and having done so it does not lie in the mouth of any one to say that the National Policy has been maintained. It is in the last degree illogical to found an argument upon facts leading in opposite directions.

Other things have also happened of late to show the somewhat helpless way in which the Conservatives are floundering. For example, Mr. Bell, of Picton, in a very positive way attacked the figures which Sir Richard Cartwright had submitted to the House last week. He endeavored to make it appear that Sir Richard had misquoted the year book for 1888 and 1889 in relation to population, and at the time he seemed to be making out a fairly good case; but at the opening of the House next day Sir Richard produced the year book in question, which were published during the Conservative regime, and established every figure which he had used in that connection. Mr. Bell did the best he could in the face of this refutation. He said he was going away for a short time, but on his return he would go into the subject again. It is not likely he will do so.

Sir Richard Cartwright's speech has been a great source of irritation to the Conservatives, inasmuch as it very fully and unanswerably exposed the unreliability of the census of 1891. One of the objects of that census was to show that the national policy had been a great stimulation to Canadian industries, and in following out this idea the census authorities had rather over-reached themselves. For instance, in 1881 Canada had but eleven carpet factories. In 1891 there were shown to be 557. Seventy of these were located in the good county of Antigonish, and a curious fact in connection therewith was the subjoined statement that these 70 factories employed but 69 hands. These were composed of one man, 65 old women, one boy and three girls. The machinery required to run these 70 factories was valued at \$1,089, while the wages amounted to about \$60 for each individual per annum.

Quebec, Sir Richard showed, had come up well in the matter of basket factories. The county of Huntington was shown to have 40 of these institutions, employing 45 hands. The value of the land occupied by these 45 basket factories is put down at \$690, while the buildings are reckoned at \$1,800; or \$62 for each factory for both land and building. This basket making industry paid out the enormous sum of \$47 a year to each individual employed.

In New Brunswick the census of 1891 showed there were in existence 51 carpet factories, giving employment to the large number of 51 hands. This large staff was required to operate \$707 worth of machinery, and they earned wages at the rate of 10 cents per day. The same general principle of enumeration was found to have been followed in Ontario and the other Provinces, the palpable object being to vindicate the National Policy. Sir Richard asked if it could be

expected that men who would countenance such frauds as he had indicated would hesitate about adding here and there a name to swell the general population.

Taking up the question of population in Ontario, Sir Richard pointed out that if the census of 1891 was strictly correct then that province showed a growth three times as great between 1881 and 1891 as between 1891 and 1901. As everyone knew, there had been much depression and a large exodus during the first named period, while in the latter period the conditions had been exceedingly favourable for growth of population. Taking Toronto as a test point, there had been a great outcry raised by the people of that city over the results of the enumeration. A police count was made, and the result was an increase of 13,000 over the census figures; but when the students, hotel guests and visitors to the city were deducted it was found that the government figures were substantially correct.

A very strong case was made out by Sir Richard Cartwright against the census of 1901, showing that there had been wholesale padding in many respects, and the inference was natural that the same inflation had been applied to population. On the other hand, it was impossible that the census of 1901 had been taken with over-scrupulous care. The groundwork had been laid, however, for accuracy in the future, and while the general results might not be satisfactory for the present there would be no cause in time to come for regret on that score. Of course the Opposition try to make the most that is possible out of the comparatively poor showing of 1901, because it seems to them to be an offset to the many astounding evidences of growth and expansion in the material resources of the country.

During the continuance of the budget debate on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday a great many facts of interest were brought out by speakers on the Government side. This is really not surprising. In every part of the Dominion there has been prosperity, and having regard to the recent statement made by the naturally cautious President of the Bankers' Association it would seem that every condition points to continued development and advancement. Under these circumstances, the opposition are driven to speculation and hair-splitting in their attempts to reflect upon the course of government. They indulge in a good deal of bluster and boast, but they really do not make any headway in their attacks.

The Telephone bill has been withdrawn, and several other measures introduced by the government will not likely be pressed. The object of this is to take away all excuse from the opposition for extending the session beyond the middle of May. Practically the only business for the House to deal with after the budget debate is over arises out of the estimates. There are no extraordinary appropriations being asked for; so that there ought to be no difficulty in bringing about prorogation within six weeks after the Easter holidays.

Steam Trawling in the Pacific.

A scheme is on foot in Victoria, B. C., for the establishment on an extensive scale of steam trawling, a mode of fishing which is entirely new to our Pacific waters, where our gill nets, drag seines and bait hooks have been solely used. This style of fishing, which consists in the use of a huge dredge or beam trawl, dragging along the bottom of the sea, is most effective for the capture of halibut and flat fish, such as the sole. It is thought that the adoption of steam trawling will result in large catches of excellent fish, which cannot be taken by the methods at present employed. Hitherto the fishery authorities in Canada have not favored the use of the beam trawl, owing to the conflict which took place in European waters, especially off the coasts of Scotland, between the ordinary fishermen and steam trawl companies. On three occasions during the last ten years attempts have been made to introduce steam trawling on the Atlantic coast of Canada, but the Fisheries Department did not regard the innovation with favor, and in some cases the experiments were disappointing. Hence, these enterprises in Canadian waters fell through. The Canadian fishery laws do not make any provision for steam trawling, but the impression prevails that if the enterprise is revived it will meet with greater favor than was formerly extended. The New Zealand Government has lately been experimenting with the steam trawl, and 150 hauls were made along the coast of that colony, resulting in the capture of some ten species of valuable fish. A report recently issued by the Government of New Zealand speaks hopefully of this mode of fishing.

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