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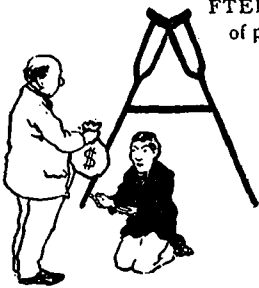
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FTER months of wire-pulling, after reams of paper have been covered with bought editorials, after scores of politicians have side-stepped, shuffled, and worked their little grafts, the Grand Trunk Pacific has secured from the Dominion Government either more or less than it originally professed to seek—at present it is difficult to say which it is, more or less. Naturally, I should like to rail at the bargain that the Government has made—it is my business to rail—but as the Government seems to have usurped my office—the Government is to rail the road—I must exercise an unwonted caution, and choose a course well-hedged with safety; and besides this, the chief objection to a hasty plunge into a generous damnation, there is the novelty of the thing—the Government's proposal is so disturbingly original! Why could not Sir Wilfred Laurier be generous and give the journalist a fair chance! There is something so timid in his carefully avoiding the heroic and unguarded path that "Old Tomorrow" trod.

Some persons still wonder why all journalists still love Sir John. The reason is not far to seek: his was no craven's heart, his was no miser's hand; he supplanted them with an abundance of material for startling copy—every day the article that would "hurl the Government from power" might be written. Ah! those good old days seem gone forever. This is the age of timid originality, when governments think more of the commonality than they think of the knights of the goose-quill. Politics has come to a pretty state! Why, Laurier and his Cabinet will be dead—yes, and buried—years before we shall know whether this new-fangled project should be condemned or not! What cowardice—pah!—hiding fearfully behind the skirts of Father Time, while we all grow old in waiting for a hearing! All that I dare predict is that, in less than fifty years—the length of time for which the road is to be leased to the Grand Trunk—railroading will be revolutionized, such roads as are now built will be abandoned, and the road-bed will be useless. This is indeed a sorry confession for one that would like to roar, to be forced to make—but it shows the base advantages that these modern politicians take. One can say so little in favor of the novelty, and so little against it, that it

seems to be designed purely as an annoyance to journalists. Even the *Mail* can only mumble faint-hearted curses, while the poor, deformed old *Globe*, like Peachey Carnehan, in Kipling's "Man Who Would be King," drags itself wearily along its dusty way, droning through its nose a sleepy hymn of praise.

THE conduct of the Toronto Railway Company in attempting to rush a line of track over forbidden ground has raised such a storm of indignation that it is become unsafe for one to attempt any defence or explanation of the company's action. Despite, however, the unpopularity of the company and its cause, I venture to offer my explanation of how the innocent affair happened.

It was night. It had been night before—and the men had toiled through all the weary hours of darkness. Mackenzie had left that night for England, and the excitement caused by the departure of the president disorganized the staff to such an extent that the little band of workers at the far-away end of Avenue Road were forgotten. Time passed; six o'clock came; the weary manager and his assistants staggered from their desks and wandered home, to be tucked snugly in their little cots. No word came to the workers. Hours passed—still no relief, no leave to quit. The place where the line should end was reached. It passed unseen—for the man that led the faithful little band wore on his head a masque of huge proportions, impenetrable to sound, to sand, to sense. He was the man with the sandy hose (not red stockings). As long as there was a rail before him, he would blow it; and, unfortunately, more rails had been taken to the place than were necessary, and those that were not required were strewn carelessly across the forbidden space. On went the man in the iron masque, aiming his bug exterminator at every length of rail—and, to show that their sand was no jot less than his, on came his followers with their tank of boiling glue and stuck the rails together. Then comes the Mayor in his nighty—and the scenes destroyed!

To no man concerned can blame attach. The man in the iron masque but did his duty. He had no orders to stop, so he kept on. If the supply of rails had lasted, and he had been let alone, we might have had street-car connection with North Bay by this time—and he would be going yet! The whole affair is a splendid exhibition of the wonderful and admirable discipline in the forces of the Street railway Company.

THE following note appeared in a paper some years ago. In view of recent events it may be found interesting:

"Rev. Mr. Barr, Episcopal clergyman of Wingham, has resigned his charge for the purpose of going into real estate speculation in the neighborhood of Prince Albert, N. W. T. Another reason given for his resignation is that he no longer believes in an eternity of punishment for the wicked in the next world."

If this is the Mr. Barr that has been the leading man in the new English colony that has attracted so much attention, he may find that the hand of Providence guided him to the North West with his colonists merely that he might be directed into the strait and narrow path again. It is a safe venture to say that, since his western experience, Mr. Barr now believes in an eternity of punishment.