

GUR OTTAWA LETTER.

LIBERALS HAVE NOT ABANDONED THEIR PLATFORM IN THE NEW TARIFF.

Sir Richard to Remain—Quebec Elections—The Plebiscite—Railway Matters—The North Shore of Lake Superior.

[From Our Own Correspondent.]
Ottawa, May 18.—The cry of the Mail and Empire is that the tariff is too long a step in the direction of freer trade, while the Tories in Parliament take the other tack and declare that it is no step at all, that the Liberals have gone back on themselves and their principles. Mr. B. H. Sir Hilbert Tupper's colleague from Picton, came to grief the other night in arraigning the Liberal party for this so-called inconsistency. He is a pleasant, clever sort of man, and a good talker. But when he had finished exhorting the Liberals for "abandoning their platform," Mr. Logan of Cumberland, showed by reading a newspaper report that three or four years ago Mr. Bell was an ardent free trader whereas he is now an ardent N. P. man. As a matter of fact there is no inconsistency in the Liberal position. They have reduced duties as far as they could do so with safety to the revenue and the public interest, at a time when business of all kinds is greatly depressed and when a too drastic change might easily bring on a financial convulsion, and have let it be understood that this instalment of reform is to be followed in due course by others. Mr. Bell has cast aside his free trade principles and embraced protection. That is inconsistency if you like. But there is no inconsistency so far as I can see in Liberals making a start on the road they have promised to travel.

If we suppose the tariff reform movement in England to have dated from Hume's report in 1840, though it really began further back, it took over twenty years for English statesmen to work out free trade by timely and moderate reductions. They had resources to fall back upon that are not found in Canada. Thus when he made large reductions in 1842, Peel resorted to the income tax in order to establish an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure. We cannot concur with an income tax or any other form of direct taxation, nor, owing to our contiguity to the United States, can we tax tea or spirits as high as we might like; in other words, the circumstances of the country render it extremely difficult to reduce the tariff as rapidly as most Liberals would desire. But the Government has made a beginning, and, as it is the first step that counts, it will not be hard for it to persevere in the good work. Free trade is impracticable in Canada but in a few years we are tolerably certain to get down to a tariff for revenue only, and this without throwing business into confusion or being too cruel with the protected "infants."

Sir Richard Will Remain.
The Tory papers have been circulating a report that Sir Richard Cartwright is going to England as High Commissioner, that he is "disgusted," etc. The report is not true. Sir Richard is not disgusted nor is he going to England—at least not just now. If he did not approve of the tariff reductions, if he regarded them as in any sense a betrayal of Liberal promises, he would have been out of the Cabinet long before this, for, as everyone knows, if there is any man in the country who has the courage of his convictions beyond the rest of us he is that man. He is convinced, however, that the Government could not have gone further with safety at this particular time. In a couple of years, when things have settled down and the Government is able to make a further reduction, he may go to England. That is probable but not of course, certain. The Liberal rank and file in the House will not let him go if they can help it for he is a tower of strength to them both in and out of the House, but it is well to remember that Sir Richard is getting on in years, and, while as vigorous intellectually as ever, is not enjoying the best of health. He is suffering much from rheumatism. He might be cured if he could remain for a few months at Caledonia or Avon Springs, but so long as he is a Minister that is out of the question. In England where he would have less to do there could be a better chance. The rumor referred to created uneasiness throughout Ontario, notably among the farmers, who look up to him as their friend and champion; so much so that Liberals in the House thought of going in a body to him and asking him to reconsider his intention. His colleagues, who are most anxious that he should remain, who indeed regard his presence in the Cabinet as essential to its stability and usefulness were equally put out till they learned that he had no idea of going to England just now.

Quebec Elections.
The result in Quebec has practically settled the Manitoba school question. The executive of the Tory association of Ontario was to have met in this city the day after the elections to rejoice over Mr. Flynn's victory and give Mr. Whitney an enthusiastic send-off in his campaign. The executive met as per arrangement but there was barely a quorum. Many of those who got the news on the Tuesday night that Mr. Flynn had been snored under did not think it worth while to come here to talk of graves and worms and epitaphs with poor old Sir Charles, and those who did come were blue. Sir Charles gave them a dinner and tried to cheer them up with robustness oratory, but it was no go. The conviction seems to be growing that the sooner the party gets rid of the Tupper's the better. Mr. Foster is looked on as the best available man for the leadership, though some consider him narrow-gauge. Dr. Montague has gone to British Columbia and may remain there. Mr. Haggart is seldom in the House. Sir Adolphe has nothing to say, while Sir Hilbert wears a cowled look and Sir Charles makes a lame-shouldered fish of the speaker's left. In fact, the only active men are Mr. Foster and Mr. Davin, the rest do not seem to care whether school keeps or not. Mr. Foster is not popular, but he has brains, and, though as disappointed as any at the turn things have taken, appears to think he may live to see the end of the Liberal regime, a consolation in which Sir Charles with his weight of years can hardly indulge.

Mr. Foster's policy at present is the resurrection of the N. P. How far this is a wise policy remains to be seen. If it improves, as they are likely to do, it will be uphill work trying to convince even the Tory farmers that it is to their interest that the existing duties should be put back to the old figure. What a job, for instance, it would be to persuade the people anywhere outside of Lambton that the tax on coal oil should be increased by the tax on small implements, cottons and woolsens, or that barbed wire and binding twine should once more be dutiable. Of course if times should grow

worse, as they did in the United States after but not in consequence of the Wilson tariff, Mr. Foster would have comparatively easy sailing—but given a marked improvement, the task of making the farmer believe that he is going to be benefited by bringing back the reign of combines will be all but impossible. If a big European war should break out and prices go up with a bound, he might as well whistle to the wind.

The Plebiscite.
The prohibition plebiscite bill will be brought down in a few days. No doubt the Government will let the electorate know what it is voting for and what the effect of carrying prohibition would be. To begin with, there is the \$8,000,000 of excise revenue, which would have to be replaced somehow, and the \$2,000,000 of revenue now accruing to the provinces and municipalities from the traffic. Then the Prohibition Commission reported in favor of compensation, which would amount to a large sum, perhaps to \$25,000,000. Then there is the cost of enforcing the law by the Dominion all along the sea and land frontier from Cape Breton to Victoria, with the United States "wet." That would take a considerable sum annually, provided, that is, an honest effort were made to enforce. Per contra, we should gain a good deal in a material way through having less drunkenness, whilst the moral gain would be still greater, always provided there was a sufficiently strong public opinion behind the law to see that it was properly enforced. If there was not, if things went on as they did in many places under the Scott Act, the moral gain would not be perceptible.

It is a serious question. To partly make up the loss of excise revenue some propose to abolish the subsidies to provinces, but that would kill prohibition in the smaller provinces where the feeling in favor of it is strong. Direct taxation would be the readiest way but would not be popular. Some have suggested that in order to show that the people mean to enforce the law at least 60 per cent. of the voters should be required to vote for it. The argument is that this would be prima facie evidence of the existence of a resolute public opinion in its behalf, and without a resolute public opinion it would be a farce. Others say there should be at least a majority of all the voters on the list in favor of it; that if, as happened before, only a fractional part of the whole number of votes was cast, the measure, if passed, could not be enforced. Others again contend that, to become a law, it should be carried in every province because if any of the larger provinces, Quebec, for example, voted against it, it would not and could not be properly enforced there, and if Quebec were practically "wet" it would be difficult to enforce the measure elsewhere, say in Eastern Ontario. I venture to think this is a somewhat unreasonable proposition. If we are going to introduce the plebiscite as an institution, well and good; it is a mighty dangerous constitution in a democracy exposed to gusts of passion and emotion, but probably could not be invoked for a better cause than prohibition. The principle of a plebiscite, however, at least the principle recognized in France, where it was invented in the interest of the Third Napoleon, is not a majority in every province and department, any more than at every polling booth, but a majority of all the votes, and not of all the votes actually on the list, but merely of all the votes cast. Sir Oliver Mowat has the bill in hand and is sure to present the question fairly.

Railway Matters.
The Government is taking its time with the Crow's Nest project and is wise in doing so, since the action to be taken, whatever it may be, will gravely affect the future of British Columbia. The people of that province would like the Government to construct the road, to begin building at Lethbridge and push on another line from the coast so as ultimately to establish a through route to the Pacific Ocean. The cost would exceed \$25,000,000. It is said, to be sure, that the road would pay from the start, but we have heard that story before about other Government roads. The general conviction is that we cannot do better than let the Canadian Pacific construct the road, with a subsidy of \$10,000 a mile, from Lethbridge through the pass to Nelson. Later on it can be extended through the Boundary Creek country to Hope. In consideration of this the Canadian Pacific is to be asked to reduce its wheat rates in Manitoba and the Territories and to submit to maximum rates and maximum prices for coal carried to the smelters. The theory is that the route through the pass to Nelson will pay handsomely, hence the Canadian Pacific can afford to accept those conditions. Sir William Van Horne looks at the matter from a strictly business point of view. A subsidy of \$10,000 per mile for 325 miles would be \$3,250,000, representing at 4 per cent. a yearly grant of \$130,000. If the reduction asked for in the wheat rate should amount to more than \$130,000 per annum it is plain that he would really be expected to build through the pass for nothing at all in the shape of Government aid. Would the Government expect any other company to do so? If not, where is the equity of asking the Canadian Pacific to build it for nothing.

This is said to be Sir William's view of it. Meanwhile Mr. Greenway's project for bringing the proposed Duluth and North Dakota line into Manitoba will, if it goes through, cut in two the wheat rate between Winnipeg and Brandon and Lake Superior. The Canadian Pacific rate from Brandon to Fort William is 19 cents per 100 pounds; the new line offers to make a rate of 10 cents per 100 from Brandon to Duluth, and as Mr. Greenway can give it running powers over the Northern Pacific lines in Manitoba, this means an enormous gain to the farmers in the best of the wheat-growing districts.

The North Shore of Lake Superior.
It has been suggested that the Canadian Pacific should reduce its rate to Fort William to 10 cents; this, it is said, would preserve the trade for Canada. "We shall be glad," said a Canadian Pacific official to me, "to consider the advisability of reducing the wheat rate to 10 cents and of cutting other rates provided the Government chooses to put us on an even-keel with our competitors. How can it put us on an even-keel simply by assuming the dead-horse mileage that was constructed for political reasons. The Canadian people insisted upon having an all-Canadian route from the Ottawa to the Pacific. To get it the road had to be carried from the Ottawa to Port Arthur, a distance of 900 miles, through a region that may be rich some day if minerals are discovered, but which is as poor as a grindstone just now so far as its freight-producing capabilities are concerned. We cannot use these 900 miles in transporting wheat from Manitoba to the seaboard. At present prices it would not pay to haul the wheat over them. Consequently our haul ceases at Fort William though we have to operate the 900 miles the year round. I put it to anybody, is it fair to ask us to cut our rate to Fort William in two to meet the threatened competition of Mr. Greenway's scheme and yet expect us to go on working those 900 miles for the political well-being of Confederation?"

The construction of the political line along the north shore of Lake Superior was bound to "come back" at us. Sir David Macpherson condemned it as strenuously as Mr. Blake because it imposed heavier rates on Manitoba than Manitoba would have had to pay if commercial considerations alone were taken into account and the road commenced at Port Arthur or Winnipeg and carried west-

want. The Tory brethren declared that we could fly in the face of commercial considerations with impunity, but it is painfully apparent that they were mistaken. GATINEAU.

Nest-Building Fishes.
There are fishes that build nests just as birds do. Not long ago some of them were brought to this country from Japan, and you can buy a pair of them for a small price at any fancier's now. If he does not have them in stock he will get them.

The purchase is sure to be profitable, because the habits of these creatures are so remarkably interesting, and, unlike gold fish, they will breed in an aquarium or even in a glass globe. They produce three or four broods of young annually, so that the owner is likely to be able to make money disposing of the increase. In the land of the Mikado, to which they are native, they are called paradise fish.

The nests they make are very odd, indeed, being composed entirely of air bubbles. When the time for mating arrives the male fish undergoes a striking change in appearance. Ordinarily he is of a dull, silvery color, but now he exhibits stripes of red, blue and green, with streaks of brightest orange on the ventral fins. Such is the costume in which he goes a-wooing.

Later on the female proceeds to construct the family nest at the surface of the water. Swallowing air, she ejects it in the shape of bubbles, which are held and made permanent by glutinous capsules from a secretion in her mouth. Having got together in this way a sufficient mass of bubbles she proceeds to lay.

At this stage the female paradise fish seems always to be seized with a strange desire to gobble her own eggs. This she would inevitably do but for the watchfulness of the male, who prevents her, taking the eggs in his mouth and ejecting them beneath the mass of bubbles, to which they arise and find a resting place among them. Sometimes he will conduct his mate under the nest so that the eggs as they are laid may ascend to it. When laying is finished he keeps guard over the nest, attacking the female if she comes near. Meanwhile he busies himself in the making of fresh bubbles to take the place of those which chance to burst.

This performance is kept up for five days, at the end of which the young are hatched out. They cannot swim, but cling like little tadpoles to the bubbles. If one falls to the bottom, as happens now and then, the papa fish takes it in his mouth and disgorges it among the bubbles again. His watchfulness is continued until the little fishes are able to take care of themselves.

They grow fast in a glass globe or aquarium, attaining a length of three or four inches. They thrive best on chopped angle-worms, but raw beef cut fine will serve as a substitute. Apparently they are exclusive carnivorous. Care must be taken not to expose them to cold, which quickly kills them.—San Francisco Examiner.

News by Carrier Pigeons.
An experimental carrier pigeon service is to be established from the Farallone Islands and from outgoing vessels to this city. The Chamber of Commerce at its quarterly meeting yesterday decided to co-operate with Mr. Carlisle, who has offered fifty pairs of homing pigeons from the "Blue and Gold" lofts to begin the experiments with. The resolution by which the chamber committed itself to this venture was offered by Capt. Nelson, who spoke of the successful operation of a carrier service in the Hawaiian Islands. Forecast Official Hanuman was present and presented the advantages such a service would be to the Weather Bureau and through it to commerce. The Farallones are peculiarly well situated, he said, for an observation station. As soon as it could be demonstrated that regular communication could be maintained with them, he had no doubt that an observation station would be established there, and then it would be only a question of time when a submarine cable would be laid. Mr. Carlisle in his communication said pigeons could be trained to return from a distance of 150 miles at sea. In this way they could be made to carry important news both from outgoing and incoming vessels.—San Francisco Chronicle.

A Sister's Love.
A sister's love is one of the very sweetest flowers planted by God in the heart of a girl. It is born of filial sympathy and confidence, and ripens into a spiritual love different from any other affection. Powerful as is the influence of a mother, there have been innumerable cases where the presence of a sister's sweet and tender love, or the memory of a sister's holy affection, has been the saving grace of a brother's life. The sister's life in the home often formulates the brother's estimate of her sex. A sister can have a softening influence upon a brother where everything else fails. She raises his opinion of women by her actions toward him.

The Man for the Place.
Arctic Explorer—We want in our party only men who are thoroughly inured to hardships and extreme cold. What experience have you had that would warrant you in joining the expedition?
Applicant—I have just finished a course of lectures on explorations in search of the north pole.

Two.
Smith—Did you ever see two women yet who could agree about the car fare?
Brown—Yes. The conductor's wife and daughter.—Up to Date.

Cause and Effect.



"Ave yer 'eard Bill's landed for three years' ard labor?"
"What for?"
"Sneezin'."
"Wet yer givin' us? Sneezin'!"
"Well, 'e was crackin' a crib, an' 'e sneezed an' broke the blocks up!"

Not in the Soup.
Mrs. Boarden—How do you find the chicken soup, Mr. Boarder?
Mr. Boarder—I have no difficulty in finding the soup, madam, but I am inclined to think that the chicken will be able to prove an alibi.—Richmond Dispatch.

In Old Kentucky.
Reporter—What shall I say of this man who drank hisself to death?
City Editor—Say that he died a natural death, of course.—Truth.