

## BUSINESS RUSHED BY PARLIAMENT

Which Does More in Seven Weeks Than in Seven Months in Past.

## NO GRAND STAND PLAYS

### PARLIAMENTARIANS GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS.

#### Order-in-Council Abolishing Exemptions Cleverly Devised to Make Quebec Do Her Share.

Ottawa, May 1.—Unless the budget debate develops a snag, which is not expected, Parliament should prorogue by May 24th. This goes to show what happens when a Government does nothing except business. No wind-jamming, no bickering, no grand-stand plays for the newspapers, no pepper and mustard for the Ottawa correspondents, no spalling, no marking time—just a case of getting down to brass tacks and staying there until the job is finished. The net result of this undistracted diligence is that Parliament has accomplished more in seven short weeks than it used to in seven long months. No one is bold enough to say that it will keep up this record next session, because next session—at least one hopes so—the operating cause of all this complaisance will be removed. With the war over or in sight of its finish, we may assume that the young lions from Quebec who now sit behind Sir Wilfred Laurier and are silent simply because the Old Man says so, will roar lustily. We may also suppose that Western opinion on free trade, public ownership, and such matters, which is mute now in the face of the tragic events on the Western front, will break loose and sweep over the country like a mighty rushing wind. In a word Parliament is good under duress. Everyone is a Tory because he has to be and submits to daily assaults on the constitution with as good grace as possible. When the Hun has ceased to thunder at the gate we count on being staunch democrats again and saving the pieces. It is then that the tendency to socialism and whiskers, which I see latent in this Parliament, will begin to get a figure in remoulding the social and economic fabric of this country and nearer to its heart's desire. Meanwhile it is not vocal be-

cause the roar of the guns in Europe is a competitor that no rhetoric, however honourable, can stand up against. Moreover, people refuse to listen to anything but the iron conversation of the war. If the most independent Parliament that ever came to Ottawa lets things slip through with a "me-too" it is because its little noise would be lost in the universal cacophony. Why should Parliament bid itself discourse what there are no ears to enchant—or when the ears are busily engaged elsewhere? Not that the right of free speech is abdicated! Not on your life! There is a motion on the order paper that Mr. Speaker edit Hansard with a view to cutting out groans of protest, means of anguish, stinging rebukes and other things members of Parliament fling about in the throes of debate, but I miss my guess if the motion is ever discussed. If it is discussed it will be surely defeated, but it is more likely that it will be taken off the order paper and quietly shelved. Why should Mr. Speaker have the power to edit the improprieties out of Hansard when there is always the closure at hand to head off the improprieties before they are uttered? This is a Government dedicated to thrift, and a Government censorship of Hansard on top of a closure that is seldom or never used is making two bites of a cherry where one bite would do. Besides one fails to see what further improvement can be made in a Hansard already polished to the last degree by that genial connoisseur of belles lettres, Mr. T. P. Owen.

The amendments to the Military Service Act, sweeping as they are, have not taken more than four days all told. Had this been the year 1913, instead of the year 1918 with the emergency fully emerged, Dr. William Pugsley would have held up these horrid innovations for a week with his own skilful hands. Quebec would have fought for two months—closure or no closure. As it is, four days suffice.

The order-in-council abolishing exemptions is rather cleverly devised to make Quebec pull her full weight in the boat. The clever part is abolishing the exemptions. The old registration of man-power fell down because the replies, thousands of them, were either insolent or misleading. Wrong names and wrong addresses were also given. There is no reason to believe that a new registration would fare better. But abolishing exemptions catches the slackers right where they live, because when they appealed to the tribunals for exemption they were obliged to give a correct description of themselves. This evidence in black and white is of great use to the authorities in rounding up the malingers all over Canada. In Quebec alone the new draft will net

from forty thousand to sixty thousand men.

Another tremendous matter that slipped through Parliament with the ease and capacity of a greased pig in a lane was the item of half a billion dollars for war purposes. Half a billion! Think of it! And not one murmur, not one complaint! Can't you imagine Sir Richard Cartwright and Alexander Mackenzie and all the other old-time champions of frugal expenditure turning in their graves and crying through the superincumbent earth, "Lemine up!" The debate, it is true, did develop some friction, but it was not relevant to the half billion dollars. Messrs. Nesbitt and Cockshutt got to wrangling about the purity of their respective elections and incidentally expressed a desire to knock each other's block off. Which was an interesting side light on the ultimate fate of the brotherly love which now prevades the Unionist ranks.

The House raised no objection whatever when four Cabinet ministers were made to grow where only two grew before. The Minister of Militia became two, one here and one overseas; the Minister of Inland Revenue became one until

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death or the resumption of the liquor traffic do them part; and two new Ministers, one of Colonization and Immigration and another of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment, were created, both of them needed if the problems rising out of the war are to be effectively handled. The two Ministers of Militia are another story. It is a moot question whether it wouldn't have been better to have one Minister of Militia wholly responsible for the war expenditure here and overseas rather than two ministers, one of whom is too far away to explain to Parliament, while the other stays at home and says it is none of his business.

Civil Service Reform, which has been a subject of controversy for fifty years, seems to have got on the statute book over night. It is not in full flower yet, but it is a bud of great intention and beautiful promise Parliament did not waver with acrid speech, preferring to let it grow or languish as the case might be and talk about it afterwards. Woman suffrage also got by with the minimum of discussion, the Opposition no doubt relying on a complete and rounded woman suffrage to restore the balance of votes now seriously disturbed by the War Times Election Act.

The big things through with a rush, but the little ones stick. Daylight saving is now the law of the land, but it rangles still in the bosom of the farmer members of Parliament who object to trading a good hour in the afternoon for a bad one in the morning. One statistician points out that when Sir George Foster monkeyed with the clock he stole an hour a day from seven million people. Seven million hours a day for the six summer months is one billion two hundred and sixty million hours. One billion two hundred and sixty million hours is fifty-two million five hundred thousand days, which is one hundred and forty-three thousand, eight hundred and thirty-five years. The Kaiser's object is to restore the Middle Ages. At one stroke, Sir George Foster shifts backward the hand of time and aggregates considered, gives us the Carboniferous Period of somewhere thereabouts. War certainly is what Sherman said it was. —H. F. GADSBY.

**Hun Preferred Death.** Douglas, Isle of Man, May 1.—Frederick Brandauer, a wealthy pen manufacturer, has committed suicide in a German detention camp rather than return to Germany. Brandauer had lived in England for 30 years, but his naturalization had lapsed.

In a letter to the camp commander he said that the agonies of death would be nothing to what he would suffer if he submitted to repatriation which the Government proposed.



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