

AN OTTAWA NOTABLE.

The Auditor-General of Canada.

Something About the Only Man on Parliament Hill Who is Independent of the Government.

The Auditor-General is the Bible of the Minister of Finance during the last session, speaking from his place in Parliament. There is nothing inspired about the Auditor-General, however. His department is a sort of cold storage for hard, high and dry facts. He would not take the word of the Prime Minister as to an account, unless accompanied by a voucher. He would not even accept the word of a clerk in the Department of the Interior. The Auditor-General might be called by many other names. He is the Parliamentary watchdog, the inquisitor, the censor, the very letter of the law. It is his duty to audit all the accounts paid by the Federal Government and to see before passing them that they are properly covered by some of the appropriations voted by Parliament. When an account does not appear to be regular he enquires into it; if he finds it charged against an appropriation which should not bear it he censures. His duties are defined and his whole course governed by an Act of Parliament. All Acts of Parliament appropriating public moneys are a guide to him and an instruction, and if the appropriation tries to take money from an appropriation and apply it in another direction the Auditor-General will quote the statute in support of his veto.

AN APPEAL TO CAESAR.
The veto of the President of the United States is not final, so there is an appeal from the Auditor-General's dicta to the Treasury Board, which consists of six Cabinet Ministers always including the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Justice. This body may over-ride the decision of the Auditor-General, who then passes the account in dispute, giving the ruling of the Treasury Board as authority for it. Under such circumstances, however, the Auditor-General is obliged to report the case to the House of Commons and submit the correspondence, so that the Treasury Board acting under this search-light is less liable to sanction anything which would be hard to defend in Parliament.

EXAMPLES OF AUTHORITY.
At times even an order-in-council is ignored by the Auditor-General, if he thinks its operation would infringe an Act of Parliament, as, for instance, when he writes as follows to the secretary of the Department of Railways and Canals:—
"I have an Order-in-Council of the 19th instant, authorizing the employment until the 31st instant of certain employees of your department. There is no indication in the Order-in-Council that the employment conforms to the requirements of the Civil Service Act. Will you therefore send me your recommendation to Council, and any other information which may be necessary to show that the employment in each case is legal."

Or again:—
"My reason for declining to honor the Chief Engineer's certificate for \$618.50 is that the work is not done. The Order-in-Council, under which the Chief Engineer is allowed in this case to accept incomplete work as complete, is, I think, ultra vires. The contractor's argument—that the work, although not up to specification, is as good as they have done for the Intercolonial before—is not one which should count for them."

This was referred to the Treasury Board and as it was never again heard of it is to be presumed the Government could not sustain their own action in conflict with the Auditor-General.
A few other extracts from letters written by him to the heads of departments will serve as examples of the various ways in which this officer acts as a check on the public expenditure:—
"Sir,—I have your application for a general letter of credit of \$100,000 for your department. I regret that I am obliged to decline to pass this credit, except in a restricted form. It will not apply to the following appropriations under 'Miscellaneous':—The payments have been irregularly made for several months, and, therefore, I do not feel justified in continuing the credit under which they are made."
"Sir,—Let me acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday's date with reference to an over-expenditure to which I had called your attention on your vote for amendment. I regret that your contention that unexpended balances on other appropriations might be utilized for this over-expenditure, or that the annual sale of extra ammunition, which is credited to revenue, might be considered as an offset against it, seem to be against the provisions of the Audit Act. Under section 21 of that Act I am to see that no cheque issues which would cause an excess of any direct parliamentary appropriation. I am unable, therefore, to pass your requisition for the bill of exchange."
The cheque of July 27, for \$250 in favor of Mr. Louis Coste, for his July services, should be charged to 'Chief Engineer's staff,' instead of to 'River St. Lawrence deepening.' And the payment should have been deferred until the end of the month."

The chief reason why the Auditor-General is such an important officer is that he is an independent one. He is accountable only to Parliament and can only be moved from office on address from the Senate and House of Commons. He is as independent as a judge on the bench.

PAST AND PRESENT SYSTEMS.
The office of Auditor-General was created in 1878 by Mr. Mackenzie. Prior to that date there was no parliamentary audit and the system in vogue was a loose one. All checks on expenditure were left to the separate departments.
At present a large part of the expenditure is made by letter of credit issued on the joint authority of the Deputy Minister of Finance, and the Auditor-General to the various departments. Against these bulk sums the departments, through the Deputy Minister and Accountant, draw the cheques, and at the end of each month a Receiver-General's cheque is given to the bank on the production of the cashed cheques. At the end of the following month the departments return all cheques with vouchers to the Auditor-General. Under this system no

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public money is handled by anybody in the employ of the Government.
All pay lists are sent to the Audit Office to be certified before any can be paid. When found correct they are returned to the departments and the departmental officers make out the cheques, which, however, are not cashed until the pay lists are deposited in the bank. After a lapse of time these pay sheets all come back to the Auditor-General. No money can be transferred by the Receiver-General except on the joint action of the Auditor-General. The periodic statements sent out by the Government's financial agents in London are examined by the Auditor-General.

In the case of public contracts, the resident engineer certifies to the work done, and this is endorsed at headquarters by the deputy minister, or chief engineer. Application is then made by the deputy to the Auditor-General, who sees that there is a parliamentary appropriation, and that it covers the class of work certified to. The Auditor-General then makes a certificate for this payment, which goes to the finance department, whose deputy says, "let a cheque issue." The cheque, when made out, goes back to the Auditor-General to be countersigned. It is then ready for the contractor. This system of securing certificates of work done from the engineer on the spot is a growth of the system since 1878. The Audit Act was drafted on the lines of the English act, but is more stringent in the way of keeping officials from handling the public cash. There are numerous safeguards in the public interest, the closest supervision of the public expenditure cannot be too close where there are so many thousands of employees spread over territory some of which is so far removed from headquarters. Mr. Mackenzie's memory is entitled to the benefit of the Audit Act.

THE OCCUPANT OF THE OFFICE.
There has been but one Auditor-General. John Lorn McDougall was appointed by Mr. Mackenzie when the office was created and he is there yet good for another fifteen years. He is a native Canadian, having been born in Renfrew 54 years ago. He is a graduate and gold medalist of Toronto University. His father was elected to the old Parliament of Canada. At the age of 29 he was elected to the first Ontario Legislature, and allied himself with the Opposition, then led by Archibald McKeil, afterwards by Mr. Blake. Not content with these legislative honors Mr. McDougall ran for the House of Commons in 1869 as the Reform candidate and was elected and sat in both Houses. He defeated his opponent, the Hon. Malcolm Cameron, by 218 majority. The boundaries of the riding of South Renfrew were altered by the Act of 1872 and in that year Mr. McDougall was defeated by James O'Reilly, the celebrated Queen's Counsel, who died suddenly in Kingston a dozen years ago.

Mr. McDougall has a rugged Scotch appearance, an open, cheery manner, silvered hair, iron gray moustache, and a hard unsympathetic voice. Among the civil servants he is regarded as adamant. He is certainly no respecter of persons. His correspondence reveals him as a man who is thoroughly posted in his duties, intelligent beyond the usual degree and absolutely fearless in the discharge of his duties. There is a robustness about his official letters, and it is much in these days that Canada has at least one public officer whose administration of an important office has been beyond suspicion and above reproach.

VERY SAD STORY.

A Pathetic Tale in Connection With an English Victim in the Battle Creek Wreck.

George Dawson, of Essex, Eng., is numbered among the dead. The story in his instance is a very sad one. Robert Henry Dawson, of Tacoma, Washington, left his home in England about six years ago and came to America. George, his brother, was on his way to visit him, and had written his brother in Tacoma to meet him in Chicago, and they were to do the World's Fair before going on west. At Buffalo George wrote his brother in Chicago, and this letter was the only means of identification. In this letter he said: "We are now the only two that are left. It is more than 10 years since our mother died, and although it seems only yesterday, I cannot bear being alone any longer. You write me that you have not been doing very well in the west. I have enough to take you back home with me, and we will live in the old home together the rest of our lives. I have stopped over here in Buffalo today that I may let you know how you may know me when you see me. It has been six years since you saw me, and perhaps you would not know me." Here follows an accurate description of his dress and his baggage. Then he tells of his watch, even adding that the key to his watch will be found in the key to his pocket. "I may get wrecked, or captured by Indians, and this will serve to let you know who I am in case anything happens. I shall leave Buffalo over the Grand Trunk on the Pacific express."

This letter was received in Chicago Saturday morning by Robert. He had waited all day Saturday and Sunday for the arrival of his brother on one of the trains. He arrived this morning, and the identity of the remains of his dead brother was soon determined upon. His watch, with the number, was found in one of the little paper sacks, and in the pocket of a tweed vest was found the key to the watch. The surviving brother is the most hopelessly heartbroken of relatives that have yet arrived. The letter which he has just received is as affectionate and tender as though from a sweetheart, and the fact that this had been written from one middle-aged man to another tells of a bond of love that years could not weaken.

There are 15,170 free schools in England and Wales, with 3,429,577 children. The total number paying a fee in schools receiving the fee grant, but still charging a fee ranging from under one penny to a little over sixpence, is \$49,091.

The emigration returns just issued by the Board of Trade show that during the eight months ending 31st August 236,342 persons left the United Kingdom for places out of Europe, as against 241,093 in the corresponding period of last year. Of the 236,342 the English numbered 96,853, the Scotch 16,991, and the Irish 41,204, the remainder being foreigners or persons whose nationality had not been distinguished.

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Liverpool has more exports than London. The average value of the houses of Great Britain is \$380. The cost of an ironclad is about \$400 a ton; this includes guns and all equipments. Mashonaland has a white population of 1,490, of whom over 800 belong to the local police force.

The largest private house in England is Wentworth Woodhouse, which belongs to Earl Fitzwilliam.

According to the latest returns the number of schools in Basutoland is 113, with an enrolment of 6,932 scholars.

The making of lucifer matches is a State monopoly in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Rumania and Servia.

On a recent day no fewer than 6,906 letters, 205 postcards, and 9,381 book packets were dealt with by the officials of the Dead Letter Office.

In the two years 1891-93 the paper used in the public department of the Government amounted to 763,680 reams, with a gross weight of 7,870 tons.

Since 1843 the Free Church of Scotland has raised no less than £22,000,000 by voluntary effort. It has now 1,160 ministers, 1,000 mansees, and an annual income of £600,000.

It is estimated that the total production of coffee in the world is about 600,000 to 650,000 tons, of which Brazil alone produces between 310,000 and 380,000 tons, and Java 60,000 to 90,000 tons.

Of the recruits in the British Army 32,694 were last year raised in England, 3,567 in Scotland, and 3,860 in Ireland. One thousand three hundred and five of these young soldiers were under seventeen years of age.

Fifty-three per cent. of the lunatics in the asylums of Bengal are there entirely as the result of using "hasniah," a poisonous drug. In Egypt, Greece, and Turkey the use of the drug is forbidden by a stringent law.

On the tower of the parish church of Bicknoll, Somerset, is growing a yew tree, now 5 feet high. It is supposed that it owes its origin to a seed dropped by a bird.

The authorities in Finland will not have active members of the Salvation Army in their midst. It is declared illegal for the Salvationists to wear their uniform or make money collections.

At the beginning of the century the Bible was accessible to but one-fifth of the population of the world. Now it may be read by nine-tenths of the people of the globe, so rapidly has its translation been carried on.

Quill toothpicks came first of all from France. The largest factory in the world is near Paris, where several million quills are dealt with yearly. The factory started to make quill pens, but when these went out of general use it was converted into a toothpick mill.

The great turtle found in the Artillery Barracks at Fort Louis in 1810, when Mauritius was ceded to Great Britain, is still alive. Though it is believed to be 200 years old at least, it has enormous strength, and can with apparent ease carry two men on its back.

The rickman's lot at Melbourne cannot be a happy one. In order to meet the competition of omnibuses and tram cars penny fares have been started as an experiment.

The first envelope-making machine was invented by Edwin Hill, brother of Rowland Hill; and De La Rue's machine for folding envelopes was patented March 17, 1815.

It is said that 30,000 ferns alone are uprooted and sold from the Cheviots yearly. Botanists assert that unless something is done the rarer flora of Northumberland and the Border will soon become extinct.

In the Colony of Natal tea continues to be largely grown in the coast districts, chiefly in Victoria County and the Lower Umzimkhulu Division. The area under cultivation may be put down at about 2,200 acres.

Oyster cultivation is a very important industry in many parts of the Continent. At Arcaehon, on the French coast, there is a huge salt water lake open to the sea at high tide, and this has become the centre for rearing and fattening the oysters.

The Huddersfield Municipal Lodging House has been flourishing for forty years. There a bed, use of cooking and table utensils, smoke-room, reading-room, conversation room, and library is provided at the inclusive charge of threepence per day, or sixpence per day for married couples.

Since the system of effecting insurances and annuities through the Post Office was established in 1865, annuities to the number of 37,658 have been purchased at a cost of £4,484,513; and 313,763 insurances effected, the total premiums for the whole period amounting to £271,658.

"The number of benefices with net income between £100 and £200 a year," says the Bishop of London, "appears to be about 4,200. To raise the net all to £200 a year would require, at an average of £210,000 a year, or a capital sum of £7,000,000."

The Skinners' Company claim to be one of the oldest in the City of London. In the reign of Henry VIII. many rich foreign furs were imported, and then the trade of the skinners was a flourishing and important industry. At that time the company had as their headquarters Copped Hall, which is believed to have occupied the site of their present hall in Dowgate-hill.

Wood, like wool, requires to be shrank before being used for manufacturing purposes. Pitchpine beams will shrink in thickness from 18½ inches to 18¼; spruce, from 8½ inches to 8¼; white pine, from 15 inches to 14½; yellow pine a trifle less; Cedar beams will shrink from a width of 12 inches to 23¼; elm, from 11 to 10½; oak, from 12 to 11½.

Next to Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles Bordeaux is the most populous town in France. Though during the last ten years the population has increased by about 30,000 persons, this increase has been almost entirely due to the immigration from the neighbouring rural districts and from foreign countries; for in late years the number of births in this town has been less than that of the deaths. At the last census the population of Bordeaux was 252,054.

DULL LINES IN BRITAIN.

Circular Issued Drawing Attention to the Scarcity of Work.

A despatch from London says:—The local government board has issued a circular to various sanitary authorities drawing the attention to the scarcity of employment which now exists in many parts of the country and to the great probability of this becoming more general and being intensified during the winter months, and urging the great importance of aiding artisans and others who make great personal sacrifices in order to avoid the stigma of pauperism in order to maintain their independence. This, says the circular, can be secured by the local authorities proceeding with the execution of the works which, in the interest of their district as regards its sanitary condition or local improvement or otherwise, is desirable should be carried out at the time when other employment is difficult to obtain.

What is required in the endeavor to relieve artisans and others who have hitherto avoided poor law assistance and who are temporarily deprived of employment is: (1) work which will not involve the stigma of pauperism; (2) work which all can perform, whatever may have been their previous avocations; (3) work which does not compete with that of other laborers at present unemployed; and, lastly, work which is not likely to interfere with the resumption of regular employment in their own trades by those who seek it.

John Jewers, the organizer of the unemployed agitation, says there are in London alone 100,000 unemployed men, the majority of whom have wives and children dependent upon them.

THE POOR OF RUSSIA.

Awful Poverty of the Lower Classes in Russia.

In a report just made public the British vice consul at Cronstadt dwells at some length on what he describes as the growing impoverishment of the Russian peasantry. He says it is painfully evident that the efforts of the government to ameliorate the condition of the rural classes by the establishment of the peasants' banks, the remission of arrears, aid in money and grain, and in other ways have not been attended with success. The economic decadence of the peasantry may be said to have commenced with their emancipation, and it has become more sharply accentuated since 1891, which was a year of widespread famine in Russia, while last year was marked by a failure of the crops in most of the districts formerly famous for the fertility of the soil and the prosperity of their population.

This decrease in the fertility of the land, with a consequent impoverishing of the agricultural class, is ascribed to a series of causes, one being the reckless destruction of the forests, which has seriously affected the climate and the humidity of the soil, while another cause is the primitive system of cultivation pursued by the people, which rapidly exhausts the soil. The economic decline of the peasantry is also attributable to the decrease in the number of their cattle, for which, especially during the last two years, there has been little fodder in consequence of the failure of the grain and hay crops.

Another cause which, the vice consul says, is erroneously assigned for the distress of the rural class, is the insufficiency of existing peasants and allotments, which are now being more and more subdivided by the natural increase of the population.

The Road To Acadia.

With talk of the historic and picturesque past, surrounded with what might be called "the local color," we drove the wretched weather out of mind until we reached a water corner and turned out of the mighty river into the Atchafalaya. This we called "Chaffery," to be in harmony with our acquaintances. It is fed out of the Mississippi where the Red River joins the Father of Waters, and immediately that we entered it a new scene was presented—a view of a narrow stream between groves which grow not merely to the water's edge, but into the water. It does not look like any river that we know in the North, it is rather like water running through woods, as a flood might appear, or a greatly swollen stream. Suddenly what is called the Grand pours into it, but the Grand is merely a wider belt of liquid mud flowing through a wilderness. Next the land begins to rise, higher banks are formed, and with these come views of cottages, freight-houses, ruins of old brick sugar-mills, fishermen's tents, negro cabins, bits of greenward, banks of rose-bushes, and patches of cultivated farm land. Our first stop was at a honey plantation, where the half-acre lot filled with beehives, novel as the sight proved, was not as peculiar as the honey-planter himself. He is famous up and down the Teche route as a man who so loves to argue that nothing can possibly happen which will not arouse his instinct for debate. He has some little learning, and even in his worn old suit of homespun suggested traces of gentle blood and breeding as he stood on the river-bank flinging long sentences and uncommon words up at our captain up on the main-deck, while his daughter, the only other white person for miles around, leaned her spare form against the side of the cabin doorway, and smiled with affectionate pride as she reflected upon the good time her father was having with his vocal organs. Something which had been ordered by him from New Orleans had not come, and he was begging leave to differ with the captain, no matter how the captain sought to account for the delay. I think I remember that the sum of this man's income each year was computed at five hundred dollars, which proved, it seemed, that he was in very comfortable circumstances, could well afford to go to New Orleans twice a year, and was able to support the position of a man of consequence in that region. (From "Along the Bayou Teche," by Julian Ralph, in Harper's Magazine for November.)

He Telephoned.

Sweet Girl: "I am so glad to see you alive and well. I was afraid papa would lose all control of himself when you asked him for my hand, and he has such an awful temper. What did he say?"

Brave Adorer: "I—I couldn't quite understand."

Sweet Girl: "Couldn't understand?"

Brave Adorer: "N—o; the—er—wires got crossed."

IN THE FAR NORTH.

A Missionary Tells Wonderful Tales of Reindeer, the Aurora, and the Cold.

A remarkable story, says the San Francisco Examiner, is told by the Rev. E. C. Wallis, a missionary who arrived here recently from the Porcupine River, in the British possessions, just over the line of Alaska, on the edge of the Rocky Mountains. It is mainly about the intense cold, the immense herds of reindeer, and the sublime magnificence of the aurora borealis. Dr. Wallis has been seven years in the wilds of the Porcupine River, and for the last eighteen months his wife has been with him assisting in teaching the Indians.

It does not appear to be generally known that there are vast herds of reindeer in that part of the country. Dr. Sheldon Jackson, Superintendent of Education for Alaska, and Capt. Healy of the Bear have for a couple of years been importing reindeer from Siberia, and this is the reason for the supposed scarcity throughout that region; but the scarcity appears to be towards the southern, south-western, and northern coasts. In the far interior there are myriads of them.

"They are remarkably numerous everywhere about my mission near the mouth of the Porcupine River," said the reverend gentleman. "Back towards the mountains from my house I have seen great bands of them, and almost everywhere I looked I could see them. This summer when the ice broke up on the river I remember seeing six or seven of them on a cake of ice floating down, and I saw many others floating on the ice."

"For much of the time I have lived at the mission, I have subsisted almost exclusively on reindeer meat. It is very good, and I may say it is about the only kind of meat you don't get tired of. I think it is better, all things considered, than beef, and you eat it longer without its palling on you. The Indians eat it almost exclusively, and they are very big and strong. Some of them are six feet in height, and the average is about five feet ten inches. They are genuine North America Indians, and not the Aleuts, Esquimaux, or a mixture of the two."

"I keep an Indian hunter, and he supplies me with all the reindeer meat I want. He also brings in grouse, ducks, bear, and other game as I need it. I have learned to shoot pretty well myself, as all white men do in that region. The ducks and grouse, like the reindeer, are remarkably good eating."

"It is fearfully cold here. Last winter the thermometer was for a week at a time down to 60° F., and I have seen it go even considerably lower. At no time in the winter, nor during other winters that I have been there, was it higher than 40° F. This cold is excruciating. We lived in a solid log house, a good warm one, but many a time I have awakened in the night and found the blankets, which were kept up well under the nose, frozen into a cake of ice. Sometimes the intense cold cakes the blankets for a long distance down."

"Meats and everything froze, and you would throw them anywhere without thinking. The worst experience was trying to make bread. The yeast would freeze in spite of you, often times even when the greatest care was exercised. If you stepped out, everything was so still and so intensely cold you could hear yourself breathe. It had a rustling sound."

"I discovered a queer thing about the cold, and it was this: Below 40 degrees you didn't notice it any more than 40 degrees. It might go to 60 degrees, or even more, but it made so little difference that you didn't notice it. It was all practically the same to you."

"The wonders of the aurora borealis in that region cannot be told. The heavens all winter long are lit up with a golden glow. Indeed, I may say the colors—the sparkles and flashes—are so many, constant, and varied that no one can describe them. There is practically no day during the year. For two or three months, up to Dec. 15 from 9 to 12 o'clock, there is a sort of dawn, but the rest of the time it is night. It is so clear that you can go out and read a newspaper anywhere."

"The 400 or 500 Indians at my mission are bright, and good progress has been made in instructing them. Nearly all of them can read in their own language. I have translated various religious and other books which have been printed in England, for their use. They have an entirely different language from any other Indians. There are five different languages, for instance, from there down to the mouth of the Yukon, and no one tribe can understand the other. The languages are all as different as French is from German."

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN VOTE.

The First to Confer Full Suffrage on the Other Sex.

Both Houses of the New Zealand Parliament have passed a bill to confer full suffrage upon women, the bill has received the formal assent of the Governor, and this enterprising community has become a true republic instead of an aristocracy of sex.

Women in the Isle of Man enjoy Parliamentary suffrage; women in Iceland, too, have full right to vote; unmarried women and widows in England, Scotland, and most of the Canadian provinces have municipal suffrage, and the women of Wyoming exercise the right of franchise to the full, but the New Zealand women will be the first to vote for what may be called a real Parliament in a practically independent State—a self-governing country of 950,000 citizens.

Foreign Bank Bills.

The Bank of England note is five inches by eight in size, and is printed in black ink on Irish paper with ragged edges. The notes of the Bank of France are made of white water-lined paper, printed in blue and black, with numerous mythological and allegorical pictures, and running in denominations from the 20-franc note to the 1000-franc. The German bills are printed in green and black. They run in denominations from 5000 to 1000 marks. Their later bills are printed on silk fibre paper. Italian notes are of all sizes, shapes and colors. The smaller bills—5 and 10-lire notes—are printed on white paper in pink, blue and carmine inks. The 100-ruble note of Russia is barred from top to bottom with all the colors of the rainbow blended as when shown through a prism.

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