

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH

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Semi-Weekly Telegraph

ST. JOHN, N. B., JUNE 6, 1908.

CARDINAL LOGUE AND THE EMPIRE

It is no more necessary that the shoe-maker should stick to his last than that the prelate should refrain from dogmatizing about affairs temporal and more especially things political.

So far, so good. But we read that Cardinal Logue, wandering from those subjects upon which he may properly claim to speak with some authority, has now conjured up a vision of the downfall of the British Empire.

Half a dozen. And the president is not one of them. Nor is Taft. He is a copy of Roosevelt in vigor and honesty, but he will not fight in the open and make the people think as Roosevelt has done.

WHAT IS THE MATTER IN THE UNITED STATES?

Mr. Lincoln Steffens thinks there is a question before the United States bigger than the national parties, bigger than currency or tariff, bigger than war. It is a moral, not a material question, but it comprehends all the material issues.

The time has come to discuss the causes of our American corruption and crimes. We have the facts. For years now investigators have been bringing forth the facts, and there should and there shall be no interruption of the inquiry.

"He has money, yes, but what has the money cost him? Cruel lines in his strong face; soft spots in his once mighty body; on his conscience regrets that make him walk the floor, and tears that prompt him to run. His home? He has none—only houses, several houses. His wife is

and the Americans will have no peace of soul until they are answered. DR. PUGSEY, THEN AND NOW Dr. Pugsey, when he comes to discuss the future of the Central Railway, is but the shadow of his former self. The Pugsey who used to call upon his merry men in the Legislature to vote another half million for the Central—and get it—had never a doubt about the years to come.

But while he thinks they are beginning to do it, and are willing when they see clearly what the matter is, he finds they have no leader yet. He asked Mr. Roosevelt and found that Mr. Roosevelt sees the symptoms and is treating them but not the disease itself.

"But like the people, the president has, and has had, no consistent policy. He knows it. He says so himself.

"I know what I want to do now; and I know what I'd like to do next. But after that, I don't know."

"Not only are his opinions like those of the American people, but his very state of mind is like theirs. And that is the state of mind we must get over. Which likewise he sees.

"We must, as a people, grasp the general problems underlying our particular problems. But how? And we must fight knowingly the war that is on, for justice and right, not only these many, many battles. But how? That is his attitude. "Isn't it typical of us, as a people? Look over the country. What are people doing, separately, everywhere? Like the president, they are hitting at heads, striking at evils. Who is looking for that Evil which is the source of all our superficial evils? No one. We all are fighting the consequences, not the causes of our corruption.

Dr. Pugsey's repeated assurances about the Central, mindful as they are of the sum total these assurances have cost them, what is their amazement when they read Dr. Pugsey's latest utterances in regard to this costly and unfinished railroad? Confronted in Parliament with a despatch intimating that the Central is unfit for heavy traffic because the gradients greatly exceed those essential to economical operation of heavy trains, and asked directly by Mr. Crockett, M.P., to say what, if anything, he knows about the transfer of the Central, the cocksure Pugsey of the bond-issuing and campaign-promise period disappears and there rises in his stead a dubious and bewildered gentleman, a mere ghost of the man we knew, who obviously possesses no convincing knowledge as to the intention of the G. T. P. in regard to the New Brunswick road.

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DISQUALIFIED

The Toronto News says the Speaker of the House of Commons should declare Sir Frederick Borden's seat vacant. It quotes the law and apphes it. This is the relevant section: "No person, directly or indirectly, alone or with any other, by himself or by the interposition of any trustee or agent, holding or enjoying, undertaking, expressed or implied, with or for the government of Canada on behalf of the officers of the government of Canada, for which any public money of Canada is to be paid, shall be eligible as a member of the house of commons, or shall sit or vote in the said house."

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CONCERNING SLANG

The Royal Society of Canada last week considered the question of embarking on a crusade against slang, but decided after an interesting discussion not to devote itself to what seemed a colossal task.

The prevalence of slang is very distasteful to many people, and yet the habit grows. It receives encouragement from unexpected quarters. On a Pittsburg platform on Monday evening, an evangelist, addressing a body of Presbyterian ministers, informed them that few ministers today are anything but stiffs and salary-quacks, and many of them were qualified candidates for the "fanny-house."

The subject of slang was discussed in a very interesting manner in a recent issue of the Boston Transcript. We quote: "If the slang of today is the correct speech of tomorrow, what language will children speak a generation hence?"

Will it be the English of George Meredith or the English of George Ade? Shall we talk in the flowery hyperbole of the days of which our newspapers of today, and even our books, are filled, or must we be content with the speech that has satisfied many generations of our forefathers? As we saunter along in enjoyment of the invigorating spring air on a bright Sunday morning, whether we have been listening to the words of the preacher or merely taking our Sabbath pleasure in the open, shall we say to our children, "You kids like along and we will follow?" Of course it will be needless to express ourselves in such grandiloquent phrase as "Children, journey home and behave yourselves decorously," for the youth of today would be ill-mannered enough to look at us as if we were speaking of a foreign land.

As a matter of fact, a little slang is an excellent thing, but in the present era of slang more than the smallest quantity is a good deal too much. The English language may fairly be said to be the most picturesque and most expressive in the world, and it does not need the verbiage of the alms, or even the catch-words and catch-phrases of the street, to add to its vigor and variety. As a rule, the use of slang is indicative more of paucity of thought and idea than of a susceptibility to the humorous and the graphic. If we tell our friend to "get on his job," "to get into himself," "to get busy," "to get a move on," or any one of the hundred other things we certainly reveal our tendency to move with the tide of the hour, but at the same time we clearly show that we are more imitative than original.

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It does not provide that he shall or shall not get any personal pecuniary gain because of the agreement. Sir Frederick's defence of himself, therefore, is not to the point. He secured the subsidy for a private company which he assisted to organize, therefore he is disqualified and his seat should be declared vacant by the speaker of the House of Commons."

THE CLOSURE

The Sun Wednesday quoted extensively, but not quite extensively enough, from the Montreal Gazette in favor of aborting the debates at Ottawa. Said the Sun: "The Montreal Gazette, which, despite its traditional conservatism—or perhaps because of that—finds it hard at times to restrain its impatience with the present management of the Conservative party, admits frankly that existing conditions at Ottawa indicate the need of applying some restriction to debates of the House of Commons in the past will tend to convince them that the government is right."

The Sun then reproduced a part of the Gazette's editorial, but not this part: "When closure is proposed in Canada, however, if it is to be accepted with favor, it will have to be proposed by a government with a better record in business capacity than that now in power. Freedom of debate should not be curtailed for the convenience of incompetent ministers who have not given Parliament in proper shape and order the business it is expected to discuss."

In the foregoing paragraph the Gazette expresses its opinion that the present government would not be justified in applying the closure under the existing circumstances. Since the Sun was using the Gazette as an authority upon the issue of the hour at Ottawa it might better have quoted the only paragraph in the Gazette's article which was wholly relevant.

The present government would not, be talking about closure if it had not called for legislation which justified the opposition in resorting to obstruction. The minority would be false to its trust if it did not resist the worst clauses of the Aylesworth bill. Sir Wilfrid himself was at one time willing to amend the bill substantially, and that attitude betrayed his conviction that certain clauses in the measure were not justifiable.

If there is delay the nature of the government's course is responsible. If resistance is not proper on this occasion no right as well as any government measure, no matter how iniquitous. Already obstruction has had good results. It has fixed public attention upon the injustice of the government sought to fasten upon the provinces. The people have given the matter much attention. They have examined the case all the more keenly because of the scandals which have betrayed the character of the administration that now proposes to control the vote of electors whom it fears to give a free hand.

As for the closure, the Montreal Herald (Lab.) tells the Liberals it is out of the question. Replying to Mr. Sifton's organ, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Herald says: "The Free Press urges that the closure should be applied as in England. That remedy even if it were desirable, is not practicable. The opposition could talk almost as long over the several stages required to change the rules of the house as they can over items of supply. It would take months to change the rules."

The Charlottetown Guardian (Ind.) points out that obstruction is not new in Canadian politics, and that the Liberals once practiced it for three months—over the franchise bill of 1885. The Guardian serves up the facts impartially for the benefit of both parties, saying in part: "The present hold-up at Ottawa and the comments thereupon to recall the old proverb about the difference as to whose ox is gored. In 1896 the Liberals were in opposition. Parliament met on January 2 and could not sit after April 28 when it would expire by effluxion of time. During that session the Liberal opposition held up the Remedial Bill from February 11 till April 15 when the government was forced to withdraw it. Twelve days later, on April 27, Sir Mackenzie Bowell resigned the premiership and Sir Charles Tupper became premier. It was impossible to have the necessary supplies voted before the dissolution which followed immediately. There were loud Tory protests then against the hold-up, minority rule and all that sort of thing, just as there are now Liberal protests on the same grounds. The country did not condemn the hold-up then, but returned the opposition to power. We are not defending either party, but pointing out a parallel. We merely point out that both parties have played the hold-up game and each has condemned the other for doing it."

"For that matter the Liberal Opposition had before held up the franchise bill in the session of 1885 for three months."

It is now claimed that the first man killed in the Civil War in the States was Corp. Sumner H. Needham, a native of Norway (Me.), who was in Lawrence (Mass.) when the war broke out, enlisted in the 6th Massachusetts regiment and was killed during the regiment's march through Baltimore.

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