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Letter from Mr. Nicholls.

To the Editor of THE LIBERAL
DEAR SIR,—We are still in London and have been thoroughly enjoying ourselves. We have been in almost every corner and have seen more in our short stay than many who have been born here. The weather has been perfect; we have not had a good rain since leaving Canada.
To-day we had one of the pleasantest trips we have yet had, being a sail down the river to Hampton Court a distance of 20 miles. We took tickets from Westminster Bridge and quickly passed under Lambeth and Vauxhall bridges noticing on the way the fine line of buildings which form St. Thomas' Hospital, the pottery establishment of Sir Henry Doulton, and the Tate Art Gallery, thence we go under Victoria Bridge the handsomest bridge on the river and over which every train entering London must pass. We pass under several other fine bridges until we come to Chelsea and there we see scores of men at work making that part of the river which forms the course for the boat racing and on a little further come to Kew, famous for its gardens which are without doubt the best in all England, and then on past the Duke of Northumberland's House. On the top of this house is a lion with its tail erect and the story goes that he wags his tail whenever he hears the clock strike twelve. Katherine Howard, Lady Jane Grey Somerset have all been inmates of this house. We go a little further and come to the Lock at Richmond where we wait patiently for a short time for force and finally come in full view of Richmond where Henry VII died and where such famous men as Keaw, Sir Walter Scott, Sheridan and Reynolds have lived. And a little further on we had a fine view of Richmond Hill, with its beautiful terraced garden and park as at home. On a little further we come to the Twickenham Ferry so well known in song and then on to Kingston which was formerly the capital of England, and in a few minutes land at Hampton Court, and as we view the building it is little wonder that Henry VIII viewed with jealousy this beautiful building and adjoining grounds erected by Cardinal Wolsey. After viewing the grounds and buildings we took the trams and busses and drove home a distance of 17 miles through all the villages named on our way up. The next day we visited the Tate gallery given to the nation last year by Mr. Tate, and also the Parliament Buildings, and then took the 9 p. m. train for Paris by way of Newhaven Dieppe and Rouen where we arrived on Sunday morning.
At last we are in gay Paris and truly it has not been misnamed for the people seem only to care for dress, pleasure, eat and drink. Wine flows here like water; bock and absinthe are also drunk in large quantities. We arrived on Sunday morning via Newhaven and Dieppe from London on one of Cook's excursions which provides a passage and return from London five days in Paris with board and three trips in and around Paris with four-in-hand. The passage across the straits which only occupied about three hours was very smooth which does not very often occur but we seem to be blessed with smooth water wherever we go. On arrival in Paris we could see very little difference to a week day. All over could be seen men with their horses and carts hauling stone, &c., the noise of hammer and chisel on building stone &c., and all the restaurants and many of the stores in full swing. After locating ourselves at The Hotel Londres and New York and having a substantial breakfast we took a tramp and finally found ourselves at the foot of Eiffel Tower which is the highest structure in the world, and is a wonderful piece of mechanism. From its top which is 985 feet from the ground a distance of 50 miles around can be seen and the city below appears little more than a map; we ascended to the top and viewing Paris from the different landing stages occupies about two hours. In the evening we visited some of the many restaurant gardens where amusements are provided and also paid a visit to the Madeleine or Church of Mary Magdalen the foundation of which was laid by Louis XV in 1764 and was only completed in 1842 at a cost of £520,000. During the civil war some hundreds of insurgents who had sought refuge here were killed on the spot by the Versailles army; the church itself escaped, although in great danger. On Monday we started out with others in a four-in-hand on our first excursion at 9.30 a. m. and came back at 5.30 p. m. in time for dinner. The drive extended about 17 miles through Paris and the first place we visited was the Grand Opera which is a government building and covers nearly 3 acres of ground and cost 1 1/2 million pounds sterling. The grand staircase is one of the beauties of Paris.
We then drove through the great Boulevards which were originally the

line of fortification of the city, but the city having extended, the moats were filled up and these immense streets constructed. They are lined with trees on either side and here and there fountains are erected and monuments to represent some French victory frequently rear their heads. The Place de la Concorde is the finest in Europe. In the center stands the obelisk of Laxor, sister monolith to Cleopatra's Needle. The Obelisk is a solid piece of stone 76 ft. high and weighs 240 tons. On this spot the guillotine was erected of which Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were the first victims and during the reign of terror 2000 persons were here decapitated. Around it are 8 fine statues representing the chief townes of France. The Champs Elysees the finest promenade in Paris leads to the Bois de Boulogne. The Palais de l'Elysie, the residence of the President of the Republic were next in order then came the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, a triumphal arch started by Napoleon I and finished after 30 years by Louis Philippe at a cost of £400,000. It is 160 feet high and from it radiate 12 streets so that from this position the city could be defended from an advancing army. Next comes the Trocadero Palace and Gardens; in the centre is an immense dome 65 ft. wider than St. Paul's in London and on either side of dome a tower from which we obtained a fine view of Paris. The Colonial Exhibition of 1900 will be held in the gardens. The Champ de Mars in which is the Old Machinery Hall of 1889 will again be used for 1900. A large portion of this ground is covered with workmen making preparations for the Exposition.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Agents.
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Our Ottawa Letter.
The Montreal Star announces with admirable display of indignation that "The Liberal surplus is a sham," and the comparison of the present financial statement with "the deficit years of the Conservative rule is dishonest." It proceeds to prove this by a number of assertions which are worthy of a moment's attention, not because they have a substantial foundation, but because they are, and will continue to be, so frequently reiterated that some begin to believe them.

THE LIBERALS AND DISHONESTY.
The Star declares that "the Liberals have collected much more money in taxation than the Conservatives thought of doing." This is perfectly true; the partial removal of trade restrictions has given an elasticity to business that has brought its natural result of increase of revenue. In other words the people have been feebler to buy and able to secure more for their money, consequently the inducement to trade has increased and the burdens upon the people have been proportionately reduced. This is an accepted principle of free trade which the greatest commercial nation of all ages—England—has proved beyond peradventure, but which no protectionist can afford to admit, as it will knock all his theories flat. Then the Star asserts that the Liberals have spent more money on consolidated fund account than the Conservatives did during 1896 of the years from 1893 to 1896, but inasmuch as they had the money to spend and could still show a surplus, instead of spending what they had not got, and showing a deficit, and inasmuch, further, as they can show other results than boodling scandals for their expenditure, the average elector will fail to find cause for excitement here.

NOT EXTRAVAGANCE BUT EXPANSION.
"In addition they have spent more money on capital account than the Conservatives have since they finished with the tremendous task of building the C. P. R.," in fact, "they ran \$4,000,000 behind on this year's transactions alone." If the Montreal Star as the result of increasing business had found it necessary to spend \$10,000 in enlarging its premises and plant and, as a result, assumed a mortgage of three or four thousand dollars on the improved property would it consider that it had run that three or four thousand behind in the year's transactions? That is exactly the position, for the expenditures on capital account have been in canal works, railway and other permanent improvements which have been always properly charged to capital account. If these are to be considered as current expenditures the late Conservative administration must face an additional deficit of \$120,000,000 and more, in the eighteen years of their term of office.
NO BOODLE IN THIS.
The Expenditure under this account do not include any such items as were

provided for in the Langevin Block, Curran Bridge, Section B., Tay Canal, Galop's Channel, Sheik's Island Dam, and a score of other contracts, which form a portion of the shameful history of the scandals disclosed by the parliamentary inquiries of the last parliament. Every dollar in the public accounts have been spent in the public service and the frantic efforts of the Opposition to prove to the country have uniformly failed.

BLAMING THE WRONG PARTY.
Some of the Conservative papers appear to be getting restive on account of the attention that Postmaster General Mulock is receiving these days. Not only are they kindly solicitous for the feelings of Mr. Mulock's colleagues, who, they seem to fear, will be jealous at the recognition bestowed upon him but they complain bitterly of the want of recognition of the efforts of previous Postmaster-Generals. It is claimed in their behalf that everything that exists in the present system, (even the deficit, though that is not specifically mentioned,) is due to the intelligent business administration of the Conservative Ministers, and then the question is sarcastically asked if all that is to count for nothing?

It would appear that this question might be best answered by the objections themselves, who can possibly explain why the splendid work of Sir Adolphe Caron, Mr. Mulock's immediate predecessor under whom the deficit ran up to \$700,000, was left out of Sir Charles Tupper's administration although he had loyally stood by the Government in the famous revolt in 1896. Sir John Carling too, another Conservative of the postal department was shifted from that to the Agricultural Department and then dropped to make way for that yet more famous agriculturist, Dr. Montague, but the apotheosis of these two statesmen has yet to materialize and it seems reasonable that the movement should at least originate within the Conservative ranks. Until greater consideration is shown by their political admirers it is hardly graceful to call the Liberal party to account for lack of appreciation.

THE PLEBISCITE.
By the time this letter appears in print the Prohibition Plebiscite will have been taken and it is hoped the vote will be sufficiently pronounced one way or the other to finally dispose of this disturbing question. The most unsatisfactory result will be a small poll, or a pretty even vote with which neither party will be satisfied and upon which neither action nor inaction would prove acceptable to the majority of the people. The campaign has been carried on with a fair amount of energy on both sides but there has not been that intense enthusiasm that was anticipated in the earlier stages of the fight. In any case it does not seem probable that a very heavy vote will be polled.

NOTES.
The formidable list of Provincial election trials is rapidly diminishing: already twenty out of the sixty odd have been practically dropped, and as many more are likely to prove abortive. The result of the first one to go through the courts, namely that in South Ontario, was not encouraging to the Opposition, and Mr. Whitney is not talking so valorously now about his intention to push proceedings to the bitter end. In this connection the Toronto Globe observes incidentally—"Conservative journals are as good at howling corruption as Liberals are at proving corruption."

The Hon. Minister of the Interior has returned to the capital after several weeks sojourning in the North West. Mr. Sifton is profoundly impressed with the universal indications of permanent progress and prosperity which are manifesting themselves on all hands. Even the prophecies of blue rain and disaster which have been so freely advanced by one school of politicians have not detracted from the splendid opinion which the Minister has formed of the future of the country.
Scarcely a week passed now without adding to the number of those returning from the Klondike, and the effect of the home-coming upon the imposing fabric of indictment for mal-administration against the Government is as sun upon a winter's snow, the whole business is melting away and proving as unsubstantial as the patriotism of those who have been so busy discrediting their country by such stories for the sake of a passing political advantage.

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