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The Week in Parliament

By Wilfrid Eggleston

Ottawa, March 19th—So far most of the session has been devoted to legislation aimed at improving the condition of the working man in Canada, and, Heaven knows, there is plenty of room for improvement in this field.

To whatever extent these laws mean relief, in the form of higher wages, shorter hours, or better unemployment benefits, some one will have to foot the bill.

These remarks serve to lead up to a notable outburst in the House last week by Miss Agnes Macphail, who is in the somewhat anomalous position of belonging to a group in the corner of the House who are always crusading for social reform and the betterment of the worker's living conditions.

"I cannot seem to want a six hour day for industrial workers when we have something that runs well over twelve hours during the summer season and at least twelve hours a day the year round for our agricultural workers."

"The farmer works so hard that at the end of the day he is not able to think... the farmers could no more think of putting on double or treble shifts than flying to the moon because no matter how they work, under present conditions, they cannot break even... I feel that we have now altogether too much disequilibrium between the country and the city..."

"What are the farmers getting out of this much talked of reform program? They are getting the chance to avail themselves of the Bankruptcy Act, which other people have had for some time past. They are getting the chance of a loan from the \$90,000,000 fund, at a rate of interest which will probably be at least five per cent and may be five and a half per cent. But the government would not think of bearing the administrative costs. Yet we can do all these other things (the labor reform program)... at the bottom you have a group like the fishermen and the farmers, who are hardly organized at all, and they have to pay all this increased cost... because there is no use blinking the fact that such legislation as that for a minimum wage, an eight hour day and unemployment insurance put additional weight on the backs of the already burdened unorganized farmers..."

The Unemployment Insurance Bill was given its Third Reading in the House of Commons and sent on to the Senate. The vote on third reading was 123 to 3. The members who opposed it were Henri Bourassa, veteran Nationalist orator from Quebec, who deprecates the degenerative influence, as he regards it, of all so-called reform measures, E. J. Garland, U.F.A. Bow River, who branded it as entirely inadequate in scope and in amount of benefit, and Jean Francois Pouliot, who condemned it as useless because in his opinion it was unconstitutional. The Act was strengthened in several particulars while passing through the Commons, one amendment giving the Insurance Commission power to sue and collect from defaulting employers who failed to contribute to the fund. The attempt of J. S. Woodsworth to make the action of the commission compulsory in such a case, protecting the worker in any event against the possibility of loss, was defeated by a majority of 21.

The House was compelled to proceed without the Prime Minister, who will hardly be back before the Easter adjournment. There is some talk of parliament being prorogued by Easter but how this can be done in view of the heavy program of legislation still to come down is not easily seen. The budget, which may be down by the time this is in print, the legislation arising out of the price spreads commission, the Economic Council, the Grain Board—these are only four of the heavier items, and they will all take a good deal of time. Indeed, Mr. Bennett's illness suggests the need of an election later in the year than was planned—perhaps September. Possibly by leaving early for London and spending a couple of weeks on the continent, Premier Bennett may get thoroughly rested up for the Jubilee Celebration.

The poultry schemes in the three prairie provinces will not be inaugurated under the Marketing Act, Hon. Robert Weir told the House early last week. In no province was the two-thirds vote, even of those actually voting, reached, although in Saskatchewan and Alberta the figure was not far short of two-thirds. In Manitoba the proposal was overwhelmingly defeated. Hon. Peter Venoit's charges against the R.C.M.P., involving claims that they used third-degree methods in a certain case, that ships stores were destroyed while hungry people on relief stood expectantly by, and that patrol boats tied up to the Bathurst wharves for days at a time while the officers idled in town, are to be investigated by the Chief Justice of New Brunswick. The former Postmaster General, while thanking the government for the inquiry, insisted on calling attention to the fact that the Chief Justice of New Brunswick and himself had in the past been the two bitterest political enemies in that province. The Tariff Board is to look into the cost of producing automobiles in Canada. The government, in making public the announcement, did not explain why, but it is well known at Ottawa that there have been numerous complaints over the disparity of prices in Canada and the United States, and it has been alleged that the Canadian manufacturer, who is in most cases the American manufacturer in branch-plant guise, is taking all the traffic will stand. Coupled with an inquiry into the cost of gasoline, it seems possible that some relief for the motorist is on the far-off horizon, if for nothing more than an election gesture. (Assistance for the West) The royal commissions inquiring into the claim of Alberta and Saskatchewan for damages from the federal treasury, to cover the alleged alienation and mismanagement of the natural resources of those provinces, from 1905 to 1930, have reported to the governments concerned, and their reports were laid on the table of the House last week. They advised that a sum of five million dollars, plus interest at five per cent per annum, from October 1, 1930 to date, should be paid to each of the provinces. This comes to about \$6,500,000 a piece, and will be of material assistance to these provinces at a critical time, assuming that it is paid over in cash. What is more likely is that it will be ticked off the sums which the two provinces owe the federal government for advances made during the depression, for unemployment relief and other purposes. This \$13,000,000 touch, added to the \$1,000,000—or nearly that—extra per year in subsidy to the Maritime provinces, recommended by the White commission, is just one in a series of demands upon the federal treasury. As the budget has not been balanced since 1930, in spite of higher taxes, it is beginning to get rather serious. The net debt of Canada has gone up \$550,000,000 in the past four years, and it looks as though the end is not yet. The Bank of Canada presented its first statement of Assets and Liabilities last week. Although it had only been officially in business for three days at the time, it showed quite substantial figures on both sides of the ledger. It has already acquired over 106 million dollars worth of gold at the old price of \$20.67 per fine ounce. At the market price for gold this would be worth nearly 185 million dollars. The new bank had already nearly 98 million dollars of its notes in circulation, and had invested in nearly 150 million dollars worth of Dominion government securities.

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SLATS' DIARY BY ROSS FARQUHAR

Friday—Carry Polk was a telling Ant Emmy that sum fella has invented a akcessory to keep girls or people frum falling out of a Rumbel seat but she told Ant Emmy she diddnt think Mutch of it. She sed to Ant Emmy. I wood like to no what a mans Arms is for enny ways, and she diddnt think it was a good thing to let to menny masheems take the place of a man enny ways.



Saturday—Mrs. Pick was a tawking to pa today and she sed to him that the biggest trubble with her husband is that he wont take advise and pa replied and sed to her. No I gess not. If he had ben in the Habit of taking advise he wooden of ben yure Husband. Pa dussent care mutch for Mrs. Pick.

Sunday—Joe Hix mebbly will go to Wirk at last. he was a telling me this morning at church that he ha got a chance to take a job as a Truck driver for Mr. Plout witch runs the saw Mill acrost the crick so now al he has got to do is lern to drive a truck by Munday morning.

Munday—Slim yerguson dipped my marbles in Glem yesterday after noon and akcually spoilt them. Ma sed I must for give him and I pose I must but not till I get 1 good crack at him I wont. Forgiveing to soon dussent pay.

Tuesday—pa was considerably wirted tonite when he 1st put his pants on to go to the Lodge meeting. For a wile he thot he must have sum buddy elses pants on an acct, he found a 1/2 a \$ in 1 of the pockets.

Wednesday—Ant Emmys cuzzen witch teaches skool over in Adams county tuk a Trip to New York a few munths ago to study condishuns in the under world and all he seen was the Sub Way.

Thursday—Arlie Crunch is very very sore at a fella and he has got his gun out and is looking for him. He cum home and found this uther man in the dineing room with his wife, & the stranger had drunk up the last Bottle of beer he had.

But your sins seldom find you out till they find you out of ready cash.

NEWTONBROOK

An Irish Supper will be served in the Sunday School Hall of Newtonbrook United Church on Friday evening, March 22nd, from 6 to 7.30 o'clock, under the auspices of the Women's Association followed by a musical program. Adults 25c., children 15c.

A very successful Father and Son service was held last Sunday evening in the United Church. A young mens choir of twenty-five voices led in the worship of song and gave special music.

The Y.P.S. met last Monday evening with Mr. Clifford Brett, convener of the Citizenship Department, in charge. The program consisted of short speeches by several members on various subjects which displayed exceptionally fine talent. Mr. George Street sang a solo in his usual pleasing manner. A social hour followed with the social convenors, Miss Irene Smith and Miss Janet Riddell, in charge. An Irish song contest was much enjoyed, Rev. and Mrs. Halbert getting the highest points. The second place was a tie between Miss Gladys Sutterby and Douglas Jack, Miss Doris Van Loven and Ernest Southern. Cakes and ice cream were served. A hearty vote of thanks was extended to all those who made the meeting such a profitable and happy one.

The W.M.S. held their March meeting at the home of Mrs. H. B. Schmidt, Lansing, with thirty in attendance. The Prayer Group met at 2.15 in charge of Mrs. J. T. Soden. Mrs. A. W. Stephenson presided. The worship service was conducted by Miss Hope and Mrs. Summers. A very fine report of the Temperance Convention in Toronto was given by Miss A. Lever, and Mrs. James gave a report of the W.M.S. annual meeting of the Toronto Centre Presbyterial. Rev. E. E. Pugsley of Thornhill was guest speaker and gave a very interesting address on "Attitudes to the Temperance Question." The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. A. H. Halbert.

Miss Ruth Allan spent the weekend with her parents at Caledonia. Mr. Leslie Grisdall was called to Brantford this week in the interests of the company in which he is working.

Mr. Billy Mollison left for Edmonton recently to seek a position. Mrs. G. A. Kearns and Miss Bessie Scott of Toronto and Mrs. T. Hood of Alliston visited at the parsonage this week.

A series of Lenten services is being held in the United Church every Sunday conducted by the pastor.

Rev. and Mrs. A. H. Halbert attended the funeral of Mr. W. H. Dice-man at King last Monday.

Earl Haig College Institute held their annual Athletic and Novelty night last Friday. An exceptionally fine program was presented to a large audience.

The Girls Mission Circle met at the Parsonage last Wednesday evening with fifteen present. The devotional service was conducted by the president, Miss Irene Smith, and Miss Mary Kirby. A report of the annual meeting of the Toronto Conference Branch W.M.S. was given by Miss Edna Street. A solo was rendered by Miss Marjorie Johnson. A very interesting address was given by Mrs. Houston of the Toronto Chinese Mission who fills the position of nurse and deaconess to this part of the W.M.S. work in Toronto. The supply secretary handed out articles of sewing to the members which will be sent in the bale in May.



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The Richmond Hill Liberal