

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1904.

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH
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Semi-Weekly Telegraph

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY 13, 1904.

STILL IN THE AIR.

Two facts appear to be overlooked in much of the current discussion of the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme. The first is the urgent need of meeting the immediate transportation wants of the west, which the Grand Trunk Pacific cannot do; and the second is that it is possible to get a new trans-continental line built without an entirely new agreement. All this talk about the probable cost of the line, and the benefits it may confer upon St. John and Halifax, is at the present stage of the proceedings a waste of words.

When the Grand Trunk Pacific act was passed, it provided for a deposit of five million dollars in cash by the company within a certain period. That deposit was not made. Instead of cash, bonds of the Grand Trunk railway company were put up. But even that security should be accepted by parliament and agreed to by the Grand Trunk shareholders, it does not settle the question. For the company, have made further demands. The nature of those demands may only be guessed at by the public, for they have not been made public by the government. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, Hon. Mr. Borden, and Hon. Mr. Dufferin have all delivered addresses since the announcement was made that the company would be asked for, but none of them has stated what it is the country will now be asked to concede. When the Hon. Mr. G. B. Hain was discussing the original contract he said: "It is a total and absolute waste of the public money." It was the opinion of the men whose knowledge and judgment have since been estimated by the government as being worth \$10,000 per year, what would be a waste of an agreement, which is to make full financial concessions to the railway company?

But is the company in a position to go on with the work under any circumstances? Is it not a fact that the publication of the Hon. Mr. Blair's speech in London made the financial world skeptical with regard to the whole scheme? Does anybody suppose that the Grand Trunk could not put up five million dollars? There are single shareholders who could do it. Is it not a fact that the difficulty lies in financing the whole scheme, rather than in putting up what the Grand Trunk would be a very small sum?

To speak, therefore, of the Grand Trunk Pacific as an agreed thing is to ignore the facts of the case. It would be a good thing for Canada if the project were dropped until surveys had been made, and the country knew what it was asked to endorse. No man can successfully maintain that this line is urgently needed at the present time. But every man knows that the extension of existing lines to the great lakes and the provision of facilities there and at our main ports is the business which will crown the present facilities as the real need of the present hour. That would amply suffice until proper surveys were made and the country knew what it was asked to endorse in the form of a new trans-continental railway.

Hon. Mr. Blair was right in urging that there should be no haste in this matter. Even if the scheme went through there would be no all-rail route for some years to come, and it would not meet existing needs, which can only be promptly and adequately met by utilizing the lake route, supplemented by a better railway service eastward from the lakes.

Hon. Mr. Blair's speech on the Grand Trunk Pacific has never been answered, simply because he was right. The government cannot say his opinions are of no value, for they have since given him the very strongest evidence that they regard him as an expert in railway matters. The wisest thing for the government to do would be to call off the Grand Trunk Pacific dog for the present, and proceed to meet the real transportation problem, which is to further utilize the great lakes and their railway connections, and to equip our ports for the business which is now offered. In the meantime the route of a new trans-continental line may be surveyed and plans completed for its construction.

HARBOR IMPROVEMENT.

Hon. Mr. Emmerson replied Tuesday to the telegram of Mayor White. The published statement of the Telegraph, the minister yesterday, the government expects that if the city wants them to provide for the improvements of the harbor as desired, the city should agree that no

alteration should be made without the government being communicated with and its sanction obtained.
As pointed out in Tuesday's Telegraph, this means that before the government agrees to do the dredging at South Road wharf the city must give the government the veto power with regard to the transfer of even the smallest portion of the harbor frontage.

This is asking too much. It is asking that in consideration for the dredging for four steamship berths, for the construction of which the city must make an agreement with a railway corporation or itself spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, it must give up its control of the harbor of St. John.

No alderman and no citizen would assent to any such proposition. It may be said, however, that the city is more than willing to join with the government in any well defined and comprehensive scheme for the development of the port. The city council would no doubt be quite willing to submit any proposition to the government, for its advice, and would without doubt be governed to some extent, and it might be entirely by the expressed views of the government; but to say that because a certain amount of dredging is needed at the present moment therefore the city should abdicate its power as the owner of the harbor of St. John is not in consonance with ordinary views of right and justice.

The city council will do well to communicate with the government, and as far as possible agree with the propositions of the government, but the mayor and aldermen must remember that their responsibility is not to the members of a government at Ottawa, but to the taxpayers of the city of St. John. Therefore, whether a proposition comes from the federal government or from a railway corporation, their duty is to conserve the interests of the city they represent, and to act in such manner as will bring to its citizens the greatest amount of benefit for the least expenditure of the money of the city. The desire of the citizens is to act in the fullest sympathy with the government, so far as the policy of the government may tend toward the development of national ports.

JAPAN STRIKES HOME.

It was observed by this paper Tuesday that Japan, before withdrawing her ambassador, had probably made up her mind to force the fighting with Russia. This view was sustained by the events of Tuesday, for the Japanese on Monday night opened hostilities at Port Arthur. Evidently their fleet was ready for business before the ambassador was recalled from St. Petersburg.

The despatches state that during Monday night Japanese torpedos seriously damaged the Russian battleships Poltava and Carewitch, and the cruiser Boyarin, which are now grounded in such a way as to interfere with the entrance to or exit from the inner harbor of Port Arthur. The channel is a difficult one to navigate, and if the despatches are true the Russian fleet in the inner harbor, and which is under the guns of the forts, is practically bottled up. Of course later despatches will clear up this point.

The Russian battleship Carewitch is the largest of the fleet. She is 33,110 tons, and had a trial speed of eighteen knots. The Poltava is 12,674 tons, with also a trial speed of eighteen knots. Evidently the Japanese laid their plans well, for these are two of the finest craft in the Russian fleet. The cruiser Boyarin is of 3,200 tons, with a speed of 22.5 knots. She is one of the smallest of the Russian protected cruisers.

Japan has thus drawn first blood, and has apparently suffered no damage. She has disabled two out of the ten Russian battleships, although the extent of the damage is as yet unknown, and has also crippled a cruiser.

The first despatch that came Tuesday, via St. Petersburg, told an entirely different story, but it was promptly contradicted.

Intense interest will now be felt in the progress of events in the Yellow Sea, for it is evident that the Japanese intend to force the fighting. Whatever may be true elsewhere, it was plain from the talk of the street yesterday that the sympathies of the people hereabouts are with the men of Japan.

An unconfirmed despatch says that the Japanese, in addition to the damage done at Port Arthur, destroyed or captured two Russian war vessels at Chemulpo, which is the port of Seoul, the capital of Corea; and that they have landed men at Chemulpo. It is true they are displaying extraordinary vigor and meeting with marked success.

REASONABLE QUESTIONS.

Everybody understands and appreciates the motives of those who oppose the transfer of any property to the C. P. R. Their desire is to conserve the harbor property of the city, so that it will produce the best results for the future development of the port. That is also the desire of those who favor the present transfer. No alderman and no citizen has any other purpose. The difference lies in the point of view. There is one aspect of the case that has not, perhaps, been dwelt upon so fully as its merits deserve. The C. P. R. has expressed a desire to enlarge its business through this port. To do so it positively declares that more yard room is required. It has asked for the water lots for that purpose. No one has suggested any alternative site for those yards. It is therefore, apparently, the water lots or nothing; and if the company is right in its contention that it must have more yard

room, if becomes a question of providing that room or remaining as we are.

Suppose that course is pursued. Suppose that, because there is a possibility of an other line coming here within the next ten years we do nothing more until that line does come. When it comes it must have yard room. Will the city then say it cannot be granted because perhaps in ten years more we may have still another line coming this way?

And if the Grand Trunk Pacific does come here some years hence, have we any right to hope that the company will be any more benevolent or any more likely to bring business to the port than the C. P. R.? The water-lots are not harbor frontage. They lie there unoccupied, and producing no wealth and no work. If they are not utilized now, when they are wanted, who can say when they will be wanted by another company? And can the city afford to let trade go past its wharves to other ports in the meantime?

DECREASE IN EXPORTS.

The trade statement for the last seven months is relatively not as satisfactory as it was for the like period of last year. There has been a large relative falling off in exports and increase of imports. That is to say, while the total trade has shown an increase, the comparison between that of the past seven months and that of the seven months ending January, 1903, and that of the seven months ending January, 1902.

The statement issued a year ago showed that for seven months the imports had increased about \$10,000,000, and the exports about \$11,000,000. The statement now issued shows that while the imports have increased \$19,000,000 in seven months the total exports have fallen off over \$3,000,000, and in the items of animals and their produce, agriculture and forest products the falling off is over \$4,000,000.

The balance of trade is thus not so favorable as it was a year ago. No doubt the snow blockades have interfered with the movement of exports of late, but while a year ago the imports for seven months were nearly \$26,000,000 less than the exports, and a year before were over \$27,000,000 less, the difference between imports and exports in the statement published last year is only \$3,500,000.

A TALK ON FORESTRY.

The visit to these provinces of the secretary and assistant secretary of the Canadian Forestry Association is an event of much interest to all who are interested in the conservation of our forest wealth. Messrs. Stewart and Campbell, who leave this morning for Halifax, where they will address a meeting tonight, at which the members of the legislature will be present, will be at Sackville Friday night, and on Monday evening Mr. Stewart will deliver an illustrated lecture in the rooms of the Natural History Society in this city.

The Canadian Forestry Association, of which Mr. Bertram, chairman of the transportation commission, which recently met in St. John, is one of the directors, has vice-presidents in all the provinces of Canada. The vice-president for New Brunswick is Lieut. Gov. Snowball. Leading lumbermen of Ontario are on its directorate, and it issues each year an annual report, in book form, which is of great value. The fourth report has but lately come to hand, and has been reviewed in this paper. It is an illustrated book of 120 pages, dealing with questions affecting forest conservation and propagation in Canada.

It is to be hoped that many citizens will take advantage of the meeting to be addressed on Monday evening by Mr. Stewart, and make themselves more familiar with this important subject.

GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Referring to Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech in Montreal, the Toronto News says it cannot think that he is convinced "that enough information exists to warrant an absolute national engagement to construct the road between Quebec and Winnipeg." The News adds: "But the country is not satisfied with the information which ministers have furnished as to the practicability of the route, and there is a growing opinion that we should know beyond all reasonable doubt that we can get a road equal to all-year traffic in competition with the lake and rail routes before we pledge \$100,000,000 to the undertaking."

These are the words of a journal which says it is not hostile to a trans-continental line. But it declares that the country asks for "reasonable information, and adequate precautions against failure before we sign an irrevocable contract." Continuing, the News says:—"Further, if the country is to build the road, and if it is wise to build it, it is altogether unwise to leave the rail for fifty years to a private corporation. The result must be to let back the movement for public ownership for half a century, and to interfere arbitrarily and unreasonably with the free action of future parties. We do not say that there is now a strong feeling in the country for public ownership, but our hands should be left free, in case we should desire in the future to follow the progressive example of other countries, and nationalize the railway system."

The News urges the immediate extension of the Intercolonial to the lakes.

MR. JUSTICE FRASER.

The appointment of Hon. D. C. Fraser to the bench of the supreme court of Nova Scotia has been expected for some time. His acceptance opens up the constituency of Guysboro, and removes from active politics one of the most entertaining

of the Liberal campaign in Nova Scotia. There is also one less free trader in the house of commons, for in the Parliament any Companion Mr. Fraser is set down as a Liberal and Free Trader.
D. C. Fraser was born in New Glasgow in 1845. He was called to the bar in 1873. In 1878 he was called to the legislative council of Nova Scotia, and entered the government, but resigned in the same year to run for the assembly. In 1888 he was again called to the legislative council, and became government leader in that body. In 1894 he was elected to represent Guysboro in the House of Commons, and was re-elected in 1896 and again in 1900. Mr. Justice Fraser is well known in St. John, and will be heartily congratulated by many friends here as elsewhere, on his appointment to the bench.

NOMINATION DAY.

The nomination proceedings at the court house Tuesday were well conducted and without any exciting incident. Indeed those whose memory went back to fighting campaigns in the past were disposed to regard the proceedings as rather tame. Hon. Mr. McKeeveny gave a good hearing, and the same courtesy was accorded to Dr. Daniel. At times each speaker was applauded, but there was nothing to indicate that either held the sympathy of the majority of the audience closely packed into the limited space at their disposal. It is perfectly clear that in this contest public sentiment is much more evenly divided than in the last federal campaign. The fact is largely due to the Grand Trunk Pacific project, and to the incisive criticism of the bill by the Hon. A. G. Blair.

THE WEATHER.

The account in today's Telegraph of existing weather conditions compared with former years shows our readers that the severity of the present winter has seldom if ever been surpassed, not alone for the persistent intensely cold weather and heavy snow falls, but high winds and gales have followed one after another with marked rapidity.

Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, disbursements to shipping have been exceptionally few and of minor importance. This has not been for lack of dangerous storms, but it is quite fair to say it is due to the timely information and warnings of approaching storms given by our Canadian Meteorological Service, which enables the mariner to seek a place of safety and avoid much loss of life and property.

HON. THOMAS GREENWAY.

An interesting statement comes from Winnipeg to the effect that Hon. Thomas Greenway has retired from provincial politics, having cast his last vote last week in favor of the Chamberlain programme of preferential trade; and that he will contest a Manitoba constituency in the Liberal interest in the next federal elections.

Hon. Thos. Greenway is now almost sixty-six years of age. He is a native of Ontario, and got in the house of commons as member for South Huron from 1875 until 1878, when he declined re-nomination and removed to Manitoba. There he engaged in farming, and the very next year after his arrival—in 1879—he was elected a member of the legislature. He has been a member of the legislature ever since. In 1887 he became leader of the opposition, and the next year his party defeated the government and he became premier. He led the government for twelve years—until 1900—when it was defeated by the Conservatives. In 1902 he was elected leader of the provincial Liberal party, and since the defeat of his government he has been leader of the opposition in the legislature.

THURSDAY'S CONFERENCE.

The conference between the harbor improvement committee and Hon. Mr. Emmerson Thursday afternoon established two facts. One was that the transportation commission while here got an erroneous idea of the capacity of this port, and the other was that the commission and the government do not know what it is that the city council proposes to grant to the C. P. R. in connection with the agreement that is now awaiting final action.

Hon. Mr. Emmerson did not know until it was clearly stated to him Thursday, and the statement reinforced by a plan of the harbor, that what it is proposed to grant to the C. P. R. is not harbor frontage, but certain water lots away in the rear of the rear harbor frontage.

When the case had been clearly set forth, the minister admitted that he was strongly impressed by the justice of the claim made by the city, and suggested that a delegation be sent to Ottawa to place the matter in its true light before the government. He explained, and he had the sympathy of the committee so far as that was concerned, that the desire of the government was that no single railway company should be granted concessions which would shut other railway companies out from facilities on the harbor front.

But it was shown to Mr. Emmerson that instead of shutting other companies out from the harbor front the desire of the city was to get back some ten acres of rear harbor front, which they hoped to do under the proposed agreement with the C. P. R., and which would be available for the extension of harbor works in the future.

It is evident from the development of the past few weeks that the transportation commission, despite all that was done when they were in St. John, went away with the impression that this harbor can only accommodate a comparatively few ships. That is an extraordinary assumption, and wholly unwarranted. But it is now necessary for the city council to

counteract the effect of the report of the commission and place the facts before the government. It is most unfortunate that any such misconception should have arisen. The duty of the council now is to send a delegation to Ottawa, with plans to set forth the facts of the case. While it is true that leading members of the government were supplied with all the correspondence relative to the C. P. R. agreement, they do not seem to have grasped its significance, or to have agreed to the proposition that the people of St. John know what is best for the trade and the harbor of St. John. By all means let a delegation be sent to Ottawa.

ALL GUESSWORK.

No politician and no newspaper is warranted in assuming that the Grand Trunk Pacific railway will be built. It is not a settled question. The company failed to put up the necessary cash deposit, and they have since notified the government that they want other modifications of the contract. Every member of the government has spoken from the public platform since the company declared its purpose, but not one of them has stated to the country what it is the Grand Trunk Pacific now demands.

Why have they not done so? If the new demands are so trifling as to be of small account, why have they not been openly stated to the people?

There is no certainty that the line will be built, unless it is built by some other company or by the government itself, and in either case it may be hoped that surveys will first be made and the people told what it is they are asked to pay for. The country can wait.

In connection with this affair there has been entirely too frequent a repetition of a question something like this: "What need you care, if there is to be a lot of money spent in your locality?" The man who is honest and desires what is best for the country does care, and is not open to bribery of this sort. He may want a trans-continental railway, but he wants to know something about the route and the probable cost before he endorses the scheme. Mr. Blair says the contract as proposed is an absolute and utter waste of public money. In view of that statement by this man who is today chairman of the Canadian Railway Commission, who will listen with patience to the assertions of men of less knowledge and ability? And why should any person base calculations on the results of the coming of a railway to St. John which may not be built for years to come, and if it is built as at present proposed can route all its freight to Portland (Me.)?

Gentlemen of sanguine temperament, assuming first that certain things will be done, are able to paint glowing pictures of certain other things which they think are likely to develop. But the cautious man wants to be sure that the first will come to pass, and after that is time enough to let his imagination loose on the question of other possibilities.

The Telegraph may be wrong, but it is of opinion that while there will some day be another trans-continental railway, the deal between the government and the Grand Trunk Pacific is practically off. No member of the government in any recent speech has asserted that the matter is settled, or that it will be settled on the lines of the proposed contract. Therefore all Grand Trunk Pacific talk may as well be effaced from the record. It is all guess-work.

STILL IN DOUBT.

Speaking in Westmount on Wednesday evening Hon. Mr. Fielding, referring to the Grand Trunk Pacific, said he trusted that a satisfactory arrangement would be made, and added that if the Grand Trunk did not wish to carry out its part of the undertaking the railway would be built anyway, even without its co-operation.

The significance of this statement is greater in what it suggests than in what it definitely asserts. The finance minister evidently anticipates trouble in connection with the further negotiations with the Grand Trunk Pacific Company.

The same doubt is in the mind of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, for at Montreal on Saturday evening, though he said he believed the company would not refuse to carry out the contract, he added these somewhat mysterious statements:—"And now if we are refused by the Grand Trunk let me tell you something: I am no longer young, I am accustomed to fighting. I have had many difficulties in my life, but I have never been discouraged. When I have failed on the one point, I have tried another, and when I have failed on that other, I have tried another until in the end I succeeded."

Sir Wilfrid should try the plan of extending the Intercolonial to the great lakes, and providing the increased facilities urgently needed for trade already offering. In the meantime surveys could be made, and the element of guesswork eliminated from the greater national project of opening up new territory.

TARIFF REVISION.

The latest word from the government is against any general revision of the tariff at the coming session of parliament. Hon. Mr. Prefontaine said two weeks ago that the finance minister had promised a reasonable revision, and it was taken to mean that something would be done at the coming session. At the same meeting Hon. Mr. Brodeur declared that changes were necessary and that the tariff would in certain cases be raised and in others lowered.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Hon. Mr. Fielding have since spoken. The premier made it clear that he is not in favor of any present revision. After denouncing high tariffs, with specific reference to the tariff of the United States, he said: "Gentlemen, we came into power, the

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country has confided in us, the people believed that we were wise enough to revise the tariff, they confided that task to us, and we have performed it in a manner to protect the manufacturers and to give satisfaction to the consumers. We have revised the tariff in such a way as to protect the manufacturers, but without doing any injustice, have protected the consumers without taking away the work of the laborer.

We have reformed the tariff of 1893. Let me tell you this for my part, and I will tell you this as chief of the government. I am not a doctrinaire. I am not a doctrinaire in any sense. I am not a free trader nor am I a protectionist; we are practical people and we know that any government, whether it be Wing or Tory, must create a revenue by a system of duty, and that system of revenue constitutes for the manufacturer a sufficient protection. It becomes necessary from time to time to reform the tariff in face of the constant changes in our industries.

Gentlemen electors, we have reformed the tariff in 1897. Since that time new questions have been created. New conditions have been established, and the day will assuredly come when the government will again have to take into serious consideration the necessity of reforming the tariff, and when that moment has arrived, then, in the name of my colleagues, in the name of the government, I say we will reform the tariff, and we will adopt the same principle which we adopted in 1897. We will again have to take into serious consideration the necessity of reforming the tariff, and when that moment has arrived, then, in the name of my colleagues, in the name of the government, I say we will reform the tariff, and we will adopt the same principle which we adopted in 1897.

The latest word from the finance minister, who declares that there will be no general revision of the tariff at the coming session, although it is shown that some individual interests are suffering from the tariff in 1897. Since that time new questions have been created. New conditions have been established, and the day will assuredly come when the government will again have to take into serious consideration the necessity of reforming the tariff, and when that moment has arrived, then, in the name of my colleagues, in the name of the government, I say we will reform the tariff, and we will adopt the same principle which we adopted in 1897.

It is evident that some of the other members of the cabinet are disposed to move more quickly in the direction of tariff revision than are the premier and finance minister, but that none of them are disposed to go as far as Mr. Borden and Mr. Tarte. The tariff, therefore, has not yet been removed from the realm of politics, but will be an issue in the next general elections, and will no doubt also be a subject of keen debate in the coming session of parliament.

BURNING NEGROES.

The cheerful habit of burning negroes, which has become so common in the southern States, and which is held up for the serious contemplation of our neighbors when they fall into the other habit of giving advice to the world at large, has not been discontinued. A recent entertainment of that sort moves the New York Evening Post to make the following observations, which appear to be worthy of some attention:—"A three days' hunt, with bloodhounds, for two negro murderers, their burning at the stake, with the incidental killing, 'by mistake,' of three other negroes, round out a horror almost equaled by frequent repetition. This time it is Daddie (Alb.) that is added to the roll of national dishonor. It is safe to assume the question, wicked to palliate this sort of collective crime. It is the expression of a brutalized community which has undergone the lesson of civilization. That three negroes would have been swiftly condemned under the law there was not the least doubt. But the law is too slow and too little spectacular for a people accustomed to private vengeance. Upon the frightful demoralization that such an orgy implies it is unnecessary to dwell. Suffice it to say that no human life is really safe where the stake and fagots stand between every negro criminal and the courts."

A New York paper says: "Japanese merchants in New York will raise a war fund to send home to the government. The purpose now is to make the subscription \$5,000,000, and to pay it in monthly instalments so long as the war lasts. This amount is the minimum fund proposed. If the war is greatly prolonged they will increase their subscriptions. The Japanese consul, Mr. Sushida, is in charge of the matter."

If a St. Petersburg despatch of this week is correct the Russians have a few more vessels, chiefly torpedo boat destroyers and torpedo boats, than has hitherto been stated. It says: "The latest returns of Russian warships in the Far East total ninety-four, including eight battleships, sixteen cruisers, seven gunboats, and fifty-six torpedo boat-destroyers and torpedo boats. Three more battleships and nine torpedo boats are to go to the Far East in the spring."

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Sensitive.

"What was the matter with that audience?" asked Mr. Stormington Barnes. "Don't the people here like Shakespeare?" "I should say they do," answered Bronco Bob. "Then why did they shoot out the light?" "Well, you see they called for the author, and when nobody came they felt kind of slighted."—Washington Star.