

# Our Letter from Ottawa

BY AGNES C. MACPHAIL, M.P.

It has been quite a week. The conglomeration of many matters, odds and ends of legislation which always mark the closing days of the session, was relieved by important legislation and interesting incidents.

First, Mr. Euler is home, and we are all glad to see him. I last saw him in Canada House, London, on the day that he flew to Moscow. Since then, he has visited many countries, particularly the distant Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, in the interests of Canadian trade.

The Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett welcomed the returning traveller warmly, if a bit ironically, and said he wished Mr. Euler would tell the House much of what he had learned. "Particularly he could give us first hand information regarding dictatorships that are not dictatorships and Soviet Unions that are not Soviet Unions. . . . We are all glad to see him back so vigorous and healthy and strong in mind to meet the onslaughts which have been made upon protection during his absence (Mr. Euler is a protectionist). . . . His impressions would brighten our days which have been made dark by the attention we have had to pay to our parliamentary duties while he has been enjoying the sunlight."

In his speech of thanks, Mr. Euler replied in the same vein. He disclaimed having travelled all over the world. He could say a good deal about Russia, but not about the dictator of that country, whom he had not seen. "But I did see the dictator in Germany, but perhaps I am not quite so well qualified to speak with regard to dictatorships as are some other to whom I might refer." Here Mr. Bennett interrupted to say "You are returning to the leadership of one."

Both these honourable gentlemen have visited New Zealand and Australia in recent months. "I hope my own leader," said Mr. Euler, will not find fault with me when I tell him that sometimes I described myself as a follower of the Rt. Hon. gentleman opposite—that is, I followed him throughout New Zealand and Australia." "You always have on fiscal matters," said Mr. Bennett. Mr. Euler went on to pay a glowing tribute to Mr. Bennett for the excellence of the speeches he had made in the sister Dominions, "all of which were good and everywhere left the best possible impression."

Two important pieces of legislation were considered this week. One has to do with the control of the export of war material from Canada. Widened powers have been given the government which will enable a closer check to be kept on both the manufacture and export of war munitions. Under the new legislation, the government can know promptly and fully who is the manufacturer and where the materials are going, and the Minister may at any time, by the cancellation of a license, stop the export of any particular material to any country. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Woodworth successfully argued that the penalties for violation of the proposed regulation be increased from one to ten thousand dollars maximum, together with four years imprisonment and confiscation of goods. Steps to remove the profit motive from traffic in war materials may be coupled with the additional power being taken by the government, already referred to.

An analysis of the exports of important raw materials from Canada last year showed that Japan, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium and the Netherlands received the largest quantities of nickel, copper and its products, lead, zinc, zinc spelter and scrap iron. Japan's purchases of scrap iron from Canada in 1936 were nearly double those of the previous year and her imports of nickel almost twice the amount purchased in 1935. Germany and the countries surrounding Germany also greatly increased their purchases of these metals from us. It is surmised that a considerable quantity of these important raw materials eventually found their way to war-mad nations.

The second important piece of legislation had to do with the amending and consolidating of the combines investigation Act. The Hon. Norman Rogers, who piloted the legislation through the House, said "A combine of necessity is not de-

clared to be illegal under this Act. It is only illegal when it operates to the public detriment. The same applies to a merger or a monopoly." When any combination is injurious to the public welfare provision is made for investigation and penalties.

Grey-Bruce is keenly interested in the manufacture of furniture. After agriculture, it is the most important industry. The Tariff Board has been considering the application made by the Furniture Manufacturers' Association for an upward revision of the intermediate tariff rate on furniture to 45%. The summary of their report is a very interesting document. They recommend that for two years an increase of 7% be made, bringing the effectual rate up to 33%. This increase will operate particularly against furniture coming in from the United States.

The Tariff Board goes on to say that the 404 furniture factories are distributed mainly in small centres of population, in towns and villages, and generally constitute the chief source of employment in that place. That is, the closing of a furniture factory would, in many cases, leave the employees entirely without any opportunity for alternative employment. While the amount of (wood) furniture imported from the United States during the calendar year of 1936 amounted to \$663,034, an increase of \$376,288 over 1935, it was only 2.96% of the furniture consumed in Canada during that period.

"In ordinary circumstances," the report states, "the fact that the share of the Canadian consumption enjoyed by United States manufacturers is less than 3% would lead to the conclusion that no increase in tariff is necessary, but certain other conditions seem to point to the advisability of an increase." Canadian furniture manufacturers are at a disadvantage because of duties on such raw materials as veneers, vegetable glues and glass and by the smallness of the cut (50 is the maximum in Canada, while 100 is regarded as an economical minimum in the U.S.A.).

The investigation made by the Tariff Board shows that furniture in carload lots is being imported from the United States into Montreal, the largest retail centre for furniture in Canada, at prices laid down, duty paid, below the prices at which similar furniture can be landed in Montreal from Southwestern Ontario, the main source of Canadian high priced furniture. And, further, that the concentration of buying power in the hands of a few companies tends to control manufacturers' prices "by means of volume of purchasing power and the threat, suggestion or fear of importations. All these factors put the furniture manufacturer in a peculiarly vulnerable position. The fact that the existing equipment in the 404 furniture factories in Canada is far more than sufficient to supply all Canadian requirements and the consequent existence of extremely severe competition among so many Canadian plants increases the power of the large buyer to exert pressure on the manufacturer."

According to the report, the Commissioners do not think that the 7% increase will cure all the ills of the furniture industry, but that it will "affect the attitude of mind of the manufacturers whose perspective has been dislocated by the sudden drop in their protection from 45% to 27%," and will enable them to take stock of their position and perhaps work out a more economically organized industry than now exists. The Board advises the furniture manufacturers, particularly in Southwestern Ontario, to begin immediately a study of their problems and, if necessary, calling a conference under the provisions of the Dominion Trade and Industry Commission. The Commissioners incline to the view that the whole situation ought to be considered again after, say, a period of two years, and that any increase granted in the tariff now should be regarded in the nature of a temporary relief rather than a final view of the amount of protection required by the industry.

AGNES C. MACPHAIL.  
OTTAWA,  
Saturday, April 3, 1937.

SHOP IN MARKDALE

## EBENEZER

(Held over from last week)

Miss Eileen D'Arcy was a week-end visitor with friends in Glenelg. Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Freeman spent a day with Mr. Eliot Smith at Pleasant Valley.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard McGee and family of Vandeleur were recent visitors at the Genoe home.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Hutchinson and family were visitors with Mr. and Mrs. J. Ward at Kimberley.

Master Arnold Rae and Lorne Thompson of Harkaway spent the week-end with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Taylor.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Flynn of Mt. Forest visited with Mr. and Mrs. A. Wyville and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Laurie Sewell and Mr. Harry Sewell called on Mr. and Mrs. Everett Graham at Kimberley one day recently. Sorry to hear that Mrs. Graham is ill with pneumonia.

A sleigh load of ladies attended the Women's Institute meeting at the Bowles home in the Valley on Thursday of last week.

Miss Jean Wyville was a visitor with Miss Evelyn McGee at Vandeleur and Mr. Hugh Wyville spent a few days with Mr. Dave Wyville at Cherry Grove.

Mrs. Jack Taylor spent a week with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. Thompson at Harkaway.

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Wright of Barrhead were visitors on Easter with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hutchinson. Miss Ruth Hutchinson returned home with them for a visit.

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Mathewson visited with Mr. and Mrs. A. Wyville.

Mr. A. Abelson, Stanley and Ruth Brodie of Markdale were holiday visitors with Mr. and Mrs. Victor Brodie.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. F. Hutchinson of Vandeleur spent Easter Monday with Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Freeman.

## ORANGE VALLEY

(Held over from last week.)

Little Dorothy Brown is spending the Easter holidays with Mr. and Mrs. John Wilson.

Mr. Fred Mathewson visited recently with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hazen and family in Owen Sound.

Mr. Byron Hill buzzed wood for Mr. George Littlejohns one day recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Hudson and Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Beirnes visited at the Gilchrist home on Sunday.

Mrs. George Hill and family spent an afternoon with Mrs. Clarence Alcox.

Miss Minerva Stafford is spending the Easter holidays with her sister, Miss Valerie Stafford in Mesherton.

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