

# "Glimpses of Parliament"

By CHARLES BISHOP

The possibility of the session of Parliament ending in two weeks and a half is entertained by some

optimists and with the prospect the Prime Minister himself is intrigued and the opposition leader, with certain reservations, is disposed to help; but this outlook is commonly regarded as little more than a pious hope. If the parties will agree, quietly, to pass everything, or drop everything not absolutely essential, it, of course, could be done but if so it will be a strange and astonishing procedure. In any event the session, of exceptional brevity, would likely conclude not later than the middle of April, permitting those who have to go, officially, to the coronation, or those who are going, on their own, to do so without the conscious feeling that public business has been neglected to facilitate their purpose. Nevertheless, the wish for reasonable expedition of everything seems to be common. The budget and probably some other things as well should be disposed of soon and other questions, to come later, will probably take less time than ordinarily they would.

At this week-end, the Prime Minister is in Washington and President Roosevelt's announcement that international relations would be discussed confirms the surmise previously published from Ottawa. "International relations," it is understood, cover not only any such matters as are outstanding between Canada and the United States but, more particularly, the world situation and views on this continent with reference to the disturbed and menacing condition abroad. For example, some internationalists find little

consistency in United States neutrality with the provisions of the Kellogg Pact, while trade interests also conflict with the neutrality principle. There is reason to believe that any discussion of trade between Canada and the States on the St. Lawrence seaway project will be subordinate to mutual discussion of the broader question.

Apart from this White House conference, the opinion prevails here that Mr. King's brief trip to the South is largely for a change and rest. He may give thought to questions to come before the Imperial Conference but any thought of them is likely to be preceded by such relaxation as is desirable for clearer thought. He has not gone with the equipment of a secretariat which is essential to much preparatory work.

Before the session concludes there will be a discussion on the Imperial Conference and what attitude, relating to it, is to be taken by Canada, especially on the position of defence. Nothing new is likely to be elicited. Already made abundantly clear, is the present government's idea that the conference will be a conference and nothing more. It will not commit any Dominion to anything. Whether the views are common or divergent, any plan which is suggested would, if acted upon, call for the antecedent sanction of the various parliaments. This will be the attitude in London of the government representatives, going from here, and they will be sufficiently numerous. Much comment on the agenda before the conference is improbable.

A "white paper" has been issued giving on each phase of the constitutional references, the respective findings of the Supreme Court of Canada and of the Privy Council. How it will come up is not certain but a full dress debate on this is being demanded. It is known that constitutionalists like Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett and Hon. C. H. Cahan have very definite views on the recent conclusions of the Privy Council, which they regard as opinions and nothing more and think susceptible of being reversed by the same tribunal on any concrete submission. There is also the question whether the noble lords have properly quoted relevant sections of the British North America Act, and if they have not, whether their opinions are based on faulty premises and whether amendments are necessary to clarify what is considered to be the original intent of the fathers in framing the fundamental law of the Canadian constitution. Strictly applied, it is already claimed, the opinions, or decisions, whichever they are, might affect the competence of the federal Parliament to contribute to anything which, like old age and blind pensions, for example, are, admittedly, the primary responsibility of the provincial authorities.

Discussion will also arise over the Foreign Enlistment Act. Some of the C.C.F. members think they find, in the provisions of one section of the bill, the banning of certain enlistments and not others even if the theater of conflict be

the same. They have gone to the trouble of getting legal advice.

The new law amending the Combines Act will pass the Commons but in the Senate amendments were killed once before and it is reported that a certain sharpening of knives is in progress for the present bill when it reaches that chamber.

Although there is precedent for change in details of the budget, no aggressive urge is apparent this year, and it is expected to pass as it is. There are varying reports about the transportation bill. Some would be prepared to drop it. The Senate leader wants to go ahead with it after certain amendments not destructive of the principle. The Canadian National capitalization is likely to pass after such amendments as will never relegate to obscurity the exact amount of public money or resources which have been invested in the huge enterprise.

The budget debate continued in the House all yesterday producing little out of the ordinary line. Hon. Grote Stirling of Yale, who used to be minister of national defence, devoted most of his time to a defence of the relief camp policy. He denied there had been any militarism in these establishments. A commission under the former government had found nothing of the sort. A commission under this government had reported fair treatment of the men. And the camps were formed not out of a "counsel of despair" as charged but by agreement with the provinces. Mr. Stirling paid tribute to General McNaughton and General Ashton.

What E. E. Perley, M.P., had said on Thursday about the wheat marketing policy was subscribed to by E. G. Hansell, Social Credit member for Macleod, who was irritated at the suggestion of C. E. Bothwell, Liberal of Swift Current, that all the resolutions of protest were of a standard type, emanating from one source.

John R. MacNicol, Conservative of Davenport, Toronto, made a highly apprehensive appraisal of the economic situation. He gave due warning to Parliament: "You are facing," he said, "a volcano; you are facing a cyclone; you are facing a disaster unless the Canadian people are put to work. They are not being put to work by the measures of this government."

Against this alarming argument was that of J. A. Glen, Liberal member for Marquette, that, since the Liberals came back, there had been more content and less disturbance among labor and a general betterment all round. Nevertheless, he conceded that unemployment was not a passing phase but something requiring long study, while a main difficulty was discovered in the disparity in income between different sections

of the country—prosperity in some and hard pulling in others. Unless something were done to eradicate this, he warned that Canada "could not survive."

Other speakers included Hon. Earl Lawson, who found a difference between Liberal promises and performances and gave some illustrations. He further said in part, apropos of concrete suggestions having been invited: "If you want to create jobs, give the grain-grower a fair share of the selling price of wheat; give industry a fair measure of protection; call the provinces together and get them to co-operate in minimum wages and maximum hours of labor and you will do more to make employment than any commission can ever do."

Mr. Johnston, Social Credit member of Bow River, charged discrimination against Alberta by the Dominion government. He suspected big powers in the East were adverse to the development of the oil resources of the province because there is a low tariff government. Mr. Lockhart, Conservative of Welland, went over the budget field but particularly stressed the argument that Canadian industry will be injured by the tariff policies of the administration.

W. A. Tucker, Liberal of Rosthern, while having views of his own on monetary policy, gave a certificate of character to the government, believing it "has accomplished more in sixteen months than any government we have had since Confederation." Conservatives, he said, were not weeping when farmers were getting 21 cents a bushel for wheat. Now, when he was getting over a dollar they "shed crocodile tears." He also spoke of the big profits of the textile companies and now a protest from the opposition leader about discussing a matter the subject of an investigation. Tucker said he had finished, anyway, with what he had to say in respect to that. In the trade agreement he saw advantage to all concerned.