

SLATS' DIARY

(By Oliver N. Warren)

Sunday: I am a bad vicktem of sirkemstantises over witch no boddie but Pa & Ma aint got no controle. Jake & Blisters went a fishen & I to S. S. & church. I sum times wander if they have got better Pas & Mas than I.

Tuesday: Jane sed to me she entertained Jake last evning & I sed I diddent see no lights when I went a past her house. She sed No, why lights? Recken she is aimen to get me jellus, & she has done it to.

Wednesday: The teacher ast Blisters what are a rabid dog & Blisters replide & sed I you chase cottontales with. I bleeve he gets dummer evry day. I was wise the ancer is a dog that are hungry.

Thursday: Sum of the big kids in this skool are dum all so. They's a Jew kid, Abie Olsteen, & the teacher ast him what are a stoic & a cynic, did he no & he sed sure, a stoic is a bird witch brings baiys & a cynic is whair you washes dishes. I new Abie was rong. When the teacher laft out lowd.

Friday: Elyv got sum thing rong in her stummick & went to the doctor & sed it was hurting offly & cudent he do sum thing for it. The doctor sed, yes, diet. & Elyv up & sed okay, what color? It looks to me like all our gang has been having a unushelly dum week. Unlest its me.

Saturday: Still more dumness. Jane wore her red dress out in the countrv to visd her unkel & when a bull over the fents begin to paw up dirt & ball she ast why are that & her unkel sed Probley that dress. Then Jane sed she new it are turbley out of stile but she diddent xpect a cow wood notis that.

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The Week in Parliament

By Wilfrid Eggleston

Ottawa, March 23rd—A lively discussion on wheat marketing, the defeat of the Transport Bill in the Senate, the annual statement of the Canadian National Railways tabled in the House, and the Bank of Canada's report on the province of Saskatchewan were the highlights in a week devoid of empire-shaking developments.

Plenty of old straw was threshed again in the wheat debate. It is, however, a matter of vital importance in the Canadian economy, and statements made by Messrs. Dunning and Gardiner made clear for the first time to the general public the government's stand last fall, when the Wheat Board ceased to function except as a cushion to absorb 'bear drives' or protect farmers against a serious decline in world prices.

It is not easy in a paragraph or two to summarize the debate. But I recall vividly the anxiety about two years ago, when stocks of wheat held by the government were approaching the 300 million bushel mark, when the Board appeared to have the bull by the tail, when to sell wheat was to break the market, and to buy it was to add to the contingent liability. Members seriously feared that the 'stabilization' experiment would cost 50 millions or more from the federal treasury; there was no saying when it would end; it looked physically and politically impossible ever to get out of the wheat business.

(Started Selling Wheat) Then came the Wheat Board act of 1935, radically changed in committee and modelled on the Argentine 'minimum price' theory, in which the government only stepped in, if, as, and when prices collapsed. The Ottawa government changed political complexion; McFarland retired; Murray was appointed to sell wheat. The board continued to buy at 87 1/2c a bushel—the price set by the McFarland board in the Bennett regime. Murray sold wheat. He was, in fact, accused of 'fire-sale' methods. He got rid of 22 millions in one day; and it seemed to some improvident. Then prices fell sharply, and the big day's sale looked like a wise move.

Then came the spring of 1936. Much wheat had been moved or much still was held. It looked like a 400 million bushel crop. Observers wondered what the board could afford to pay for the crop that fall. I used to hear guesses of 75 to 80 cents as a minimum price; perhaps only 70, depending on world supply. Then came the disastrous drought and the need for setting a minimum price. The government was rapidly getting out of the wheat business, and tremendously bucked up at the thought that it might now be done without much loss. August came along; it was necessary to make a decision. And that, when it came, was to protect the wheat farmer against further collapse; to buy if wheat fell below 90 cents (basis No. 1 Fort William), but not otherwise. The government was 'getting out'.

It has never fallen below 90 cents. No more wheat has been bought. The Board held its supplies off the market while the farmer was disposing of his harvest. Prices climbed. They were soon above the dollar mark, and have since ranged between a dollar and a dollar-forty. The Board no longer existed as a buying agency. And that, of course, is what the row is about. The government is accused of 'selling out' the western farmer. (Two Sides to Story)

There are two sides to the story; both were heard. The government, collectively, believes that it did the fair thing by Canada as a whole; that the criticism is localized; that it couldn't continue to guarantee wheat prices without, eventually, guaranteeing lumber, fish, copper, poultry, potato and other prices. The Transport Bill, killed in the Senate, would have extended the power of the Board of Railway Commissioners to deal with water traffic on the lakes, with aviation, with highways, so far as the latter were under Ottawa control.

The Minister of Transport wanted the measure put through, in the interests of wise regulation, to avoid chaos and destructive competition. But it had almost no other friends. The industries of Canada approved of the general principle of regulation, so long as it was not themselves which were to be regulated. The Senate heard much evidence in committee. Then it gently but firmly applied the quietus, or coup de grace, or whatever the novelists say when a death blow is delivered.

(About Our Railway) Since the Canadian National Railways is, in theory at least, owned by you and me and eleven million other Canadians, I should say a few words about its annual statement tabled in the house. It was not a

particularly encouraging report. True, the slide down into the pit of bankruptcy and disaster has stopped; but improvement is slow. Every dollar of increased revenue in 1936 was absorbed by increased operating costs. Only the fact that it was possible by refunding loans at lower interest rates to save a few millions, permitted the management to show some improvement over the previous year. The Dominion treasury had to cough up \$43,303,393 (count them!) to enable the railway to pay its obligations and remain solvent.

If a reasonably good wheat crop had been raised, this might have been much better. Other freight revenue was up considerably. Apparently the government is banking on some more substantial improvement in 1937, since Hon. Charles Dunning suggested that \$35,000,000 might be enough to meet the deficit next year. If so, net return from operation will have to pick up considerably more in 1937 than it did in 1936.

(Profit From Steamships) A bright note, of a minor nature, came from the report on the Canadian National (West Indies) Steamships. 'For the first time since the formation of the company—it earned a surplus,' said the statement. The modest sum of \$87,398 was handed back to the government to be used in offsetting in some small manner the losses of earlier years.

The Bank of Canada's report on the financial condition of Saskatchewan was not particularly hilarious reading, either. It advised, much as in the report on Manitoba, that the royal commission which the government proposes should delve deeply into the question of adjusting the provinces' burdens and taxation powers. It added that the tax structure of the province was capable of yielding more revenue, from persons able to pay, even in light of the disastrous times it has passed through. However, it made it quite clear that some temporary assistance must also be granted, presumably in the form of a subsidy, pending the report of the royal commission, and its implementation.

(A Study in Contrasts) One observation of the Bank's economist is worth repeating as a study in contrasts—the standard of living as obtained from agriculture in the 'golden era' of the 20's, as compared with the extreme destitution which it has seen in the 30's: "On the whole, the net cash income of the average citizen in Saskatchewan during this period (four years 1925-28) probably exceeded that in any other economy in the world of about equal population, with the exception of certain areas in the middle west of the United States."

And, after the disaster: "In no other province of Canada is the relief problem so acute. It is unnecessary to recite the desolation which successive droughts have brought. At present one-third of the rural population and 13 per cent of the urban population are on relief—the total relief expenditures since 1930 have exceeded the total ordinary revenues of the province for the same period."

The Dominion Conference of Mayors which met at Ottawa and wound up by conferring with five members of the federal cabinet brought further grief to Ottawa to consider a.d., if possible, relieve. It was an almost uniformly black picture of failing municipal revenue, increasing relief costs, empty provincial treasuries, and general hard luck, which they painted.

The government was urged to embark at once on a wide-scale low-cost housing scheme, but this proposal, advanced originally by the National Employment Commission, for which elaborate and detailed plans have been drawn, has been postponed for a year. It is still possible that sufficient pressure may be brought upon the government to go ahead with something yet, but very doubtful.

The million dollars to be voted for youth assistance will be largely confined to training plans, and will not go very far to meet the problem of the unemployed young person between 16 and 25, it is feared. The Youth Employment Committee worked out a much more ambitious scheme, but on grounds of economy and constitutional difficulty the treasury board severely lopped the original appropriation.

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VEJLORE

The Vellore Euchre Club met in the hall last Monday evening. The prize winners were as follows: Ladies, 1st, Mrs. J. McNeil; 2nd, Miss E. Cave; 3rd, Mrs. M. McDonald; Consolation, Mrs. A. Cameron. Gents, 1st, Mr. W. Crane; 2nd, Mr. W. Bates; 3rd, Mr. P. Craib; Consolation, Mr. J. McNeil.

On Tuesday evening of last week the Vellore Junior Farmers held a social evening in connection with the winning side in the stalling and ground hog campaign, the captain being Mr. P. Craib. A social time was spent playing Court Whist for the first part of the evening. The winners were: Ladies, 1st, Miss S. McNeil; Consolation, Miss D. Ire-

land. Gents, 1st, Mr. J. McDonald. Dancing followed for the rest of the evening and lunch was served by the losing side.

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McNeil, Mr. and Mrs. L. McNeil and Mrs. Geo. Jarrett enjoyed a motor trip to Galt last week.

The project girls met at the home of Miss S. McNeil last Wednesday afternoon and have their clothes closet well on the way to completion.

Judge—"Do you want a lawyer to defend you?"

Prisoner—"Not particularly, sir."

Judge—"Well, what do you propose to do about the case?"

Prisoner—"Oh, I'm quite willing to drop it as far as I'm concerned."

Clerk: Please, sir, I think somebody wants you on the telephone. The Boss: Now, why do you say you think I am wanted? Am I wanted or not? Clerk: Well, sir, somebody called up and said, "Is that you, you old idiot?"

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- FURNITURE: 1 Cooking Stove, Quebec, with warming closet, nearly new; 1 Quebec Heater; 1 Oil Stove; 1 two-plate Electric with Oven; 1 Therenoid Electric Belt; 1 Extension Table; 1 Buffet; 6 Kitchen Chairs; 1 Chest of Drawers; 2 Clocks; 3 Small Tables; 1 Marble Top Table; 1 Hall Rack; 2 Toilet Sets; 1 Silver Tea Service, 4 pieces; Quantity of Silver; 1 Washstand for Tubs; 1 Camera; 1 Show-Case, small; 1 Milk Strainer; 1 Milk Plunger; 1 Writing Desk; 1 Gramophone with records; 1 Rocking Chair; 2 Cane Bottom Chairs; 1 Chesterfield Suite, 3 pieces, new; 1 Oak Bedroom Suite; 1 Walnut Bedroom Suite; 1 Folding Single Bed; 1 Large Rug; 1 Linoleum Rug, 3 1/2 x 4 yds.; Quantity of Dishes; Quantity of Fruit and Pickles; 2 Birds and Cages; Number of Bird Cages; 1 Barrel Churn; 1 Lawn Mower; 1 Incubator, 250 egg; 1 Stone Water Bowl; 1 Electric Motor, 1/4 h.p. and jack for pump; 1 Whitewash Sprayer; 1 Power Clipper; 1 Wheelbarrow; 1 Washing Machine and Wringer; 1 Dog House; 1 Storm Door; 1 Crowbar; 1 Long Ladder; 1 Light Chain; A Quantity of Chicken Wire; A Quantity of Chicken Feeders; A Quantity of Chicken Boxes; Number of Window Screens; Porks, Shovels, hoes; CATTLE: 1 Durham and Jersey Cow supposed to calf in May; 1 Jersey Heifer, 1 year old, will register; 1 Jersey Heifer, rising 1 year; The above are T. B. Tested; A Number of Hens

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