

**The Sidney & Islands Review**  
AND SAANICH GAZETTE.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1918.

**THE PREMIER'S POLICY FOR HOUSING RETURNED SOLDIERS.**

**A Governmental Dispute.**

Premier Oliver, of British Columbia, is to be congratulated heartily on his line of policy with regard to the cost of construction of houses for returned soldiers and on his pertinacity in pressing his point before the Federal authorities. A discussion, which has almost reached the stage of a serious dispute, has arisen between Premier Oliver and Sir Thomas White, the latter representing the Dominion Government, on the point as to whether the Federal authorities were prepared to bear any loss that might be occasioned in the part of the national housing plan that would take care of returned soldiers and their dependents. And it is conceivable there would be a loss, which would bear heavily upon the finances of this province, which would have to make provision for a large number of returned soldiers. The Premier of the Province is naturally anxious that the Federal authorities should cover the cost of what he argues, and, in our opinion, argues rightly, should be a national undertaking. On the other hand, Sir Thomas White, with more financial acumen than consideration of the resources and rightful uses of the provincial exchequer, takes up the position of non-responsibility on the part of the Dominion Government. A position on the face of it, is unfair to the province and the returning soldier. The housing scheme before the Government is divided into two sections. First, a national housing plan for returning soldiers is proposed, and, second, to build houses for the benefit of the general population requiring care in this direction.

The attitude of Sir Sir Thomas White is that if housing plans were properly carried out, there should be no loss, and that suitable land bought at present day low prices should be enhanced in value in the future. In general, he pointed out that responsibility would devolve upon Provincial Governments and Municipalities because they would be the beneficiaries through improved local industrial conditions.

In reply to the direct question as to the Dominion Government's responsibility for loss, if any, under the first head, the following telegram was received by Premier Oliver:

"The proposal of the Government is to loan money to Provincial Government's at five per cent. Provincial Governments will be responsible for the repayment of principal and interest in full. Understand some of the Provinces and Municipalities taking up the matter will loan money to Building Associations founded to promote better housing rather than make direct loans to borrowers. This, however, is a question of policy. As I pointed out in my previous telegram, there should be no loss if housing policy is properly carried out."

The Premier has again wired to the Acting Prime Minister at Ottawa in the following terms:

"Will the Dominion Government bear the whole or any portion of any loss occasioned by the Provincial Government providing housing for returned soldiers or their dependents? This is the question to which we want an answer. If you will bear only a portion of the loss, what portion will you carry? Situation here is becoming acute, and we want to know just where we are at."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the real point at issue is whether the cost of housing the returning soldier and his dependents should be a state or a provincial burden. Premier Oliver obviously takes up the attitude which we and the majority of our readers will think as being logically and economically sound, that it is essentially a state duty and the responsibility devolves upon and should be accepted by the state. It is clearly an expense, if it is regarded as such, as should be met from those funds for which the recent Victory loan was supposed to be raised. It is essentially not a provincial responsibility, and the soothing suggestion that the Federal authorities will loan the money—at a war percentage—is quite beside the point. Why should what is in all equity surely the burden and responsibility of the Dominion Government be thrust upon the Provincial Government? It is clearly a national duty to provide homes for the returning soldier in the service of the Dominion Government who has earned his right by his services to such consideration. It is no more the duty of the provincial governments to provide such homes, bearing the burden of their cost, maintenance and interest, than it would be for a municipality to be asked to undertake it. There is no reluctance on the part of the Provincial Government to do its best assist in the materialization of this responsible and important scheme. Everyone is confident that the government of the province, assisted by local agencies, would do their utmost towards such a deserving object, but the initiation of the scheme is clearly a duty which should fall upon the state. It is not justified in trying to thrust such a financial burden upon the Provincial Governments, and, we take it, the other governments will make the same objections. Premier Oliver, with his foresight, happened to be first provincial premier to see the importance of the point at issue, and in voicing it and pressing it home, he has acted as the jealous custodian of our provincial interests. He has succeeded by his insistence of bringing the question to a definite issue, from which the Dominion Government cannot in equity or grace escape. Sir Thomas White has obviously evaded the point. It is not a question of lending money, but one of responsibility, a responsibility, which to every right-thinking person, must be borne by the state alone. We heartily congratulate the premier on the wise and fair stand he has made, which is one we are sure our readers will endorse.

**THE REVIEW.**

We owe our readers an explanation and an apology for the non-publication of The Review last week. We regret it was unavoidable, as every member of the staff was ill with influenza. The editor, eventually, had to go into hospital. Under such circumstances, we feel our readers will excuse the non-appearance of the paper. We have only managed to get the present issue out with the greatest difficulty, as members of our staff are still incapacitated.

**AT THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN NEW YORK ON EMPIRE DAY.**

General Pershing, in a cablegram received by Judge Parker, said: "Steadfast

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in adversity, wounded with a thousand wounds, Great Britain's hammer blows have never weakened or faltered. But for the tenacity of her people, the war would have been lost. To those of us who have been associated with them and fought with their gallant troops, words of praise seem inadequate to express our admiration. These things which our kinsmen have done have brought inseparable union between them and ourselves. We offer our right hand of friendship that our two nations may be more firmly linked together to insure the future of the world."

Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Leeds, England, on December 7th, said: "I shall never forget that morning when I sent a cable message to President Wilson telling him what the facts were and how essential it was that we should get American help at the speediest possible rate, and inviting him to send 120,000 infantry and machine gunners to Europe," in the course of a speech to 3,000 persons.

"The following day," continued the Premier, "there came a cablegram from President Wilson: 'Send your ships across and we will send the 120,000 men.'"

"Then I invited Sir Joseph McClay, the Shipping Controller, to Downing Street, and said: 'Send every ship you can.'"

"They were all engaged in essential trades, because we were cut down right to the bones. There was nothing that was not essential. We said: 'This is the time for taking risks.'"

"We ran risks with our food, and we ran risks with essential raw materials. We said: 'The thing to do is to get these men across at all hazard.'"

"America sent 1,900,000 men across, and out of that number 1,100,000 were carried by the British mercantile marine. The good old ships of Britain have saved the liberty of the world many times. They saved it in the days of Queen Elizabeth, saved it in the days of Louis XIV., saved it in the days of Napoleon, and have saved it in the days of Kaiser William II.

"It is a change from December, 1916; a change from the days when at the end of the year we made up our balance-sheet and found Germany had acquired more Allied territory than she had before, and a new ally had fallen and another ally was tottering to its fall, and that Germany was advancing ruthlessly from conquest to conquest.

"That was the story up to the end of December, 1916. What is the story today? Every German submarine is in a British port today. The best battleships and cruisers and torpedo boats of Germany are now, with lowered flags, under sur-

veillance of British seamen in British harbors.

"And the British army which has fought so gallantly—which has fought with a heroism which the world has never matched—that army, after months of fighting and of suffering, is, today, at this hour, marching across the Rhine into Germany and into one of the most famous cities of Germany."

**THE SIDNEY RED CROSS SOCIETY.**

The Secretary-Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge with thanks donations, etc., as follows:

- Mrs. G. S. Harris, donation . . . . . \$10.00
  - Rev. and Mrs. T. C. DesBarres, donation . . . . . 9.00
  - Proceeds from sale of Belgian Hares donated by Miss D. L. Exley . . . . . 3.00
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  - Anonymous . . . . . 5.00
- The B. C. Electric Railway Co. have also donated light and power to the value of \$3.05.

A remittance of \$175.00 has been forwarded to the Treasurer at Victoria.

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