

## The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1920.

### "THE OPPOSITION'S POSITION."

A perusal of the article which appeared in the Daily Telegraph yesterday, under the above caption, leaves the average reader with the impression that the writer of it had recently been reading Mr. Punch's History of the Great War, and that so taken was he with the light and airy style of it, that he decided to adopt the same vein. There is just one difference, however. Mr. Punch is generally pretty sure of his ground. The Telegraph writer seemingly was not, for he had to fall back upon the Globe for support in the position he tried to take up.

The Telegraph, somewhat foolishly, refers to certain scandals which it says existed in the province in recent years. This is at any time rather dangerous ground for our contemporary to tread on. It mentions specifically the "Patriotic Pokota" scandal. In the only word which at all adequately describes the manner in which the so-called investigation into the matter was conducted. A real investigation was the last thing the Government wanted; what they wanted was a condemnatory report on some of their political opponents, so they hired the most unprincipled politician in the whole province, a man known to have a long standing grudge against the men whose names he was asked to "investigate," to do the work they wanted, and they got it done to their satisfaction. The Telegraph is right; it was a scandal.

Then there was the so-called "Timber Limit" scandal, in which certain moneys were collected from the lumbermen on the solicitation of the late Mr. W. H. Berry. Well, we don't know that we would go so far as to say that it was a scandal for Mr. John E. Moore, the Telegraph's chief writer, to sit in his office and receive the cash as it was handed in, and obligingly cash the cheques and drafts. Reprehensible would perhaps be a sufficient strong expression under the circumstances. Still, if the Telegraph professes to use the word scandal, we have no objection.

Then, again, the Telegraph refers to the Valley Railway scandal. Right once more. The sum of \$19,400 was paid to three so-called directors for doing nothing for two years, and, in addition, they received also \$7,170 under the head of expenses. Their "office staff" received over \$5,000 more. These amounts are all outside the payments made to the men who actually looked after the work. Yes, scandal is a good word to use in this connection.

There are some scandals the Telegraph apparently overlooked in its airy resume of political affairs. There is the case of Mr. William Currie, whom Mr. Commissioner Friel reported that "the Province was defrauded out of a substantial sum in the stamp-ages due from the Company of which Mr. Currie was the manager, and that he was in a position to have prevented it." This substantial sum was \$4,000. Is it anything but a scandal that the Premier permits this supporter of his to retain this money, and allows the province to be defrauded? When the late A. J. H. Stewart, of Gloucester, was caught in certain delinquencies, Premier Clarke told him to get out, and the seasonal indemnity due him was sequestered and applied to repay the money he had withheld from the province. Compare this method of procedure with that adopted by Premier Foster, who not only has not attempted to recover any of this \$4,000 from Mr. Currie, but actually paid him the full seasonal indemnity, together with an additional \$100 that the members were paid on account of the greatly increased cost of hotel accommodation while in Fredericton, when he had never set foot in the city during the whole season. How would the public describe this sort of thing if it is not a scandal?

As to its merits, and the wonderful

politics the Telegraph says it has in view, these can be dealt with later on.

### COLLECTING THE TAXES.

A number of business houses in St. John are applying the provisions of the new so-called luxury tax on all sales which they make. This is in accordance with the verbal announcement of the Minister of Finance in delivering his Budget speech. No doubt these merchants are quite correct in the attitude which they have adopted, for it was apparently the intention of the Minister that these proposals should become effective immediately. A considerable number of other merchants in St. John—and this is unquestionably true of other cities, towns and villages as well—are not applying the provisions of this new tax to their sales, nor do they intend so acting—according to present expressions of opinion—until they have been officially notified and instructed as to the methods of procedure. Insofar as customs duties are concerned the Finance Department in connection with other governmental departments is in a position to apply the new tariff the moment it is announced, but such a condition does not exist with respect to ordinary merchandising. Up to the present all we have had in this or any other community is a condensed telegraphic report of the Budget speech delivered by the Finance Minister, which condensation was sent out by the Canadian Press to its subscribers, or by individual newspaper correspondents at Ottawa to their respective papers. With the exception of isolated cases, merchants have not been instructed by any Government official as to their duties in applying this tax. Newspaper reports of a Parliamentary speech are their only authority, and while it is generally supposed that—despite whatever action may hereafter be taken by Parliament on these proposals—the new taxes should be collected from the moment they were announced, merchants who are not yet making such collections have much to justify them in their attitude. A man may not be a newspaper reader, yet still conduct an important business. It is possible that none of the publications reaching his town or village have contained information as to how he would apply to his particular business covering those tax proposals. And in St. John at any rate certain of those who are not imposing the luxury taxes contend that they have no business to charge customers such taxes with nothing better to go on than a newspaper report of an address delivered at Ottawa.

Uncertainty seems to exist as to whether the proposals contained in the Budget speech may or may not be modified by Parliament, but whatever the outcome, it is only right to feel that the Finance Department at Ottawa should before now have taken steps to notify all merchants, either individually or in a general way by widespread publication of an official proclamation, that these luxury taxes are applicable from a certain date. It is doubtful if many of the country stores in New Brunswick and other provinces are collecting these taxes. Certainly they are not to the same extent as prevails in the larger cities, where newspapers are more common. And in St. John, today, conditions exist which are unfair to the community generally because of the uncertainty which has been created by this Budget proposal. Men in similar lines of business are acting in direct opposition to each other. Some are collecting the luxury tax and losing business, for the reason that their competitors are refusing to make such collections, and the latter are naturally securing the orders.

The situation is one which should be cleared up with the least possible delay.

### SIR ARTHUR CURRIE.

He is a younger looking man than his pictures make him appear. Undoubtedly, despite some years of strenuous military experience, he is more at home in evening dress than in uniform. Showing no effects whatever of the intense nervous strain to which he has been subjected, but perfectly at ease under any circumstances, Sir Arthur Currie has made a decidedly favorable impression on St. John. We had read of him, had heard of him from the boys who served overseas, and were inclined to expect something in the shape of an imposing martinet. The realization is different. He is very much of a human being with quite a twinkle in his eyes—those eyes which have apparently the faculty of seeing through things. And in the recollection only of his recent military career, we are apt to be surprised at his unassuming eloquence, forgetting in the enthusiasm of the moment that he was not always a soldier. But perhaps that phase of the visit with which St. John is honored is the complete self-effacement which characterizes his every word and act. The Commanding Officer was nothing—the Canadian Soldier was all. And in that constant tribute to the men with whom he was associated

General Currie has won the esteem of those who have heard him or have met him on this occasion. He is honored by Canada for his work overseas. He will be esteemed as well for his demeanor at home, and while we hope that the brief visit to this old town will remain to him a pleasant memory, he may take away the assurance that he has not only deepened the pride which all had felt in the work of our men overseas, but, as well, given us something to ponder over in our more serious moments.

### OUR GROUND FOR CRITICISM.

Speaking in Union Club last evening, General Currie urged his hearers to forget provincialism, to think as Canadians, to put aside petty sectional prejudices, and to remember that we are all one people. "In your local affairs," he said, "if I send down here to represent a man from Manitoba do not complain that he is a Westerner, and that you should have been given one of your own men. If in Vancouver I appoint a New Brunswicker, I do not want the people on the coast to complain that such a man is undesirable merely because he happens to come from New Brunswick." These are not the exact words, but are near enough for the purpose. And evidently General Currie has been hearing something of the criticism which has marked Ottawa's administration of military affairs in this district. Were there fewer "ifs" in the way it would be much easier to follow his suggestion. We in New Brunswick would never complain of Western men being sent here, did it happen that Eastern men were sent elsewhere. But it would pay General Currie, who has been absent from Canada for a long time, to go through the records either here or in Ottawa, and find out how many men have been sent to this district to fill positions which rightly belong to our own citizens, how many of our own have been dismissed from service and employment to make room for these visitors from other provinces, how many New Brunswickers have been refused positions on the ground that other men in Ontario and the West were insisting upon appointments. And then the General might, if time permitted, his search made of the records, to ascertain whether or not a single New Brunswicker soldier has ever been given a position in another province; if so, who and when. And, for a finish, glance over the lists of those now drawing salary in Military District No. 7 and see if there is even one on the register who claims this province as his home. The information the General can obtain by such a course will explain fully the criticism of which he presumably has heard.

### WHAT OTHERS SAY

**Humor of the Country.**  
 (Farm and Home British.)  
 A north country miller, noted for his keenness in financial matters, was in a boat trying his best to get across the stream which crossed his mill. The stream was flooded, and he was taken past the point at which he wanted to land, while further on misfortune again overtook him, to the extent that the boat was upset. His wife, realizing the danger he was in, ran frantically along the side of the stream, crying for help in a pitiful voice, when to her sheer amazement she was suddenly brought to a standstill by her husband yelling out:  
 "If I'm drowned, Molly, don't forget that flour's gone up two shillins a sack!"

**Mennonite Education.**  
 (Saskatoon Star.)  
 It should be to the mind that the Mennonites did not have to send their children to the public schools. If they had provided them with instruction equal to the public school standards, there would have been no criticism and no legal action. But the state long ago assumed the right to declare that every child should receive an adequate minimum of education, and it will not accept this that the Mennonites are determined to leave. It is of course only the Old Colony Mennonites who are leaving. The great majority of the sect are satisfied to accept the law, and as a matter of fact welcome good schools for their children. The few irreligious Mennonites really do not merit the sympathy which is being lavished upon them in certain quarters.

### SHORT OF BREATH Could Hardly Walk Without Resting.

When you go to a physician to be examined for any heart trouble one of the first questions he asks is: "Are you short of breath?" Now, when the heart becomes affected, there ensues a feeling of a choking sensation, a shortness of breath, palpitation, throbbing, irregular beating, smothering sensation, dizziness and a weak, sinking, or gaseous feeling of oppression and anxiety.

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## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAGE

THE WORMS IMITATION—A PLAY.  
 Scene. A worm and his wife on a rock alongside of a river.  
 Worm. Hay, I think we better move off of this rock.  
 His wife. Wat for? We bin living hear for 5 years now and—  
 Just won Im getting use to it you want to move somewere else.  
 I never saw anybody so full of foolish ideas.  
 Worm. Well suppose I fall in the river some day and some fish eat me up. This rocks too near the river, thas wats worry-ing me.  
 His wife. O go on, shut up. Youre enuff to make a body nervous jest lissenin to you.  
 ACK 2.  
 Scene. The same.  
 Worms wife. Wat in the world are you doing, getting in all those funny shapes? If you get roomatism wy dont you say so.  
 Worm. Roomatism uthing. Im practicing giving a imitation of a worm on a fish hook, so in case I fall in the fish will be afraid to eat me.  
 His wife. Good nite!  
 ACK 3.  
 Scene. The same.  
 Worm. Help! Im falling in the river. Well, heens wate I give my imitation.  
 Fish. O heer comes a funny shape worm. Herryay!  
 Worms wife. Look at that fish eating my husband. It must of bin too dum to know wat the imitation was supposed to be.  
 The End.

### THE LAUGH LINE

Up to Now.  
 "A wand'ring minstrel I—  
 A thing of shreds and patches,"  
 warbled Nanki-Poo.  
 "And overalls so cheap and fashion-  
 able!" giggled Yun-Yun.  
 Galloping Dominoes.  
 Sam—Ah done heard da dey fine  
 Columbus's bones.  
 Ezra—Lawsd! Ah never knowd dat  
 he was a gambler! men—Columbia  
 Jester.  
 Men Are So Stupid.  
 "I thought Mrs. Grabooh was quite  
 affable just now," remarked Mr. Daw-  
 wats.  
 "Oh, you men!" exclaimed Mrs.  
 Grabooh in profound disgust. "Such  
 obtuseness!"  
 "Why, what's the matter, my dear?"  
 "Couldnt you see that hateful wom-  
 an just ogged condescension and  
 flaunted her costly furs in my face?"  
 I could have boxed her ears!"—Bir-  
 mingham Age-Herald.  
 False Truth.  
 "Do you know, they say you dye  
 your hair?"  
 "It's false!"  
 "Ah! I know that!"  
 Too Damp for Comfort.  
 After their long-talked-of trip  
 abroad, the Browns returned to Mud-  
 come, to retail their experiences to  
 their admiring and envious friends.  
 Among their visitors one day was  
 the vicar, a worthy old gentleman.  
 When he had heard the oft-told tale  
 of the Browns' holiday, he asked his  
 host:  
 "And what did you think of Venice?"  
 "Venice? Venice?" murmured Mr.  
 Brown. Then he turned to his wife:  
 "Mary, did we go to Venice?"  
 "Well, we did just stop there," re-  
 plied Mrs. Brown pompously. "but  
 don't you remember that there was a  
 flood on, so we didn't leave the sta-  
 tion?"  
 Put Away.  
 "Norah, where are the refreshments  
 left over from the party? Did you  
 put them away, as I told you?"  
 "Shure, I did, ma'am, an' I can tell  
 ye I enjoyed 'em."—Boston Transcript.

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