

OTTAWA

WEEK BY WEEK



ACTIVITIES PRESAGING EARLY SESSION

With the steady arrival in the nation's capital of a virtual flood of people, including members and ex-members seeking appointments though there will be few rewards for services rendered due to the large number of Liberals elected, it is beginning to look as if a new session will be summoned much earlier than had been expected. In fact, the conviction is at Parliament Hill that the Government plans to have the newly-elected Parliament sit more frequently than is usually the policy in times of peace. One reason for this is that a great many war measures will be called for

continuously and since these may not be popular, then it would be wise to have Parliament pronounce upon them such as is now being done in the British House of Commons at Westminster where the legislature has been sitting continuously except for short recesses. In other words, Parliament will be consulted frequently during the war, with the probability that a new session will be called in the fall after the present one adjourns in July or August. Then again, if a member is to receive a full seasonal indemnity of \$4,000, the session must be of a minimum of 85 days, or the member receives only \$25 per day, which was the payment given for the historic one day session of January 25

last, and therefore, the great majority of the members want a session of sufficient length to qualify them for the full \$4,000 indemnity to help with their recently incurred election expenses. The longer the delay in opening the new session, the greater the possibility there will be of sittings running into the excessively hot summer weather which is so typical of Ottawa.

THE WAR AND UNEMPLOYMENT

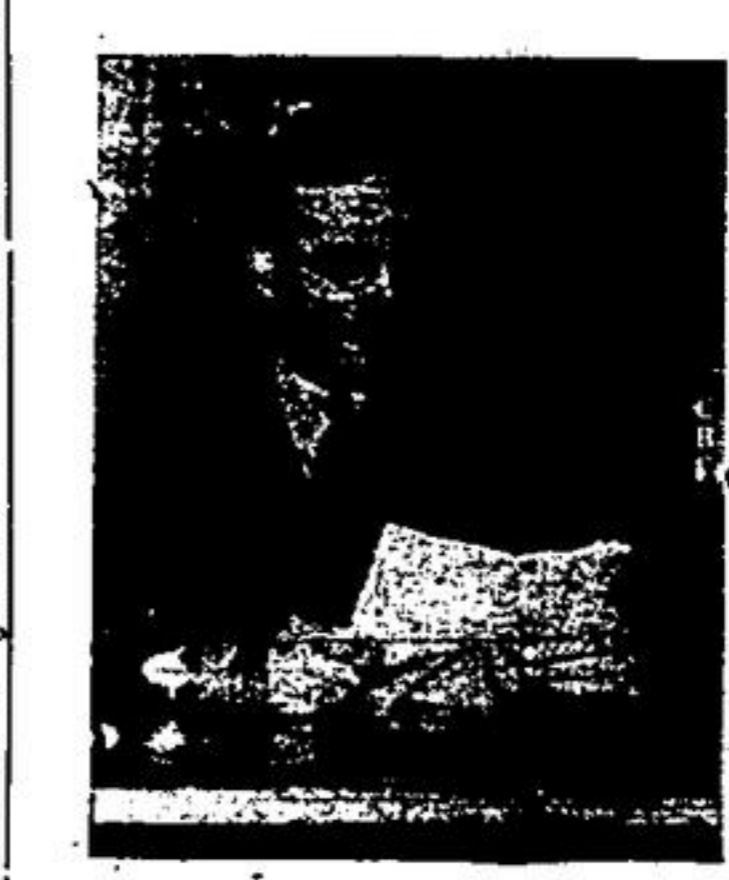
Notwithstanding all despatches in the press of Canada purporting to report the present activities in Ottawa as a result of the elections, this veteran observer can detect indications behind the scenes in Parliament. Hill which suggest or hint in no uncertain manner that the newly-elected representatives of the Nineteenth Parliament will be faced with an unusually large volume of vital legislation involving serious problems both on the home front and abroad due to the extraordinary circumstances of the war. In fact, it is beyond the memory of this observer to recall another post-election period when so many vital and serious national problems were placed on the agenda for the immediate decisive action of the legislators in Canada's capital. The spotlight is bound to be directed right from the start on the acute question of how to finance the war and to continue to pay huge sums for the relief of unemployment victims throughout the country. The total population and who are wholly not self-supporting, though over a billion dollars has been spent during the past decade for the benefit of these unfortunate in a desperate effort to solve this grave national problem.

It had been hoped that with the outbreak of the war there would be a spontaneous disappearance of dependency upon the state, but this has not happened, with the result that if this public menace is allowed, it may lead to chaotic conditions not only during the post-war period but even during the conflict itself. Hence the discussion and solution of this is an immediate problem for the newly-elected legislators because it concerns the whole life-blood of Canada and any indifference, idleness or deterioration on the part of the representatives would be a complete negation of the very democracy for which the war is being waged.

Since the outbreak of the war, there has been an extremely insignificant improvement in employment figures, mainly noticeable in the rural areas of the western provinces, but in the urban areas throughout the nation there is a solid core of dependency that defies dissolution by time or events. This number reaches the amazing number of 725,000, made up of 300,000 in the four western provinces, 375,000 in Ontario and Quebec, and 50,000 in the rest of Canada. Out of this number about 500,000 may be classed as persons who will never again become self-supporting on account of age, condition or inclination, and about 100,000 may be considered as definitely drifting into chronic indigence. Furthermore, there are many other idle young persons who are being wholly or partially supported by parents or relatives; there are about 75,000 to 80,000 new workers looking for jobs each year; there are 180,000 aged persons, 4,000 blind in receipt of special grants, 33,000 children in charge of special agencies, 14,000 homeless or infirm in charitable institutions, 90,000 mothers and children in receipt of special grants for mothers' allowances, and a rapidly mounting list of non-paying patients in hospitals and mental institutions. In other words, there are very few able-bodied persons in the whole group of unemployed who are likely to be absorbed into war work or enlistment by and spontaneous action unless this inertia in the movement off the relief lists is dissipated by remedial conditions, accompanied by a scientific and carefully planned government programme which will physically and mentally recondition our unemployed. It is hoped to accomplish this programme by eliminating the "pork barrel" list of appropriations for public buildings or other forms of petty patronage, keeping down to an absolute minimum the non-war expenditures and using public monies for

uncontrollable services or those which directly or indirectly will help in winning the war. At the same time there will be a drastic reorganization of agricultural programmes of war production which will absorb into the employed ranks those presently unemployed who are fit for effective land work, and others will get off the relief lists through a rapid speeding up of industrial production, together with many others who are sure to join this country's active armed services. Then again, preparations for war will be accompanied for post-war adjustments by the consideration of a war saving fund for war workers. It would be nothing short of a war-time equivalent of unemployment insurance, though it would end when the war is over in order that it could be enacted under the War Measures Act. This is the only way in which it can be created because in 1936 the Privy Council decided that unemployment insurance schemes by the Federal Government are fatally unconstitutional and are legislative matters in the jurisdiction of the provinces. Moreover, whenever the Federal authorities sought the necessary co-operation of the provinces for such action the schemes proved unworkable since several provinces refused to offer any assistance. It would be a three-way fund, with contributions by those engaged in war work, by those employing these persons, and by the Dominion Government. The distribution of "cut" from the fund would be given when the war is finished. (Reproduction Prohibited, 1940, Educational Features Syndicate.)

NEWS COMMENTATOR



One of the most authoritative news commentators on the air is Raymond Gram Swing, above, whose weekly talk, "The United States Today," is heard by listeners on the CBC National Network on Saturdays, from 7.45 to 8.00 p.m.

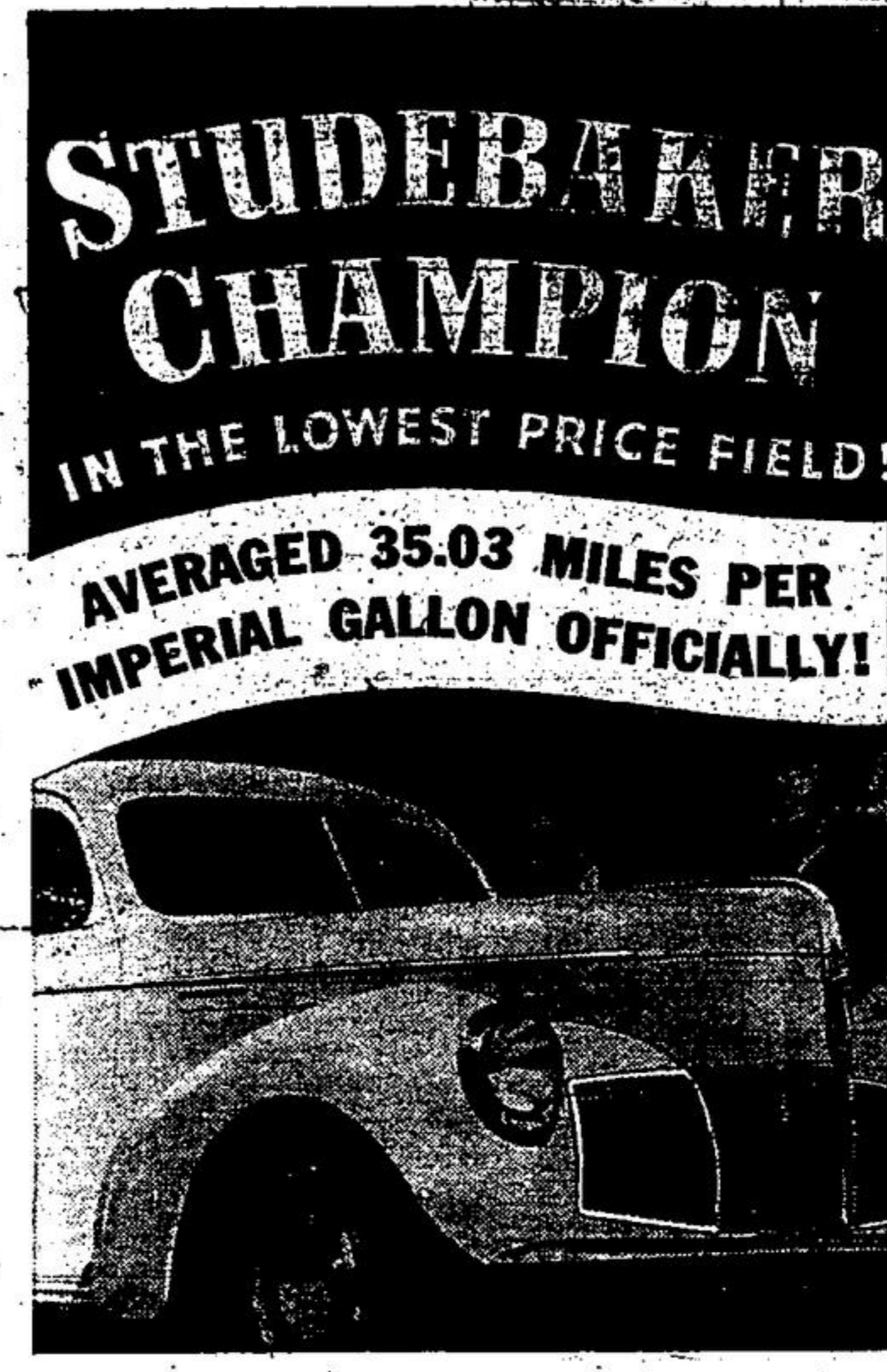
WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION STATEMENT

There were 5,065 accidents reported to the Workmen's Compensation Board during the month of March, as compared with 5,502 during February, and 4,540 during March a year ago. The benefits awarded amounted to \$488,220.84, of which \$375,802.24 was for compensation and \$112,418.60 for medical aid. This brings the total number of accidents reported during the first quarter of 1940 to 16,109, as against 13,389 during the same period of 1939, and

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