

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1919.

PREMIER BORDEN.

In spite of the rumors which have been current for some time in regard to his health, the announcement from Ottawa that Premier Borden will retire from political life after the New Year will be a great surprise to the country. His retirement will mean a great loss to the Unionist Party, and a great loss to Canada and the Empire. Having piloted the country through the greatest task it ever attempted, having rallied this young nation to unexpected heights of achievement in the defence of the Empire and the cause of civilization, there was a natural hope and desire that the country would have the benefit of his strong leadership and ripe judgment throughout the whole period of reconstruction. But the strain of the great responsibilities imposed upon him during the war has impaired his health, and though he apparently has the spirit and the disposition to continue his labors, his physicians have advised him that he can only do so at the risk of irreparable breakdown, and he has decided—evidently with reluctance—to pass over his heavy responsibilities to another man.

Sir Robert was one of the few Prime Ministers who led his country into the war, and was still leading with undiminished energy and greater prestige at the signing of the Peace Treaty, and he has borne a steady burden that might well have broken a younger man. It was no light task to arouse a peace-loving people, filled with repugnance for the very thought of war, to the martial ardor that eventually pervaded the nation, or to unite a people, divided by sharply defined political beliefs, in a common effort in a great conflict, the importance of the issue of which was not adequately visualized by many remote from the scene of strife, and the able manner in which Sir Robert Borden discharged his great task has earned him the gratitude of all Canadians, and the admiration of all the people of the Empire and the freedom-loving nations. To his able leadership we mainly owe it that Canada was able to play a role in the titanic struggle that has evoked the wonder of the world, and placed upon the stage of affairs a new conception of the Empire. After his great labors at home he went to the Peace Conference, and there, besides securing the recognition of Canada's new status in the Empire and world affairs brilliantly earned by her soldiers in the field, he put his mark on the Peace Treaty and the League of Nations, especially in the way of securing a better recognition of the rights of labor, as was befitting the representative of a young and hardworking democracy.

Since the war Premier Borden has tackled with foresight and energy the problem of providing for the dependents of Canada's sons fallen in the war, and of re-settling the returned soldiers in civil life, and under his guidance Canada has shown a greater generosity to her soldiers than any other combatant nation. His measures have not been free from criticism, and it is possible that the Government might have done more—it could never do too much for the soldiers—but it is only recently that a distinguished Australian visiting this country expressed surprise at the extent of the work the Canadian Government has done for the soldiers. Under his guidance, too, the important task of re-converting our industries to a peace basis was undertaken with boldness and energy, and by the provision of foreign credits, this country has already got on her feet again in an industrial and commercial sense without any of those serious disturbances which have marked the efforts of other countries to recover from the shock of war. Today Canada faces the future with high ambition and great hopes, with a feeling of optimism and security unknown in most other countries, and it may be said that Sir Robert can retire with the consciousness that as a result of his wise policies the hardest problems of the task of reconstruction appear to be solved.

But of Sir Robert will relinquish the helm of the ship of State staunch and trim in an economic sense, and with the prospect of fair weather for some time to come, it is not so certain that he will bequeath to his successor a political situation untroubled by the possibility of storms. Hon. Arthur Meighan, who is mentioned as the probable successor, is a very able man, endowed with an unusually brilliant and powerful intellect, but it would be idle to pretend that he is likely to lead the Unionist party as successfully as Sir Robert might have done if his health had permitted him to continue to give his distinguished services to public life. Mr. Meighan has youth and energy, and what is important at the present moment when there appears to be danger of a division between the East and the West over the tariff question, the advantage of representing the middle west, of knowing the ways of thinking and feeling on the prairies, where the political policies which have made Canada a progressive

and prosperous country are being thrown into the melting pot. Apparently the new leader, who will be chosen by a caucus of the Unionist members of Parliament after the New Year, will be left the task of reconstructing the Cabinet, and if the honor falls to Mr. Meighan he will have no difficulty in gathering around him a group of Ministers of sufficient ability and prestige to command public confidence, and carry on public affairs with efficiency and energy.

BUYING IN CANADA.

It is announced that the Federal Government proposes to inaugurate a "Buy in Canada" campaign, and it would seem to be the psychological moment for such a campaign. Our huge purchases from the United States give cause for new reflections when the Canadian dollar there is quoted at 89 cents, a thing that is doubtless calling to the national pride. Last year Canada spent about \$800,000,000 in the States for goods, many of which might have been manufactured in this country, but there are now indications that the unfavorable rate of exchange is affecting American sales in Canada. A Winnipeg shoe dealer is reported as saying that whereas he used to sell 1,000 pairs of American shoes annually, this year the demand has so fallen off that he will not place any orders for American shoes next year. And there are other reports that American commercial travellers are not finding sales so easy as in the past, particularly in the Western Provinces.

A Government campaign to promote buying in Canada may do much good. Government propaganda proved its value in many ways during the war; it stimulated recruiting, increased production, and made a remarkable success of the war loans. The Government's paternal interest in foreign trade through the Canadian Trade Commission has resulted in a big increase of our exports to European countries and South America. And Government propaganda could also help much to create a preference for home products, and by reducing the unfavorable balance of trade between this country and the United States restore the Canadian dollar to par value. Canadian manufacturers and wholesalers might also help their own business and the general prosperity by doing more advertising on their own account. There can be little doubt that the great demand for American goods in this country is due in large measure to the artful and expensive advertising carried by the American magazines and newspapers which circulate in such immense numbers in Canada. And the Federal Government is to some extent responsible for the competition of all this attractive advertising, because American periodicals enjoy cheaper postal facilities in Canada than our own publications. When the present postal union between the two countries was adopted there were practically no Canadian publications of national circulation to be considered, and there are very few now, owing partly to the fact that they have inferior postal facilities.

From time to time we have had in various cities in the Maritime Provinces advertising campaigns on the part of local merchants to encourage buying in the home town, but have these campaigns had sufficient support from the big manufacturers or wholesalers interested in the development of the Canadian market generally? More Canadian manufacturers are doing advertising on a national scale than formerly, but American manufacturers are probably doing as much if not more right here in Canada. The manager of a group of Canadian trade papers stated the other day that one-half of the advertisements carried by Canadian trade papers came from American sources.

A "Buy in Canada" campaign might encourage the movement of American capital and enterprise to this country. Today the United States has much capital seeking investment, but it will not be utilized to develop industries here if American products find an easy sale in Canada. If American or British capital is encouraged to come here by patriotic buying, American and British immigrants will come here, too, and business generally will be stimulated, and a larger home market developed for the farmer as well.

THE CONVOY SYSTEM.

Admiralty officials are fond of talking of the success of the convoy system, not only as applied to troop ships, but to merchant ships generally. But for two years or more they took the ground that it could not be generally adopted, because merchant ship officers could not be trusted to keep station or manoeuvre in convoy. In the first two years of the war few British merchant ships had guns, and probably none had pom-poms for firing depth bombs. When Havelock Wilson and a delegation of merchant seamen demanded guns, Lord Kitchener told him he could not get guns for the army, and sent them to France. After

seeing how the British troops were suffering from lack of guns, the delegation returned and told the merchant sailors to carry on. And in course of time the Admiralty gave its attention to the problem of arming merchant ships.

When the Admiralty began to develop the convoy system on a large scale, most British merchant ships carried one gun, and some carried pom-poms capable of firing depth bombs the full range of torpedo attack. And other developments in the anti-submarine campaign were imposing increasing limitations upon the effectiveness of U-boat warfare. Admiralty figures of losses under the convoy system and before are impressive, but the relative immunity is probably not wholly due to the convoy system itself, if it was the Admiralty should be blamed for not adopting the convoy system before. In a large convoy ships were frequently dropping behind through engine trouble. Many a convoy was followed day after day by submarines which picked off the ships as they fell behind. But it does not appear that these losses were counted on the side of convoy system. And many a fine big ship was lost in convoy that would have made port if she had not been obliged to loaf along with much slower ships. In one case two big ships in the heart of a convoy in the Mediterranean were torpedoed; if they had been on their own responsibility they would have been proceeding fifteen knots instead of eight. The masters of those ships could never be persuaded of the advantage of the convoy system.

In the first two years of the war the Admiralty did not have as many armed ships available for escorting purposes as they had later. But they had enough to have instituted the convoy system on a considerable scale. At that time the U-boats were mostly destroying merchant ships by gun fire, and the U-boats only carried guns of small calibre. One armed vessel would have been a considerable protection for a convoy of helpless merchantmen.

WINNIPEG'S TROUBLES.

The report that the position of Mayor Gray, of Winnipeg, is threatened by charges of bribery on his behalf gives a new interest to the extraordinary situation in that city. The recent elections made Mayor Gray dictator of the city; the new council is composed of seven labor representatives of radical propensities, and seven representatives of the Citizens' Committee. As the two factions in the council are at daggers drawn on most questions, the Mayor's casting vote would often have to determine the issue. Moreover the burden of carrying on the administrative services will largely devolve upon the Mayor, a task that will be the more difficult because in the past the Mayor of Winnipeg has exercised no executive functions beyond those of a social and ornamental character.

Some days ago a labor candidate in the recent elections charged Nathan Segal, manager of the United Baking Company, and Adolph Friedman, an ex-city detective, with offering him a large sum of money to withdraw when it would have been too late to nominate another man in his place. These two men were convicted, and fined \$50 each. It was not suggested that Mayor Gray or officers of the Citizens' Committee knew anything of this attempt at bribery, or of the other charges that have been made since. But Mayor Gray's position has been made more difficult, even if the charges that threaten his election are thrown out of court.

A curious feature of the recent election was that in spite of the grave character of the issues involved only about half of the registered voters went to the polls. That in the circumstances there should have been so large a neutral element is a matter of some concern for those who believe in democracy.

A BIT OF FUN

Imbued With Modern Spirit.
 The Boss—So you want a job do you? What can you do?
 Applicant—Nothing particular, but then work is not so much an object as good wages.

A Different Branding.
 "Hello, Skeets, how's tricks?"
 "Pretty fair."
 "Still writing nonsense verses?"
 "Yes, but I label it verse libre now. Believe me the market is better."

A Change of Air.
 "Hello, Martin!" cried Jinks, as they met in the street. "You look up to much." "I have been off color lately," replied Martin sadly. "Saw the doctor the other day, as the wife was rather worried." "And what was his verdict?" "He said I needed a change of air." "Oh, and what did your mistress say?" "Nothing." Jinks answered frankly. "She only went out and bought a new record for the gramophone."

THE EDITOR'S MAIL

To the Editor of The Standard:
 St. John, N. B.
 Dear Sir—It was with interest that I read your highly colored page on December 10th with heading: "Maritime Union."
 The writer was very bold to sweep forth and tell us of our narrowness. Brave was he who dared say that St. John knocked Halifax and vice versa. The writer might have gone further and told how the river service on the magnificent St. John, the Rhine of America for beautiful scenery, has been ruined by St. John hotels driv-

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

This afternoon a man started to paint the front of our house, starting all the way up by setting on a board and leaving it down with ropes hooked on the roof and when he got outside the 3rd story I went up and leaned out the window and started to talk to keep him company, saying, How does it feel to be up so high, mister?

You're up just as high, ain't you? sed the man. Being a kind of a funny looking man with long skinnie legs hanging down, and I sed, Yes, but I aint setting on a board out on the air.

Wich I wasent, and I kepp on watching him a while and then I sed, It would be pritty dangerous if the ropes happened to brake or anything, wouldnt it, mister.

Thats drawing it mild, see the man. Meaning it would be dangerous as anything. And he kepp on painting with a serious expression getting some on his white overalls every once in a while, and I sed, If one of the hooks came undid, that would be just as dangerous, wouldnt it mister?

I would you know, and say, for the love of Mike, cut out the calamity stuff, will you? sed the man.

And he kepp on painting and I kepp on watching him, and after a while I sed, Suppose you suddinly got dizzy and fell over backwards, that would be the most dangerous of all wouldnt it, mister?

Confound it, you almost made me drop my brush then, now if you dont get away from that window in about a half a 2nd, Ill paint your face for you, sed the man.

Proving he properly was a little nervise by disposition, and I stayed there about 5 more 2nds jest to show he wasent my boss and then I went down in the kitchen to see wat we was goin to have for supper.

ing summer visitors not to go up the river. "Fredericton is hot" it is small, there is nothing there." If he is a St. John writer, though I notice his article is published in the Atlantic Leader, Halifax, he might have told how the Transcontinental Railway was carried away from the natural course, the St. John Valley, to follow a course through the provincial lumber tracts, which will probably all ways be kept for its lumber, because Nova Scotia has forestal things with a one-sided view.

Will the term Maritime Union alter this sort of thing? The national sentiment is the key stone of our future success. The slogan in the mouth of every man, woman and child should be "Canada for the Canadians."

Canada is now stepping out of her long clothes. Her mother is proud of her, her neighbors jealous of her. Then, why? now, when we see the result of class voting and legislation exhibited in the Bolsheviki control of the labor unions in the United States, should something be torpeded on the public to take away the one great national idea.

The writer is not logical, he tells how narrow we are, yet he wishes to build a wall called Maritime Union to hedge us, thus preventing our right developing.

The article seems to be of the same skyline color as Western Farmers' business, politics. "Watch for further developments."

Yours truly,
 H. H. McNALLY,
 Fredericton, Dec. 10, 1919.

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