

THE LEADER.

VOL. 17. NO. 11.

Thursday Evening, May 4, 1899.

LEGISLATIVE NOTES.

The recent session of the North-West Legislature was convened on 4th April and prorogued on the 29th of the same month; it comprised just twenty working days. The session was the shortest in the history of the North-West Assembly, excepting that memorable one cut short by proclamation of Governor Royal in August, 1892. While not a little noise had been made about the revolutionary tendencies of members of the new House, and not a little expectation created of "things to happen" when those members came face to face with the Government on the door of the chamber,—yet after all the noise and expectation the 1899 session will go on record as the most amicable legislative meeting yet held in the Territories. Only one feature of the Government's policy was seriously challenged,—and that, a comparatively insignificant proposal relative to village organisation. The budget was adopted without division and practically without debate. Not an item of the Estimates was objected to, the only criticism being that for certain services needing attention no provision was made. The single matter of administration against which a word of complaint was uttered was the case of the irrigation experimental station at Calgary; and on that point after the question had been threshed out the complainant, Mr. Bennett, virtually apologised for his attitude and urged in extenuation that he had been deprived of certain information which completely altered the complexion of the case.

Undoubtedly the most important legislation of the session was the extension of the Local Improvement system to thinly settled areas—legislation which will make amenable to the system and liable to taxation large areas of land the holders of which hitherto escaped contributions towards local improvement.

Together with Mr. McDonald, the member for North Qu'Appelle, THE LEADER had long urged action with respect of the education of deaf mutes and we are, as Mr. McDonald must have been, gratified that at last provision is made for dealing with the subject.

The Territorial Assembly has always had the knack of adopting important principles with the minimum of disturbance. The incorporation of two such principles mark the recent session. The eight-hour-day affecting workers in coal mines was proposed by Dr. DeVeber, member for Lethbridge, and unanimously adopted by the House. The other notable proposition came from Mr. McKay, of Prince Albert West, namely, to prohibit members of the Assembly resigning to accept positions under the Government. This proposal also was unanimously adopted; and hereafter no member of the Territorial Assembly will be eligible for any post under the local Government within the term for which he was elected to serve as a member.

The Calgary Herald we doubt not will have noted the "strong fight for life" made by the Territorial Government during the recent session.

An encouraging feature of the outlook for the summer fair to be held at Regina this year is that the agricultural community is evincing a keener interest than formerly. A number of farmers are subscribing to the fund for the general prize list as well as offering special prizes.

Now that the Assembly is prorogued and effectual contradiction would not likely overtake the yarn within the next eight or ten months, we respectfully suggest that the present is an appropriate time for The Standard to perpetrate one of its double-leaded concoctions headed "The Executive Probably Defeated."

In November last THE LEADER published a list of the members of the newly-elected legislature, classifying them respectively as government supporters and otherwise. The list has been a bone of contention with The Standard ever since. We have now had a session of the new House, and The Standard should be able to point out to its readers wherein The LEADER's list was astray. The only error revealed to us by the session was in respect of Mr. McKay whom we had placed in the Opposition column, and who rebelled against the lonesomeness of that position.

We extend fraternal greetings to "The West," the newest sister in the family of Regina journalism, which comes out neatly and nobly even if not too modestly. We congratulate the horny-handed farmer of this country on the uprising of another friend to comfort him in his orphange, soothe him in his tribulations, and scoop in his hard-earned dollar when the subscription bill falls due. And we reverently bow before the eternal altar of Truth on which assuredly stands the first George Washington in the ranks of circulation managers with his loop-holed legend—"Largest circulation in the Territories."

An incident in the legislature last Thursday furnished a striking illustration of the truth that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. With all the power of his remarkable eloquence the member for Calgary West (Mr. Bennett) assailed the arrangement made by the Government in respect of the Calgary experimental station. The member for East Calgary (Mr. Cross) followed, and, with absolutely no attempt at oratory, in quiet, business-like tone, he gave his view of the arrangement. The House was not merely affected, it was convinced. The effect of Mr. Bennett's declamation disappeared before Mr. Cross's quiet argument like so much chaff. Mr. Bennett realised the position and admitted it.

BUDGET STATEMENT
BY MR. ROSS.

Continued from Page 3.

never members of the House to have that little historical sketch of the early history of the Territories. There was no member in that House better qualified to give such a resume than the Territorial Treasurer because he had been connected with the legislature of the country since its earliest days. If was not always an easy task to deliver a budget speech, neither was it always easy to criticise it to one's liking. And it was more difficult on that occasion than usual to intelligently criticise the different items in the speech, and for two reasons. One was that they did not have as long a time for the perusal of the public accounts as they should have had. He concluded that those accounts should be laid upon the table as soon as a week or ten days before the budget is brought down. Then again, the accounts covered a long period—viz., sixteen months, which was a longer period than that usually covered in any other Assembly. Again, the Estimates practically were only placed on the table one day ago. Certainly they were received by members late on Saturday night, but Sunday was not the time to study the Estimates.

Mr. Hautain—Hear, hear. (Laughter.)

Dr. Brett was glad the Premier concurred in that view, for he (Dr. Brett) was sure there were a great many honourable gentlemen who could not be prevailed upon to study the Estimates of Sunday (Hear, hear, and laugh).

The result was that they were tied down to just one day before being called upon to come in the Estimates or to express an opinion on the different items. But there was also one reason which made it easier than usual to criticise the budget proposal this year, and that was that there were so few items. At no time since Estimates had been laid on the table had there been so few items as on this occasion. But while that made it easier in one way, it made it more difficult in another way to make up their minds whether these Estimates were such as they could easily concur in or whether they were such as they should object to or take a longer time for discussion and explanation before they concurred in them. It was true that additional information had been given to him by the hon. the Territorial Treasurer when he (Dr. Brett) had been called upon to come in the Estimates or to express an opinion on the different items. But there was also one reason which made it easier than usual to criticise the budget proposal this year, and that was that there were so few items. At no time since Estimates had been laid on the table had there been so few items as on this occasion.

He quite agreed with the remarks made by the Territorial Treasurer that afternoon when he stated that he would rather be censured for having expended money on his staff to get the work done than to be censured for neglecting to get the work done properly; and he was not going to carp because there was an extra employee here and there about the budget. He was not going to complain that the man who had assisted him was really required by all means let it be obtained. He had always sustained the Executive where they had employed the best talent they could find. He had always supported them, and he hoped he always would, in employing the very best men they could find, even if they had to pay very large salaries to get them. The principle he believed in was to employ the best men they could get and a sufficient number of them, and then to expect and demand good and efficient service at their hands. He had no fault, then, to find in reference to the staff, although it might be large. But what he might point out was that the item of civil government, as compared with the total sum expended, amounted to ten per cent. of the whole. In saying this he was not including the hon. the Commissioner in introducing the Statistic Labor Ordinance dwelt on the fact that the districts and the members of other parishes and the districts would form an excellent medium for this object. The hon. gentleman said that the question of getting statistics of the cattle, grain and produce of the Territories was a matter of great importance to the Territories.

Mr. Hautain—Hear, hear.

Mr. Brett, continuing, said that was two years ago, and he was not aware that any information on this important matter had been given to the public. He knew there were many people who were desirous of getting that information as to the country as a whole; they wished to get some statistics to show what the country was doing; they wished for statistics of some value that could be sent broadcast to the world, but they were unable to obtain those statistics. He repeated that the statement referred to had been made two years ago. He did not know how long it took to get the information. He knew it could not be done in a few weeks, but surely it could be done in a year, and certainly it ought to be done in less than two years. Had the House then any evidence that the government had carried out that portion of its duty in the manner they should do in reference to these important returns of cereals and cattle?

Then there were the vital statistics. He knew that many people might consider the Vital Statistics Ordinance an unimportant one to enforce, but he considered it a very important Ordinance. It was considered important in any other province, and although in the opinion of some, they were beginning the collection of these statistics very soon in their history yet he did not think him that they were doing anything a day too soon. They could not commence too soon, because if we were able to demonstrate from such returns that in this country we are free from disease than in other countries it would be a great incentive to immigration. It could not be thought that the bulk of the money was to be expended in this district or in that district on the completion of this bridge or that bridge was constructed by the hands of the Government and the Commissioner of Public Works chose to do. 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