THE BRITISH BUDGET

Lower Income Tax---Old Age Pensions---Surplus Over $17,000,000.

A despatch from London says: The two outstanding features in the budget statement brought down to the House of Commons by Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, were the announcement of a reduction of the income tax by threepence in the pound, and the statement by the Chancellor that a fund was to be started to provide for the honorable relief of necessitous old age.

THE PENSION FUND.

The surplus over expenditure this year would be $17,165,000, and after making all reductions there would be a disposal surplus of $9,165,000. Of this $1,665,000 would be retained for emergencies. The remaining $7,500,000 would be invested and would form the nucleus of an old-age pension fund. In addition there would be $3,750,000 of uncollected arrears of this year's income tax. This would swell the fund to $11,250,000.

THREEPENCE OFF INCOME TAX.

Mr. Asquith stated that he did not intend to make any reduction this year in indirect taxation. He intended, however, to deal with the income tax incidence, which in its present shape worked unjustly. Earned incomes under $10,000 a year would hereafter only pay ninepence, while the existing tax of a shilling in the pound sterling on unearned incomes would remain. This reduction would be in addition to all the present rebates, but it would be confined to the earned incomes of persons whose total income from all sources did not exceed $10,000 a year.

DEATH DUTIES REVISED.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated the loss from this differentiation of the income tax at $6,250,000. Of this, however, $3,750,000 would not recur, but would be made up by a revision of the death duties as follows:—Five per cent. as at present on $500,000 and under, above $750,000 7 per cent.; above $1,250,000, 8 per cent.; above $2,500,000, 9 per cent.; above $3,750,000, and up to $5,000,000, 10 per cent. On estates of $10,000,000, 1¼ per cent. would be levied on the second $5,000,000. On estates of $15,000,000 or over 10 per cent. would be levied on the first $5,000,000, and 13 per cent. on every other $5,000,000.

THE DEBT REDUCED.

Mr. Asquith estimated the expenditure for 1907-'08 at $703,785,000, $8,320,000 less than for last fiscal year. The revenue on the existing basis of taxation was estimated to be $720,950,000.

The permanent reduction of the national debt for 1906-'07 was announced to be $68,570,000.

The treasury receipts for the year had been over $10,000,000 in excess of the estimates, unanticipated death duties accounting for $6,000,000 of this sum, while the balance was made up of increased receipts from the coal duty and the mint. The latter was due to the increased demand for coinage on account of the prosperous state of trade, and the large amount of silver, aggregating $2,500,000, required for varied purposes.

REVENUE NOT ELASTIC.

As a whole, the revenue returns, the Chancellor added, had not shown great elasticity, and in view of the undoubted prosperous state of trade they were distinctly disappointing. The reduction in the tea duty in the last budget had been followed by increased consumption, amounting to 4,500,000 pounds.

The revenue from tobacco had not realized expectations, and there had been a progressive formidable decline in the revenue from the alcohol groups since 1899 until last year. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, he, Mr. Asquith, was glad to say that there were signs of a definite reaction, and the present year had furnished an increase of $2,470,000 in these receipts. There had been a falling off in the revenue from stamps owing to the slackness of operations on the Stock Exchange, and to the fact that the telephone was superseding letters.

CLOSE PLANTING.

Will Produce Better Timber Trees Than Wider Spacing—Other Advantages.

Foresters plant very young and small trees and plant them very close together. From four to six feet apart each way is the usual distance in forestry planting now-a-days, though less and greater distances have their advocates.

Of course, in planting an orchard, or shade-trees, or, say maples for a sugar-bush, the trees will be planted farther apart; but in planting for the purpose of raising a wood-lot the figures given above hold.

By thus crowding the trees better timber is produced, for the trees will grow taller and straighter. Such trees will be found naturally in a thick wood as compared with a more open one. The dead branches will fall off better (in other words, the tree will prune itself better) and the timber will be freer from knots.

Another reason for close planting is to bring the crowns of the trees together within a reasonable time. The distance between the trees should be such that the trees will come together in at least six to eight years; if in less time, all the better. The soil will be improved and the growth in height of the trees increased by this meeting of the crowns.

In some regions (the prairie country, for instance) cultivation is necessary for the first few years after planting the trees; and under these conditions the close planting shortens the time during which it is necessary to cultivate the plantation. Where a plantation has been made with the trees four feet apart each way (at least, in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan) it is found that three years' cultivation will suffice; if the trees were put six feet apart each way, cultivation would be necessary for twice that time, or even longer.

Wooden water pipes are to be tested in London.

ASH-WIZARD'S SECRET IS OUT

Altoona, Penn., Now Burning Ashes and Saving Money.

A despatch from Altoona, Penn., says: The remarkable ashes-burning secret discovered by John Ellmore, an Altoona cobbler, which has excited attention almost the world over, is out. Almost every householder in Altoona is now converting his ashes into fuel, with great saving in coal bills.

Sveral well-known chemists, immediately it was announced that Ellmore had solved the problem of obtaining heat from ashes, set to work to try and discover the formula. They were successful, and here it is:— Moisten with either salt water or salt water in which oxalic acid has been dissolved a mixture containing one part coal and three parts ashes, and a better fuel than pure coal is obtained. The ashes of anthracite coal burn as readily as do those of bituminous coal. This mixture will, upon being placed upon a burning fire, fuse into a coke-like mass and deposit but little residue. The salt water may be obtained by the dissolution of common salt in water.

The chemical action of this compound is thus explained:— When an aqueous solution of an alkaline salt, such as common salt, is mixed with coal ash the result is that a mild lye is formed, which, when mixed with any combustible material, such as coal, and upon the application of heat, gives off oxygen gas, thus promoting rapid combustion.

The addition of oxalic acid causes a chemical change of greater value than the first, for the reason that the second chemical breakdown results in the formation of a carbide, which in turn gives off acetylene gas, this adding to the intensity of the heat and facilitating complete combustion.

It is possible upon moistening a small quantity of ashes, without the addition of coal, to readily detect the odor of acetylene gas, and if the treated ashes are placed upon a lighted fire they will fuse and burn to a fine powder.

The ash-burning compound is now being used in many large industrial and mercantile places here, and it is claimed for it that it has reduced the fuel item more than half. It has eliminated almost entirely the question of disposing of ashes, which has been considerable where great quantities of coal are consumed.

The discovery has resulted in a number of complications, and is retarding the work of paving contractors who have utilized ashes as a foundation for sidewalks. Heretofere it was possible to secure all the ashes required for this purpose without cost, but contractors are now complaining that it is impossible to get them.

Ellmore, who discovered the secret and focused attention upon the possibilities that lurked in ashes, claims that his patent will protect his secret. He claims to have received an offer from the British Government if he can demonstrate the practicability of his compound.

While it is everywhere conceded that Ellmore has conferred a great boon upon humanity, it is feared that he will not derive any tangible benefits from his discovery, in view of the fact that hundreds of others have secured the same results, following his lead.

LEADING MARKETS

BREADSTUFFS.

Toronto, April 23.—Wheat—Ontario, No. 2 white winter, 72c to 72½c; No. 2 red 72c to 72½c; No. 2 mixed, 72c.

Manitoba Wheat—No. 1 hard, 86½c to 87c; No. 1 northern, 85½c to 86c, lake ports, 90c North Bay; No. 2 northern, 83½c to 84c ports.

Oats—No. 3 white, 38½c to 39¼c, outside; No. 2 mixed, 38c to 38½c.

Peas—78c to 78½c.

Corn—Strong; No. 2 yellow American, 53c to 53½c, Toronto and west; Ontario, 45c to 46c.

Rye—62c to 63c.

Barley—Scarce; No. 2, nominal at 53c to 53½c outside; No. 3 extra, 52c to 52½c; No. 3, 51c to 51½c.

Flour—Ontario—90 per cent. patents, $3.70 asked. $2.67 bid; Manitoba, first patents, $4.50; seconds, $3.75; bakers'. $3.90.

Bran—$20 outside, buyers' sacks; nominal.

PROVISIONS.

Dressed Hogs—$9.25 for light and $8.75 for heavies, farmers' lots; $8.25 to $8.35 for car lots.

Pork—Short cut, $23.50 to $24 per barrel; mess, $21 to $21.50.

Smoked and Dry Salted Meats—Long clear bacon, 11c to 11½c for tons and cases; hams, medium and light, 15½c to 16c; heavy, 14½c to 15c; backs, 16½c to 17c; shoulders, 11c to 11½c; rolls, 11½c; out of pickle, 1c less than smoked.

Lard—Firm; tierces, 12½c; tubs, 12½c; pails. 12¾c.

COUNTRY PRODUCE.

Butter—Market at present holds very steady.

Creamery, prints	27c to 29c
do solids	26c to 27c
Dairy, prints	25c to 26c
do tubs	21c to 23c

Cheese—Steady at 14c for large and 14½c for twins.

Eggs—Unchanged at 16c to 17c; splits, 13½c to 14c.

Poultry—Quiet, and prices generally nominal.

Chickens, live	10c to 11c
do dressed	12c to 14c
Hens, live	8c to 9c
do dressed	10c to 11c

Honey—Pails, 11c to 12c lb., combs, $2.50 to $2.75 per doz.

Beans—$1.50 to $1.55 for hand-picked and $1.35 to $1.40 for primes.

Potatoes—Ontario, 85c to 90c; eastern, 95c, in car lots here.

Baled Hay—$12.50 to $13.50 for No. 1 timothy and $10 to $11.50 for secondary grades, in car lots here.

Baled Straw—$7 per ton in car lots here.

MONTREAL MARKETS.

Montreal, April 23.—The market for oats is firm; for No. 2 white 43c is quoted, and lower grades, No. 3, 42c and No. 4, 1c lower. For Manitoba No. 2 white, 43½c is quoted.

Buckwheat—55c to 56½c per bushel.

Corn—American No. 2 yellow, 55c; No. 3 mixed, 65c ex store.

Peas—Boiling peas, $1 in carload lots and $1.10 in jobbing lots.

Flour—Manitoba spring wheat, $4.25 to $4.60; strong bakers', $4 to $4.10; winter wheat patents, $4.10 to $4.25; straight rollers, $3.60 to $3.70; do., in bags, $1.65 to $1.75; extras, $1.50 to $1.55.

Millfeed—Manitoba bran, in bags, $20 to $22; shorts, $22 to $22.50; Ontario bran, in bags, $20 to $21; shorts, $22 to $29.50; milled mouille. $21 to $25; straight grain, $28 to $29 per ton.

Rolled Oats—Per bag, $1.90 to $2.

Hay—No. 1, $13.50; No. 2, $12.50; No. 3, $11.50; clover mixed, $11; pure clover, $10.50 to $11 per ton in car lots.

Eggs—There are no changes and the quotation of 17c to 17½c per dozen still holds good.

Butter—Quotations for finest, 32c, while for winter make, 26c to 28c is being asked.

Cheese—13c is still quoted for old white and 12½c is the quotation for fodders.

Provisions—Barrels short cut mess, $22.50 to $23.50; half barrels, $11.75 to $12.50; clear fat back, $24 to $24.50; long cut heavy mess, $20.50 to $22; half barrels do., $10.75 to $11.50; dry salt, long clear bacon, 11½c to 12½c; barrels plate beef, $12 to $13; half barrels do., $6.25 to $6.75; barrels heavy mess beef, $8.50, half barrels do., $6.75; compound lard, 9½c to 10½c; pure lard, 12½c to 13c; kettle rendered, 13c to 13½c; hams, 14c to 16½c, according to size; breakfast bacon, 15c to 16c; Windsor bacon, 15c to 16½c; fresh killed abattoir dressed hogs, $10; alive, $7.25 to $7.40.

BUFFALO MARKET.

Buffalo, April 23.—Flour—Firm. Wheat—Spring quiet; No. 1 Northern, 87¾c; Winter nominal. Corn—Easier; No. 2 yellow, 51¾c; No. 3 white, 50c. Oats—Dull; No. 2 white, 47½c; No. 2 mixed, 44¾c. Barley—Western quoted, 67 to 75c. Rye—Firm; No. 1, in store, 72c asked.

NEW YORK WHEAT MARKET.

New York, April 23.—Wheat—Spot steady; No. 2 red, 83½c elevator; No. 2 red, 84½c f.o.b., afloat; No. 1 northern Duluth, 91⅝c, opening navigation, f.o.b. afloat; No. 2 hard winter, 87⅝c, opening navigation, f.o.b. afloat.

LIVE STOCK MARKET.

Toronto, April 23.—Export cattle were quiet, with not many of them offering. In almost every case export quality sold as butchers'. A few sold for export at prices slightly easier. Quotations are a little lower, but are practically nominal.

Butchers' cattle were offering freely. Top sales ranged around $5.10 to $5.15, with the bulk of the good butchers' offerings selling from $4.75 to $5. Choice cows were in demand and firm, prices ranging from $4 to $4.25. These prices, however, were for the best, ordinary stock ranged from $2.75 to $3.50.

Stockers and feeders are in good demand and prices are firm. Choice, $3.75 to $4.

Milch cows are slightly easier, with a quiet demand. Prices range from $30 to $45, extra choice selling up to $50 to $55; common, $25 to $30.

Veal calves are steady and unchanged at 3 to 6c per lb.

Sheep and grain-fed lambs are firm and unchanged, but common lambs are slow and 50c easier. Spring lambs are steady and unchanged.

Hogs are unchanged at $6.40 for select fed and watered.

DEATH IN MONTREAL FIRE

Thirty Women Hemmed in and Three People Killed.

A despatch from Montreal says: A most disastrous fire broke out at 3 o'clock on Thursday afternoon in the premises of the Canada Steam Laundry & Dye Works, corner of St. Justin and St. Catherine streets. As a result of the fire two charred and burned bodies, supposed to be those of Mrs. Furlong and Wm. Martineau, lie in the morgue, and Mrs. Giroux, who was severely injured, has since died, making the third victim.

SEVERAL WERE INJURED.

The severely injured are:— Mrs. Diagle, severely burned and fractured limbs; Albertina Paradis, broken arm and severe burns; Albertina Proulx, fractured leg and burns; Janet Leith, burned and injured internally by fall—all in the General Hospital.

The others injured are:—Miss Emma Etienne, burned and rib broken; Miss Bertha McKercher, burns on face and arm broken; Miss Levigne, burns on face and back; Miss Rodgier, suffering from burns and shock; Miss Bowenfant, burns on back.

THIRTY WOMEN HEMMED IN.

The fire broke out in the second story of a three-story building through the explosion of benzine in the engine room. The building was old and thoroughly saturated with benzine, and as a result the flames spread with fearful rapidity, and in an incredibly short period the building was a mass of flames. Thirty women and girls were in the second and third stories, and became panic-stricken as the devouring flames cut off their way to the fire escape in front.

THREW THEMSELVES OUT.

Terrified by the flames that were devouring the building, many of them rushed to the windows and threw themseves out, preferring to be dashed to pieces rather than be burned to death. Two of the first girls who jumped escaped serious injuries, but half a dozen others who followed were seriously hurt.

Although the firemen quickly responded to the alarm, and had sixteen streams playing on the doomed building within a few minutes, it was impossible to quench the fire. Two bodies were removed to the morgue all charred and burned so that their identification was impossible. From the list of employees they are thought to be Mrs. Furlong and Wm. Martineau.

HEART RENDING SCENES.

The news of the disaster spread like wildfire. Most of the girls lived near their place of work, and mothers and sisters were on the spot in a minute, rushing to and fro in quest of their loved ones. As face after face appeared at the flame-swept windows mothers called frantically to their daughters to jump, and stretched pleading arms to them to come.

The white-faced victims would turn and cast a despairing look at the flames behind, and then leap from the third story windows.

As the mournful looking waggons were filled and went off with their loads men and women fought to see if it was their loved ones who were being hurried away, and turned away sobbing as the victims turned out to be some other persons.

SMALLPOX ON A C. P. R. STEAMER.

Empress of Japan Detained at Williamshead—Chinese Crew Infected.

A despatch from Victoria, B. C., says: The Empress of Japan, with the overseas mail, outbound, is detained at Williamshead quarantine station with smallpox. Four cases have been landed, and the vessel is being fumigated. The cases are among the Chinese crew.

THEIR BOAT UPSET.

William Mack Drowned Opposite Brockville.

A despatch from Brockville says: Missing a stroke in the water with his oars, Wm. Mack, while rowing from Morristown, a small village opposite Brockville, was drowned on Saturday night. In company with his brother-in-law, Joseph Mars, he was returning from Morristown, where they had ferried two passengers, and, giving a sudden jerk on the oars, the boat capsized. Mars' cries for help were heard by Peter Frazer, a young man, who went to his assistance and succeeded in landing him on an island. He then went to the village for assistance. Mars became unconscious when pulled out of the water, and it was not until three hours later that he told of Mack being with him. Searching parties were out on Sunday but the body has not been found. The drowned man was 22 years old, and leaves a wife and three months' old child.

Fifty thousand dollars are to be expended by the Dominion Government in improving the western entrance to Toronto Harbor.

Francis Barner, aged fifteen years, of Dover township, accidentally shot himself while hunting muskrats, on Saturday, and died in a couple of hours.

MILLIONS ARE STARVING.

Russian Famine Sufferers Require Aid for Months.

A despatch from London says: Writing from the Russian famine district, Dr. Kennard, who was sent by the Society of Friends to investigate conditions among the peasantry, draws an appalling picture of the suffering. He says:—

"This is the worst famine Russia has known. No less than 20,000,000 people distributed throughout the southeastern provinces cannot live without aid to see another harvest, and I may say that this figure has been not only approved by the Zemstvo organization, but also by the Government itself. The date of the harvest will vary with the latitude and the famine-stricken region is spread over such a wide area (five times the size of France) that more than ten degrees of latitude are involved. This means that in direct proportion from south to north the harvest will be from July 3 to 23. It will be seen that funds will be needed to the end of July to feed all these millions, and then the harvest will bring relief, but there are many hundreds of thousands to whom the harvest will not bring relief, for they have neither land nor cattle. The few cows that are in existence are in such a pitiful condition themselves that they are useless for milking purposes. The result is that babies and young children are being forced to eat the coarse black bread and the indigestible young cucumbers which are luxuries to the adult Russian peasant to-day, but are death to the babies, or at any rate spell disease. These people have sold their all, and in most cases have likewise sold in advance all that the harvest might bring them. Meanwhile epidemics of disease add to the terrible conditions obtaining. The difficulties encountered of relieving these people are made ten times worse now owing to the practically impassable condition of the country roads. The winter snows are melting and projecting vast volumes of water in countless cataracts toward mother Volga, and neither man nor beast can hope to do anything in the way of travel."

CHINA'S CHILDERN DYING.

A despatch from Shanghai says: The following are extracts from the reports just received of foreigners in four famine centres:—

"Yaowan—The famine is growing worse. Children dying in great numbers."

"Suchien—Almost out of supplies. Need large amounts immediately to continue the relief commenced."

"Singkiangpu—Many dying. Must decrease relief work unless larger shipments of supplies are received."

"Lukiawietse—The whole country is in the deepest distress. Refugees who went south hoping to find relief are returning empty-handed. There are processions of people with wheelbarrows transporting their doors, tables, beds and cupboards to market to be sold for almost nothing. Hundreds of women and children are seen in the fields scratching out roots and scanty blades of grass. Hundreds of trees have been stripped of their bark from root to the highest branches for use as food. The majority of the population are living on wild roots etc., and these are causing diseases."