

EVENTS OF THE YEAR

The first session of the eleventh Parliament of the Dominion of Canada was opened on January 20 and closed by prorogation on May 19 1909. During the session 154 measures were enacted, consisting of 37 public and 117 local and private acts. The public acts related chiefly to the formation of a Department of External Affairs and of a separate Department of Labour, to the conservation of natural resources, the sale of agricultural fertilisers and feeding stuffs, prevention of the payment of illicit or secret commissions, the raising of a public loan not exceeding \$50,000,000, the granting of a loan towards the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the increase of civil service salaries. The second session opened on November 11.

Chapter 13 creates a Department of External Affairs, and provides that the Secretary of State as head of the Department shall have the conduct of all official communications between the Government of Canada and the Government of any other country in connection with the external affairs of Canada, and shall be charged with such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Department by order of the Governor in Council in relation to such external affairs or to the conduct and management of international or intercolonial negotiations so far as they may appertain to the Government of Canada. Provision is also made for the appointment of a permanent staff, including an Under Secretary of State for External Affairs as deputy head of the Department.

By section 10 of the Conciliation act 1900 a Department of Labour was established, mainly to undertake the publication and collection of statistical and other information relating to the conditions of labour and to issue monthly the Labour Gazette. From its inception this Department has been under the charge of the Postmaster General, but owing to the rapid development of Canadian industries and the increasing importance of labour questions Parliament deemed it expedient to constitute a separate Department under the control of a Minister of Labour holding no other portfolio. This was effected in 1909 by the Labour Department act (chapter 22). The Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, M.P., who was Deputy Minister of Labour from 1900 until his resignation on September 21 1908, was appointed the first Minister of Labour under the new act.

The Commercial Feeding Stuffs and the Fertilisers acts are practically identical in their provisions, except that one (chapter 15) relates to commercial feeding stuffs and the other (chapter 16) to agricultural fertilisers. They are intended to afford greater security to farmers in the purchase of these commodities.