

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 1920.

THE RAILWAY ESTIMATES.

The nationalization of the Canadian Railways appears likely to have most expensive results, for, according to the Minister of Railways, the loss on operation during the past year has amounted to \$47,000,000. Of this amount \$6,500,000 was incurred on the Canadian Northern, and \$7,500,000 on the Intercolonial and Transcontinental. In addition, there were fixed charges to be met amounting to \$23,000,000. During the year, we are told, the operating expenses increased from \$84,000,000 to \$108,000,000, this being largely due to the increase of wages under the McAdoo award. Out of every dollar earned, seventy-eight cents went in wages to the employees. Despite the unfavorable balance, it seems that the freight earnings for the year show an increase in excess of \$2,500,000, although there was a heavy falling off in the amount of freight handled, due to a considerable extent to the cessation of transportation of war materials. Had the volume of freight handled continued on the same scale as the previous year, the earnings from that source would have shown an increase of \$7,500,000 instead of \$2,500,000 only.

During the year 11,500,000 passengers were carried, an increase of about 1,250,000. As a result, the passenger earnings increased from \$14,000,000 to a little less than \$22,000,000, of which about \$1,500,000 is due to the ten per cent increase in the passenger rates. Wages to employees amounted to \$73,000,000. In 1914 the average wage per year of the employees was \$700; at the present time it is \$1,447.

In order to bring the equipment up to date, and to take proper care of the traffic, a large number of new locomotives and a very considerable addition to the other rolling stock have been ordered. Under all these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that requests should be forthcoming for a further increase in rates. There are only two ways by which the expenditures can be kept within the revenue, either by an increase in rates, or an increase in the amount of business. There does not seem to be at the present time any very bright prospect for much increase in business, so that the only other alternative must be relied on. Concerning this, the Minister asks whether it would be better to grant this increase, or to continue the present rates, giving customers no excuse to complain, until conditions improve. He adds that if the present rates are to be continued, it must be expected that a deficit will be recorded each year for some years yet to come. The decision on this matter must rest with the House, and it will be interesting to follow the debate as it progresses.

A TAX ON LUXURIES.

In Canada there is one source of revenue for Dominion purposes that might be made more productive. That is special taxation on luxuries. As war revenue measures, Sir Thomas White had a special tax put on automobiles produced in this country, and had other imposts on a few articles that might be deemed luxuries. But no attempt has been made to institute any wholesale imposition of taxes on the general run of what are distinct luxuries, to be collected from the manufacturer or merchant. The United States, France, and even Britain, in a few particulars have tried this source of revenue, with varying success, but at present in Canada little effort is being made to utilize for public revenue purposes the wave of extravagant private spending.

The fact has to be accepted that the high cost of living is putting on the masses of people about all the burden they can bear. If a married man's income is above \$2,000 a year, he pays Dominion income tax on the excess. He pays municipal income tax. His rent or his property taxes on his home eat up a large part of his income. No man need pay the customs duties on luxuries unless he chooses to do so. If he does not buy the goods he does not pay the tax. The tremendous importations of luxuries from the United States, amounting to at least a quarter billion dollars a year, show that the duties are insufficient to prevent widespread extravagance in indulging in these. The heavy importations mean that still further imposts can be put on the commodities purchased only by people of means without forcing such a decrease as would destroy the revenue-producing feature of the tax. The method would require careful handling, but the principle of selecting the luxury importations for further taxation is sound. It might be that, in some cases, an excise tax on similar production in Canada would be found necessary to counter-balance tariff changes.

The need in this country is more public economy. Municipalities are running up their debts. Expenses are generally increasing. The enormous increase in visible paper money and credit has created a spending power that is rapidly heading us toward a period of drastic retrenchment. The public policy of this country must be

one of Government economy, and such balancing of the inevitable heavy taxation as will keep the main industries of the country free to go full blast. That is, the masses of workers should be encouraged to economize, and producers employing them to expand enterprise. The check and added burden should be laid on those who would increase the general difficulty by inordinate wasteful spending.

NEW FRANCHISE BILL STANDS THE TEST.

Montreal Herald. The Government must be given credit by all fair minded persons for coming successfully out of the severe ordeal of criticism in the debate on the second reading of the Franchise Bill. There were a hundred critical eyes scanning the measure on the look out for a "joker" somewhere in it and failed to find one. There was one possible exception, to which attention had been drawn in these columns a few days before. There was danger that the new period of naturalization of ten years for those who had been enemy aliens might be held to apply to persons who had been naturalized and who had exercised the franchise prior to 1917. Mr. Meighen said such was not the intention, and promised to frame an amendment to be proposed in committee making that point clear.

This amendment, and indeed each and every clause, will be closely scrutinized in committee, where the restraint of debate with the Speaker in the chair is removed, but the main thing is that the principle of the measure has met with the approval of the House, and amendments to perfect the bill have been invited by the Minister who introduced it.

Those Dutch manufacturers who are planning to introduce wooden shoes into the United States and Canada may have to send over Dutchmen to wear them. Sabots were worn in parts of Quebec, at certain times of the year as recently as a score of years ago, and there may be some in use yet. Hand-made wooden shoes were a common sight in the Bonsecours market in those days, and so were wooden legs of the unbending variety. Both are out of style, with the old water-bucket yoke that was employed by farmers as near Montreal as Boucherville. Perhaps the Hollanders are counting on the rising cost of boots, which is really alarming, to drive ordinary Canadians into using wooden shoes. The sabots at least have the merit of solidity, which cannot be said of all the boots and shoes that are being sold today at unprecedented prices.

The Annual Convention of the New Brunswick Fruit Growers' Association opens today in Fredericton. This is a young and energetic society which is doing much to improve the horticultural industry in the Province. No Province in Canada is better adapted for the production of most kinds of fruit than this is, and the steady growth both in the quantity and quality of the fruit produced, which has been so apparent in the last few years is due to the increased interest taken in the industry since Mr. A. G. Tournay took charge of it. The extraordinary work he has done shows that the late Government made no mistake when they appointed him to the position of Chief Horticulturist.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a communication from the Rev. Thomas Marshall, of Fairville, Vice-President of the N. B. Temperance Alliance. The only portion of it calling for comment is the last paragraph, with regard to which we may say that when Mr. Marshall knows as much about those inspectors' expense accounts as the writer of the head notes that he objects to does, he will then be in a position to discuss them intelligently. At present he is not.

Dr. Roberts' views on the subject of a Greater St. John will probably meet with the approval of most of its citizens, who will, however, wish that the honorable gentleman had been able to point out with equal facility a method which might be said to promise some prospect of his ideas being carried out. Most of the citizens would, we fancy, be satisfied to take something less than he suggests if they could only get it.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Something Wrong. (Salt Lake Telegram.) An English medium says that beer is popular in heaven. Possibly some departed spirit gave her the wrong number.

Fond Dream. (Omaha World-Herald.) Our idea of the millennium is a time when a London Parliament will draw up an Irish Home Rule bill that will please both Belfast and Dublin.

Nobody Loves the Turk. (Chicago Ledger.) Rents are said to be increasing rapidly in Constantinople. If they just go up to where the Turks will move.

rather than pay an international problem will be solved.

Great Chance Missed. (Toronto Star.) One is inclined to believe as a legal journal, The Docket, recently said, of or pertaining to, and concerning "the redundant terminology, superfluous nomenclature, excessive wordiness, and abundant casuistry of law, equity, jurisprudence, or legal science, be it stated, affirmed, and declared that the purpose, aim, intent, design, end, effect, and consequence, thereof, therefrom, thereon, and thereon is completely, entirely, totally, and perfectly to be fuddle, puzzle, bewilder, confuse, nonplus, and mystify the layman's intellect, understanding, reason, and mind."

So that is to be regretted that the Legislature, when it had the chance, did not codify all the laws it could lay its hands on that day when the lawyers were absent.

An Astounding Condition.

(Toronto Star.) The truth must come home to the American mind that there must be something very far wrong with a constitution and system of government which has made possible such a series of performances as the U. S. has shown in certain terms of settlement and safeguards for the future. He presented himself as an absolute authority, and secured the assent of other nations to terms and terms to him. After the other nations had assented he returned home, and the Senate repudiated him and the demands he had made the country and committed all Europe. Eight months ago a treaty was submitted to the Senate. It is only rejected now the waste of the eight gravest months in history?

And how now?

A BIT OF VERSE

A PLEA.
 Let me remember through the day
 To play the friend whenever I may;
 Let me be glad that I can bear
 My portion of life's round of care;
 Let me in its hour, when I am
 To rest in sweet content at night.

Let me remember, where I go,
 To make no honest man my foe;
 Let me press on, nor leave behind
 For those who follow me to find,
 One sign of hatred or of shame
 To scar my labor or my name.

Keep me from envy free, I pray,
 Of those who tread a smoother way;
 Teach me to use what I possess;
 Of gold and joy and happiness
 Without one discontented sigh
 That other men have more than I.

Let me remember that I may
 Perform some needed task today;
 May, with the best of all I possess,
 Brighten the life of one with less;
 And through this day of joy and strife
 Be worthy of the gift of life.

THE LAUGH LINE

The average man has a lot of get-rich-quick ideas up his sleeve, which when going nearly always go wrong.

Now is the time for all economical men to sit the ashes and bank the home fire free.

Doing Him an Injustice?
 Mrs. Gauding—No, I don't care much for Mr. Smythe. He always seems to be yawning when I speak to him.

Wily Minister.
 Said the wily minister before the collection was taken up, "Those who are in debt need not put anything on the plate." The collection was double the usual amount.

What It Really Is.
 "Jack is perfectly devoted to that blonde." His family thinks it is a case of hypnosis. "Huh! That's more like chemical attraction."—Boston Transcript.

Try This in Your Coffee Pot.
 From a magazine—Then she boiled two potatoes which she found in one corner of an empty bag and made a pot of coffee.

A country clergyman prayed, "Oh, Lord, double Thy power. Thou hast learned from the papers of our recent and grave afflictions."

Queen Alexandra has sent her annual subscription of five guineas to the British Home and Hospital for incurables, Streatham, of which she is the patroness.

Proving It—
 There was a sign upon the fence, The sign was "PAINT."
 And everybody that went by, Sinner or saint,
 Put out a finger, Touched the paint,
 And as they wiped their finger tips "It is," they said.

When They Growl.
 No one considers the high cost of pleasure, but after the dancing they growl when the fiddler asks for pay. —Atlanta Constitution.

Electricity Saves Timber.
 English scientists have decided that passing electricity through freshly cut timber makes it more resistant against decay and fungus growths.

Why Not?
 "I was a trifle embarrassed when her mother came into the parlor."
 "Wait, the girl was singing 'Kiss Me Again.' And I hadn't kissed at all, don't you know." —Courier-Journal.

Modern Weddings.
 The bride no longer swears that she'll obey,
 Nor does the groom with worldly goods endow,
 The bride—because she wants her own sweet way,
 The groom—because he ain't got 'em anyhow. —F. D. D.

Benny's Note Book

—BY LEE PAPE—

Yesterday I was wawking throo the dining room without any speeshil reason, and wat did I see on the side bord but a big lemmun merrang pie about 2 inches thick, me thinking, G, gosh, G. And I looked at it a while wishing I was eating it, and then I stuck my little finger in the merrang part to see how long it would take to get to the lemmun part thinking, Gosh, it made a hole.

And I licked my finger and went out of the dining room, thinking, G, that's a heck of a way to leave a lemmun merrang pie, with a finger hole in it. And I went back agen and looked at the hole, thinking, Maybe I better cut out the whole peeces and eat it, a pie with a piece out looks a darn site better than a pie with a finger hole in.

And I cut out the slice with the hole in it and ate it, talsting swell, and the empty space in the pie looked about twice as big as wat the slice did, and I went upstairs and mia was in her room darnin' holes out of socks, and I sed, Ma, can I have a slice of that lemmun merrang pie before supper?

Do you ever think of anything.
 Why not, for pity sake? sed ma.

Yes ma, I sed. And ma dident say anything, and I sed, Can I, ma?

No sed ma, and I sed, Aw G, ma, why not?
 Because I say no, sed ma.

Being a reason without any argument to use agensit it, and after a while I sed, Well I dont think I want any pie for supper, ma.

Why not, for pity sake? sed ma.
 Because I had my slice, I sed.

Well, sed ma, you take the cake.
 Wich I take the pie, enyways.

Eggs Five Cents Per Dozen.

Pride fixing can be dated as far back as the fourth century, when Diocletian placed the price of eggs at 5 cents a dozen.

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SUCCESSFUL SALE.

A successful tea and apron sale was held yesterday afternoon in the vestry of the Victoria street Baptist church, under the auspices of the Ladies' Sewing Circle. The proceeds are for the benefit of the new building fund. Mrs. S. A. Williams, president of the society, was in charge of the sale and was assisted by the treasurer, Mrs. Ducey, and other members of the circle.

MANY STEAMSHIPS.

There were twenty ocean steamships in port yesterday, fifteen at berths and five anchored in the harbor waiting berth accommodation.

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(Ground Floor.)

RE-ORGANIZATION OF VARIOUS UNITS

The re-organization of the various units of the non-permanent active militia in Military District No. 7, has been completed and arranged in order that the identity of the overseas battalions may be preserved. The 8th Princess Louise's N. B. Hussars will remain the same and the 28th Dragoons will be changed to the New Brunswick Dragoons and these two units will form the cavalry in this district.

The Artillery has been changed as follows:—The 4th Brigade Canadian field artillery composed of the 10th, 12th and 19th batteries will be known as the 12th brigade, consisting of 9th and battery of Woodstock, the 90th bat-

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