

GENERAL MEWBURN RETIRES FROM UNION GOVERNMENT CAUSING CABINET CHANGES

With the Shifts Made the Government Will Remain as it is Today Until After Sir Robert's Return to Capital.

SIR GEORGE FOSTER ACTING PREMIER

The Two Vacancies in the Cabinet Will Not be Filled for the Present — Departments to be Amalgamated.

Ottawa, Ont., January 1.—Official announcement that Major General Meuburn, Minister of Militia, had retired from the Unionist Government, and that there had been some shuffling of portfolios was made today.

Cabinet Shifts

The cabinet shifts announced places Hon. Mr. Burrell, who since his retirement from the post of Minister of Agriculture in favor of Hon. Mr. Crozier when the Union Government was formed, has been Secretary of State, becomes the head of the Customs Department which has been without a Minister since Hon. Arthur L. Sifton succeeded Hon. P. B. Carroll as Minister of Public Works.

Mr. Sifton makes another change and assumes the post of Secretary of State in succession to Mr. Burrell. This shift in portfolios is a natural one because it puts a Minister with legal training at the head of the Department of State. In view of the practical certainty that the Dominion Election Act will be introduced at the approaching session of Parliament, and the possibility that there may be a general election within a year, it will be better to have a lawyer presiding over the State Department, which has a great deal to do with the administration of election laws and other legal matters.

The acting Minister of Militia will be Hon. J. A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, while Hon. J. D. Reid in addition to being Minister of Railways will assume responsibility for the Department of Public Works. The announcement disposes of the report that Mr. Sifton was about to retire from the Government.

Acting Premier

It is also stated that Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, will be acting Prime Minister during the absence from Ottawa of the Prime Minister. He will not, however, undertake to lead the House throughout the session of Parliament and it is likely that House sessions will be held to choose a House leader. The adoption of this plan will relieve Sir George from attendance in the House on many occasions when matters of great importance are under discussion. The probabilities are that the choice of House leader will fall upon Hon. C. J. DeLozier, who has filled this position acceptably in the past.

Tribute to Meuburn

In a letter handed out Sir Robert Borden pays a high tribute to the work done in the Militia Department by Major General Meuburn. He speaks of the minister's splendid and unobtrusive service to Canada and to the Empire in different capacities. The retirement of Major General Meuburn does not occasion much surprise as it has been known for some months past that he is anxious to return to the practice of law in Hamilton. When he entered the cabinet he promised to serve only for the period of the war. Major General Meuburn has been Minister of Militia since the formation of the Union Government in October, 1917, and he has been regarded as the capital as well as capable administrator.

There are now two cabinet vacancies, New Brunswick is still without a minister. Major General Meuburn's resignation leaves a gap in Ontario's representation in the Government. It is officially intimated that neither of these vacancies are likely to be filled during Sir Robert Borden's absence. It is also intimated that later on there will be reduction in the number of portfolios to the pre-war basis. Changes will include the uniting of the Militia and Soldiers Civil Re-employment departments, while Immigration and Colonization will go back to the Interior Department, should the western provinces be given their natural resources, for which they have been agitating for many years. The Interior Department would not be so important as it is at the present time and the minister could administer both interior and immigration affairs.

Sir Robert Borden today visited upon His Excellency the Governor General and submitted to His Excellency the resignation of Major General Meuburn and the cabinet changes for approval. The Prime Minister expects to leave tomorrow for his holiday, but the name of the place at which he will seek a rest which it is expected will completely restore him to former state of health, will not be mooted.

Pope Urged To Intercede In Behalf Of Prisoners Still Held In Siberia

Rome, Jan. 1.—Pope Benedict recently received a letter from the International Committee of the Red Cross at Geneva, urging him to use all his influence to hasten the repatriation of 200,000 prisoners still in Siberia, who are suffering the greatest privations. The letter was signed by Gustave Ador, formerly President of Switzerland and now President of the Red Cross Committee. The Pope announced that he enthusiastically agreed with the sentiments expressed in the letter and declared the hope that no Christian heart would be unresponsive. The Pope said he would ask the authorities concerned to co-operate for repatriation of the prisoners. The Japanese Emperor and Government have been approached by the Pope on the subject, since the only way of repatriating the prisoners is to assemble them at Vladivostok.

The Cabinet Shuffle Causing Much Concern Among Politicians

The Announcement Means That Cabinet Reorganization, Long Promised, is Again Indefinitely Postponed—Criticism That New Brunswick Gap Has Not Been Filled—Situation Created by Causing Another Vacancy is Not Without Criticism in Loyal Unionist Ranks—Agrarian Movement Taking Advantage of the Situation.

Special to The Standard Ottawa, Jan. 1.—The object of the Cabinet shuffle, announced yesterday, is not quite clear to students of politics. Manifestly it is not a measure to strengthen the Ministry, and impossible of being construed as even a step in reorganization. The most likely explanation of it is that it has been taken to suit the convenience of Ministers. Mr. Sifton, whose health is somewhat impaired and whose resignation was understood to have been in the hands of the Prime Minister, has been induced to resign his decision by the inducement of a lighter department, although with economy and retrenchment the watchword of the cabinet. Mr. Sifton is now a heavy portfolio. At all events the shuffle and the resignation have both taken place and the net result is that the Ministry has lost a good man and the two important departments—Defence and Public Works—are given but divided attention.

With the Prime Minister leaving today for a period of prolonged rest, yesterday's announcement means that Cabinet re-organization, long promised but always postponed, is again indefinitely delayed. And while it is true that re-organization on a substantial scale has not been expected under the circumstances described by the Prime Minister in his statement concerning his health, issued a few days ago, it was thought that the New Brunswick gap in the Cabinet might be filled, and that at least no more vacancies, such as that which is now announced, would be permitted to occur. For some reason, not quite clear, however, Mr. Carroll is still without a successor, while General Meuburn's retirement leaves another unfiled gap.

The situation thus created is not received without criticism in loyal Unionist circles. It is pointed out that delay in Cabinet re-organization, and the failure to replace outgoing Cabinet ministers are to the public signs of political weakness, and an encouragement to the enemies of Unionism. "While the enemies of Union Government are everywhere organizing and marshalling their forces," declared one of the leading men of the Unionist Party yesterday, "the Government is pursuing a policy of political stagnation. This refusal to get up and fight is bound to prove disastrous. It cost the strategical blunder in North Ontario where defeat would easily have been turned into a victory. It is permitting uniform discontent to run riot in the country, and it is every day making more difficult the formation of a permanent Unionist party."

However, just or unjust, this criticism, it is beyond question that the Government has sorely neglected the question of party organization. This neglect in a way, perhaps, has been to its credit, because so much of the time of the Cabinet has been concentrated upon the war and the problems arising from the war that little or no thought has been given to the party's strength in the country. When Union Government was formed and the 1917 election won, no attempt was made to consolidate the ground that was taken. The Publicity Bureau, which had been used effectively during the election, was closed and all political propaganda ceased. No agency was created to keep the country informed as to what the Government achieved. No central organization was maintained to keep its finger upon the country's political pulse. Cabinet Ministers seldom, if ever, left Ottawa to say a word on the Government's behalf, and it seemed as if the Ministry had entered into a conspiracy of silence against itself. And, when added to all this, the Government abolished patronage, a well-tried party sustainer, the result for Unionism was bad.

The Government, while blamed and heartily denoted for everything that went wrong was given little or no credit for the many things it achieved. Political workers, with the lure of patronage gone, declined to longer work men who at first were eager to make Unionism a permanent thing because they thought that it was a failure and to drift back to old alliances, and only the depth of war memories, and the lack of the opposition and the lack of another party, with the inclination prevented disintegration. It was hoped by many Unionists at the close of last session that something would be done in the recess to remedy the situation. With the party scheduled to meet in session in February next, it is decided whether it is to live as a political entity, it was thought that some attempt during recess to strengthen the Ministry and to educate the country in regard to the Government's war record would tend to create an atmosphere favorable to Union. But no measures of the kind have been taken. The result, beyond question, is that the matter of forming a permanent Unionist organization has been made more difficult than ever.

The Agrarian movement, taking advantage of the situation, has been pursuing a militant policy. With Mr. Crozier, openly acknowledged as the leader, it has been carrying on an aggressive campaign throughout the entire country. The West has been thoroughly organized, Ontario revolutionized, the Maritime Provinces successfully invaded and even Quebec attacked. A leader of considerable personal force and ability, daily increasing his strength on the platform with a definite object in view, who has challenged the supremacy of Sir Louisbourg, there is reason for believing that Mr. Crozier, not without personal ambition, forces a situation whereby in the next parliament a Quebec Liberal Western Radical alliance could hold the balance of power.

LARGE PART OF MONTREAL LEFT WITHOUT WATER

Employees of the Aqueduct Department Went on Strike Leaving the Officials in Serious Flight.

AMUSING SCENES AROUND THE PUMP

Many a Housewife Telephoned Guests Invited to New Year's Dinner to Bring a Can of Water.

Special to The Standard.

Montreal, Jan. 1.—What prohibition failed to do, employees of the Montreal waterworks accomplished today. They made the city dry, or at least the largest part of the city, and today and today the water schedule was just as the clocks of the city pealed out the hour of midnight, which marked the passing of 1919 and the coming of 1920, about 100 city engineers, firemen, and about 150 aqueduct workers went on strike. The walkout resulted from an ultimatum delivered on Tuesday by the administrative commission to accept the water schedule preferred by the commission or resign, and the men, considering the scale inadequate, walked out.

The men's contract with the city, made about a year ago, expired at midnight of December 31st, but very few Montrealers realized that the situation was so acute. The surprise came when they woke this morning and found no water. To the revelers with a parched throat or a large head it was a near tragedy, for with the cessation of pumping there was no water on the higher levels of the city, and what there was soon dwindled during the morning, so that by nine o'clock Montreal was really a dry city.

Any day is inopportune for the water supply of a big city to be cut off, but on a day like this the situation was particularly acute, and residents were compelled to resort to primitive methods to get water, which to prepare their New Year's dinner. One of the leading hotels was able to draw its supply from a well on its property, but the ordinary citizen was left to his own devices. The almost forgotten days of the town pump were revived in various parts of the city, where little groups of citizens were to be found starting their buckets at the fire hydrant. Here a sedate-looking citizen, carrying a large zinc washbasin, and another with a teakettle or jug, while all sides of the juniors of the household were recruited, and Montrealers reverted in fact to "drawings of water," but even the hydrants soon became useless as sources of supply because of lack of pressure to force the water to the upper levels, and the ingenuity of the male portion of the population was hard put to forage for enough water to meet the need. In one or two places a good Parisian started his breakfast table out through a hose to grateful groups.

The scarcity of the usually most plentiful and most despised beverage may be gauged by an incident which was reported during the day. A lady in Robison's clothing store of goods valued at \$500; Johnson's jewelry store, and of holding up Moses Newman, a Water Street storekeeper, at the point of a revolver and robbing the cash register of \$200. After the latter robbery they took the first train for Lunenburg and were returning to the city today when the police boarded the train near here and arrested them. When searched new revolvers, fully loaded, were found in their possession. Corkum belongs to Lunenburg, and Scott hails from Scotland.

MONCTON EDITOR STRICKEN WITH PARALYSIS

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He defeated his strongest opponent, Controller Samuel McBride, by 5,000 majority, and left the labor candidate, James H. Ballantyne, trailing in the race many thousand votes behind. All the by-laws and questions were carried with big majorities.

TORONTO VOTERS AGAIN RE-ELECT MAYOR CHURCH

For the Sixth Consecutive Term He is Given the Reins of Office, Leading by Large Majority.

Toronto, Jan. 1.—Mayor Thomas Langdon Church was re-elected mayor of Toronto today for his sixth term.

The Rising Waters of The Rhine Are Causing Much Damage In Coblenz

Coblenz, Jan. 1.—Lower parts of this city are flooded by the rising waters of the Rhine, the river being at the highest stage known in the past forty years. A number of army units have been moved to higher ground, but the loss of American property is small, units along the river banks being warned in time to move their supplies. The city is temporarily without gas and water, while cellars of hotels and homes along the Rhine boulevard, including the mansion occupied by General Allen, are flooded.

Barge traffic on the Rhine was suspended several days ago, about one hundred coal barges being delayed here and at Mayence. Reports state the Moselle River is also rising, but little damage has resulted so far. The Rhine continues to rise at Mayence, according to reports, heavy rainfalls continuing in that section.

British Forced To Hard Test

Reports from British India Show There Has Been Considerable Fighting With Revolting Tribesmen.

London, Jan. 1.—Despatches received here from British India under date of December 20 show that there has been considerable fighting between the British Expeditionary Forces and the revolting tribesmen. Severe losses were inflicted on the tribesmen, although the British apparently were put to a hard test in defeating them.

A despatch from Mandanakkach, dated December 18 says the British column lighting against 2,000 Mahabis and another force composed of Waziris and Mahauds, who occupied the hills westward of Jandala, captured the Sarkal Ridge, driving the tribesmen from their positions upon which the British later pitched their camp. Air planes following the enemy, harassing them and causing number of casualties.

Another despatch dated December 20 shows that on December 19 the tribesmen counter attacked and the British were compelled to retire owing to heavy casualties from Sand Hill which they previously had taken after a stubborn resistance lasting several hours. Sand Hill is situated in the further progress.

The battle continued throughout the twentieth, with the British having captured several objectives. The number of casualties are reported to have been heavy.

HALIFAX POLICE ARREST GUNMEN

Take Into Custody Two Youths Who Admit Series of Bold Hold-ups at Revolver Point.

Halifax, Jan. 1.—The police today rounded up the young gunmen who have been working with success in Halifax for several weeks past. They are James Scott, 20½, and James Corkum, 20½. The police say they have succeeded in robbing the clothing store of goods valued at \$500; Johnson's jewelry store, and of holding up Moses Newman, a Water Street storekeeper, at the point of a revolver and robbing the cash register of \$200. After the latter robbery they took the first train for Lunenburg and were returning to the city today when the police boarded the train near here and arrested them. When searched new revolvers, fully loaded, were found in their possession. Corkum belongs to Lunenburg, and Scott hails from Scotland.

NARROW ESCAPE FROM QUITE NEAR FATAL ACCIDENT

Auto Truck Collides With Freight Train at Blind Crossing in St. Stephen.

Special to The Standard

St. Stephen, N. B., Jan. 1.—What came near being a fatal accident occurred this afternoon at four thirty, when Frank Devlin, accompanied by Dr. Jos. Waller, was driving his auto truck out King street. They struck the C. P. R. freight train going to Milltown, completely demolishing the car, but both occupants escaped unhurt. The C. P. crossing by the fair grounds is a blind one and Mr. Devlin did not see the train until he was within twenty feet of the crossing. He applied his brakes immediately, but on account of the slippery condition of the road, the brakes would not hold the truck and it slid into the third car of the train, the engine and two cars having passed. Several accidents have occurred at this crossing lately in the very same manner as it is impossible to see a train coming until it is nearly on the crossing.

The residence of William Barter of Milltown was completely destroyed by fire late yesterday.

ARMED FORCES OF GERMANY NOW OVER MILLION

Under the Terms of the Peace Treaty That Country Obligated to Reduce Its Forces to 100,000 Men Before March 31.

BRITISH OFFICERS REPORT FINDINGS

Are of Opinion Germany Should Not be Permitted to Maintain Volunteers and Civic Guards Now Organized.

London, Jan. 1.—Germany's armed forces are estimated by the British War Office to total close to a million men. These are divided into the regular army of 400,000. The land forces of the regular navy, 12,000, the army consubulary, forty to fifty thousand; the temporary volunteers or regular army reserves 150,000 to 200,000; air guards 300,000 to 400,000.

The figures with regard to the last named branches are rough estimates, the exact figures being unknown. Under the terms of the Peace Treaty, Germany is compelled to reduce her regular forces to 100,000 by March 31, and the number of consubulars must not exceed those existing as military police in 1913. The reduction of the regular army, in compliance with the Treaty obligation is proceeding, although at a slower pace than originally was contemplated, owing to the delay in ratification of the Peace Treaty, the unsettled state of Germany, and the fact that the German Government not to increase the number of persons unemployed.

British Officers' Report. Quite apart from the British official statement, but bearing on the subject, is unofficial information brought to England from Germany by British army officers. The substance of their report is summed up as follows: "There is no truth in the stories that Germany has a secret, mobile army. Not only are the German people war weary and anxious for peace, but there is a great shortage of war supplies such as rubber, petrol, coal, horses, and, in addition, the rolling stock of the country is greatly depleted. Manufacture of arms and munitions is not going on in any large degree, although it is probable that to force the Germans to give up all the rifles stipulated in the Peace Treaty will be impossible, since the concealment of arms is not difficult.

There is no danger of warlike aggression from Germany in the immediate future. However, if the Germans are permitted to maintain volunteers and civic guards these bodies would constitute a potential danger, as they would provide basic material for a big war army."

It is stated in well-informed circles in London that the allies will insist that these military organizations be abolished. It is conceded, however, that the maintenance of a consubulary is necessary to protect property from hoodlums and organized bodies of thieves.

Army officers are said to believe that considerable ground exists for Germany's claim that she needs a regular army of more than 100,000 as this force would be very small for a country of great extent. Many citizens of Germany, as a patriotic duty, are said to be joining the civic guards to protect themselves and their property from depredations of criminals and from Spartacist outbreaks. Numerous generals are among the guards, including the famous Field Marshal Von Kluck.

DISTILLERS OF UNITED STATES RECEIVE BLACK EYE

Dominion Cabinet Blocks Their Game to Make Canada a Storage Ground for Surplus Stocks.

Special to The Standard

Ottawa, Ont., Dec. 31.—United States distillers who may have cherished hopes of shipping their surplus stock of whiskey into Canada in bond and re-exporting it from the Dominion under the law which permits liquor from this country, were struck a hard blow, today, when the Dominion Government passed an order-in-council prohibiting importation of liquor into Canada in bond. While the order embraced all countries it is known that it is directed particularly against the distillers of the United States, who it was feared, might flood the Dominion with their surplus stock between now and January 17 and then re-ship from here.

WRECKAGE COMES ASHORE NEAR HARBORVILLE, N. S.

Stern of Large Sailing Vessel, Bearing Inscription A. W. Allan, Providence, R. I., Picked up With Other Material.

Special to The Standard

Halifax, N. S., Jan. 1.—The stern of what was evidently a large sailing vessel came ashore at Harborville, near Kentville, on the Bay of Fundy shore during the night. The wreckage bore the inscription A. W. Allan, Providence, Rhode Island.

Along with the stern came several chests of oil, a number of chairs and a trunk. The trunk contained a quantity of ladies wearing apparel which, however gave no clue to the owner. A sum of money in American gold was found sewn up in one of the garments. The wreck of last night followed other wreckage which has been drifting ashore in this vicinity for the past week, advice from Harborville this morning stated. Included in the wreckage previously coming ashore was an eighty foot spar. Available shipping records do not list the A. W. Allan.