

## The St. John Standard

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## THE ESTIMATES.

The Provincial Secretary is a cheerful man. In spite of a deficit of three hundred thousand dollars, he deliberately, wittily and with malice aforethought presents to the legislature a budget for the current year in which he estimates a surplus of ten thousand, six hundred and forty-two dollars and thirty-five cents. He might at least have dropped off the thirty-five cents in order to make it even money, for really the people of New Brunswick will not worry whether he saves that thirty-five or not.

Mr. Murray has prepared a very pretty program, no great improvement over what he had last year, of course—but in view of the experience of the past two months certainly a more optimistic proposal might have been expected. He doesn't worry over one hundred and thirty-four thousand or an acknowledged deficit, or three hundred thousand dollars actual deficit, nor even a bogus surplus of thirty-one thousand dollars. These things mean nothing at all to Mr. Murray, for as a matter of fact he does not spend the money. He collects it, and pays the bills for Mr. Veniot and the others—but chiefly for Mr. Veniot. And he has faith in the minister of public works, too. He does not believe that the Honorable Peter exceeded his appropriation by hundreds of thousands of dollars last year. He pays no attention to the fact that never before in the history of New Brunswick was there a charge to capital account for the construction of permanent roads when no permanent roads were built. He knows things will be alright, for it is an easy matter to increase the federal subsidy by one brass farthing. Let's stay exactly as it was last year, mind you. This is a strange omission in the face of Premier Foster's rosy forecast of what was about to happen in Ottawa. But when it comes to territorial revenues from stampage and royalties, Mr. Murray shines. He has put in one hundred and twenty thousand dollars increase in the stampage of bookkeeping to transfer to capital account whatever deficit may be created through excess ditching of back roads, political employment to prospective supporters, and all the other trills and incidentals with which the heads of the administrative departments are so familiar.

Coming down to cases, Mr. Murray is modest in his estimates. He doesn't even increase the federal subsidy by one brass farthing. Let's stay exactly as it was last year, mind you. This is a strange omission in the face of Premier Foster's rosy forecast of what was about to happen in Ottawa. But when it comes to territorial revenues from stampage and royalties, Mr. Murray shines. He has put in one hundred and twenty thousand dollars increase in the stampage of bookkeeping to transfer to capital account whatever deficit may be created through excess ditching of back roads, political employment to prospective supporters, and all the other trills and incidentals with which the heads of the administrative departments are so familiar.

He figures fifty thousand dollars from amusement admission tax. Last year's estimate was only five thousand, but that was for only a portion of the year, and the opinion was that the full year would produce thirty thousand dollars. The present estimate is a lot of money to take out of the people—largely out of the pockets of the poor people who find their principal amusement in the cheaper picture houses. It will be a pity if Mr. Murray gets that much. There are a lot of folks who need the money more than he does.

Motor vehicles are put down for twenty thousand dollars more than the estimate for last year, and this is perhaps a fair estimate, but as against this item it is proposed, according to the estimates, to set aside a larger proportion of the vehicle tax for the construction of permanent roads.

Apparently the patriotic and war purposes assessment is not to be continued this year. Having taken one hundred and twenty thousand dollars from the people in what was nothing more nor less than sheer robbery, the Foster Government is prepared to let matters slide and to make up in other ways what it may lose from this source. These are the only items in estimated receipts which are worthy of comment. All the others are of a routine nature. A new figure appears in the form of public health fees, but this estimate is a very small proportion of the prospective expenditure, and need not be regarded as belonging to the estimates. Mr. Murray is very moderate indeed, although there are some little things open to explanation. It is in this very moderation that his cheerful spirit so strikingly appears. Knowing his colleagues as he does, how Mr. Murray can keep down his guesses on their expenditures is a mystery, but of course these are only estimates, and members of the Veniot-Foster Government are bound by the law, nor by votes passed by the Legislature. They will simply go ahead and spend whatever they please, and they have done in the past, and trust to a merciful providence to help them out of the hole.

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

The most important news in the world today is being created at the peace conference in Paris, and the world knows nothing about it. Such scraps of information as are being given out serve only to conceal the true tendency of the proceedings. Un-

fortunately they do more than that—they create among the people of the various nations suspicion regarding the attitude of their Allies. This policy of secrecy prevents the dissipation of unrest, prohibits the contradiction of incorrect impressions which are so increasingly evident, and is gradually creating a feeling of distrust and the belief that all is not well between the associated powers. Fragments of reports touching on the attitude of one or other group of delegates appear in the press of Europe and America without explanation as to the positions taken, or the sentiments entertained by those at variance. One day we are told that President Wilson dominates the conference, on another that the European powers are disgusted with his shiftless policy of idealism and procrastination. We are advised from London that Wilson has the whole United States behind him, while Paris is informed by special cable that he has embittered even his own friends by calculated disregard of their views. We learn from Paris that the British delegation yields to America's contentions, but New York insists that United States representatives are blocking the proceedings of the conference by ill-considered insistence in endeavoring to force their views on the gathering.

Many thousands of words are cabled across the Atlantic every day from men who are supposed to be the best living correspondents, but who in this particular matter are apparently using their abilities to conceal rather than to present the truth regarding what is being done. After several months of practically continuous sessions the German armistice has been twice renewed, a compromise has been reached whereby German merchant shipping will be taken over by the Allies, powers at a price payable in food, and that before very long a preliminary peace treaty will be drafted. Of the terms of peace for which the conference assembled there is not a word.

We know nothing in respect to the ideas of the assembled powers in the matter of compensation for wrongs, punishment of criminals, restitution, or future relations. Apart from the demobilization of Germany, concerning which no definite information has been given out, but which is perhaps proceeding leisurely, there is no action either in process or contemplated with respect to Russia or Turkey, nor does the matter of Austria-Hungary, Germany's willing tool, appear very frequently in the conference reports.

The proceedings at the conference are shrouded in silence, and from all that the people of the allied countries are able to learn, are typical of that secret diplomacy against which there has been such wide-spread protest and which it was intimated would not longer be permitted to influence the destinies of world powers.

British comment, and in fact press comment in all the allied countries has of late been severely critical of the methods adopted at this conference and the charge is made on all sides that to the delay in dealing with important subjects and to the interminable discussion of minor points, may be traced the growing unrest in central Europe. The feeling prevails that unless the peace conference gets through its principal duties the task before it will be much more serious than it is today.

## HOUSING LEGISLATION.

The Attorney General of Nova Scotia gives notice of legislation to provide for rental for dwelling houses and to restrict the eviction of tenants. While it is true that such legislation will be applicable to all parts of Nova Scotia, Halifax is suffering most severely, just as in New Brunswick St. John finds it particularly difficult to provide accommodation for its residents at anything like a reasonable price. Halifax has experienced exceptional conditions during the past few years. Big business has been the order, with a consequent influx of new residents. Money has been plentiful, wages high, and profits large, with the result that advances have been very marked in every item of household expense. Naturally, because of the excessive cost of construction, and of the great efforts which had to be put forth in the way of reconstruction following the explosion, there has been little done in the way of providing new homes for rental under private ownership. As a matter of fact, the building record of Halifax is no better in this respect than is the record of St. John, and it is felt in the Nova Scotia capital that the very marked increase in rentals which have been demanded by property owners are due almost wholly to the great demand for accommodation which prevails, and are not justified by such increases as are required in taxation, cost of repairs and other maintenance incidentals. It is practically impossible to secure a home in Halifax at the present time without spending a very much larger proportion of one's income than should be required for this purpose, but it is extremely doubtful if conditions there are any worse than those which exist in St. John where there has been no construction in recent years, and where the gradual growth of the city has brought about conditions of serious discomfort to many. It will be interesting to watch how the Nova

Scotia legislation works out. If it proves at all successful there will be an urgent demand from St. John, Moncton and other New Brunswick towns for similar action on the part of our government.

## THE McQUEEN REPORT.

In spite of desperate attempts of The Telegraph and Times, and a few of the smaller fry employed to defend the Veniot-Foster administration, the McQueen report has fallen flat. Unfortunately for the Government, the people of this Province have clearly recognized the methods which prompted this investigation, and knew the calibre of the men conducting it. They realized from the beginning that this inquiry was not undertaken for the purpose of promoting political purity, but that it was a deliberate attempt to wreck the public reputations of certain political opponents. Recognizing this condition, the public generally, who had observed the methods employed by the commissioner, anticipated exactly such a report as has been presented, and the people of this province who knew the records of the men condemned by that report also knew enough about the present administration and its tools not to be surprised at anything it may do.

Had the McQueen report been prepared by a man holding the respect of the people, at the instance of a government deserving of any respect whatever, a different view might have been taken of it. But under present conditions the worst that Mr. McQueen and his employers can say about those political opponents does not lessen in the slightest degree the opinion in which they are held by the people at a whole.

## THEY APPRECIATE IT.

The Standard has received the following letter from a prominent business man of Sherbrooke, Quebec, which will be read with pleasure by many who are devoting their time to the subject referred to: "As chairman of one of the citizens' committees looking after the protection of returning soldiers, I have frequent occasion to meet troop trains from St. John, and I feel that you might like to know that scarcely a train passes through but we hear from the men expressions of appreciation of the great kindness and attention shown to them by the people of St. John. As a result of this attention the men are invariably in a very happy frame of mind when they reach here, and no doubt they are greatly benefited as a result of the kind manner in which they are received in St. John."

## WHAT THEY SAY

## Consequences.

Detroit Free Press: It is said that idleness in Germany is leading to disaster. This, however, is what comes of being too busy making war to do any advance thinking.

## Indemnity Angle.

New York Herald: Restaurant bandit is pursued and captured by waiter. He failed to tip. A few more instances of the sort will place tips in a class with health insurance premiums.

## Something to Worry Over.

Buffalo Courier: Canada has begun seriously to consider the question as to what would become of that country as a fishing resort under permanent and no bait.

## The Bulls Eye.

London Free Press: The old Canadian cent is no longer to be minted. A smaller coin will take its place. The only members of the community likely to resent the change will be the "kiddies," who may fear that if the cent is made small the tempting "bull's-eye" will suffer a proportionate shrinkage.

## An Infectious Disease.

London Daily Express: Bolshevism is a nasty disease, and very catching. It is infectious, however, its origin and spread are fully recognized, so that inoculation may follow. It might be called the "Bolshevik" disease. Murder, manslaughter, treason, treason-felony — and Bolshevism. Why not?

## A BIT OF VERSE

## The Flashing Axe.

(By W. T. Duncan.)  
Here's to the flashing axe  
That cleared a glorious way  
For the men who fought and wisely wrought  
A road for an empire's sway.

Hark to the mighty crash—  
Its echoes are ringing still—  
Which brought the trees to the sturdy knees.  
Of men with a conquering will.

Hark to the children's cry,  
In fancy heard today,  
When the savage yelled and the rifle held  
The ruthless foe at bay.

Rifle and axe and spear,  
Honor, and trust in God:  
These were the tools that made  
The road that nation trod.

Thus have the men of the west  
Sprung from a gallant page  
With the power to hew, to dare and do,  
As a priceless heritage.

Proud should their children be  
That their fathers' sires were men  
Who mapped a line from brins to brins  
With a flashing axe for a pen.

Then, here's to the flashing axe  
And the men that knew no fear,  
Who with swinging blade, a pathway made—  
The path of the Pioneer.

## Little Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE.

I'm reading a book with a red cover called In the Days of the Round Table, all about knights fighting each other with spears, and tawking the way they use to tawlk and different things, being pretty exciting even without the pictures, and tawntie will we was eating supper, I sed, Methinks this soap is good.

It sounds all rite, sed my sister Gladia. Meaning I was making too much noise drinking it, and pop sed, And ware do you get that methinks stuff?

He's bin tawking like that all day, sed ma, its out of some book he's reading and its awnt to drive a persin crazy.

Old bodykins, methinks it didnt drive the people krazy wen they use to speak like that all the time, etitson, so methinks w should it just in one day? I sed.

Izent that perfectly redickles? sed ma.

I dont see mutch sents to it myself, sed pop. And we got past the soap and kops on eating, and I sed, Methinks theres a beek of a lot of pepper in these tomatoes, gasooks.

If you dont like a thing you dont haff to eat it, I've told you that awnten enuff, and I dont want you to eat people gasooks, I dont care wat book you're reading, sed ma.

The boy means gasooks, its meerly an old fashioned exclamation, sed pop, and ma sed, I dont care wat it is, I wont have him calling me one.

And we kops on eating supper and I sed, Marry come up, methinks I want some more buttr, gasooks.

Benny Potts, wat did I tell you, now this has gone far enuff, I dont like that word and I dont like any of those words, and if people use it wat like that all the time, etitson, and theres no reason I should suffer, sed ma.

Benny, sed pop  
Sir? I sed.  
Can the King Arthur stuff, sed pop.  
Wich I did.

COMMON COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING

The Common Council yesterday decided to call for tenders for the sheathing of the West Side ferry approach, the painting of the ferry steamer Governor Carleton and caps and uniforms for some of the ferry employees; to pay Milton Belyea, deck-hand on the ferry, who was hurt in the recent accident, forty-five per cent. of his wages not paid by the Compensation Board, and the doctors and medicine bills incurred by him while on duty, and to accept the tender of J. T. Knight and Co. for 460 tons of Mexican asphalt at \$27.75 per ton. In connection with the request from Mr. Belyea for payment of the balance of wages not paid by the Compensation Board, the interesting fact was brought out that while the city was paying a great deal more for liability insurance than before the inception of the new Workmen's Compensation Board, the protection was only fifty-five per cent. today as compared with seventy-five per cent. under the old regime. When this fact was brought out one of the commissioners was heard to remark: "But they have a large office staff to keep up."

Mayor Hayes presided and Commissioners Thornton, Bullock, Jones and Fisher were present. The report of the committee of the whole as previously published was adopted. On motion of Commissioner Fisher it was decided to reserve the paving of Union street from Waterloo to Bruns street, at an estimated cost of \$8,317.50. Commissioner Jones said there would be general opposition to paving under the local improvement act, and it seemed a waste of time and money to advertise these streets. The mayor and chamberlains were authorized to make arrangements for the printing of the reports and accounts.

Barnhill, Ewing and Sanford, on behalf of their client, A. W. Smith, claimed damages to the amount of \$99.50, for injuries received by fall up on March 4th in front of the Royal Hotel, fall caused by hole in the sidewalk. Referred to the commissioners of public works and city solicitor.

A communication was received from the Nail Makers' Union, requesting the city commissioners to keep in mind the need for workmen's tickets, eight for a quarter, when the new rates were being made with the New Brunswick Power Co. This was referred to the committee of the whole.

A letter from D. McLaughlin, calling attention to a need of a sidewalk on a portion of Forest street, was referred to the commissioner of public works.

A bill from the Union of Canadian municipalities of \$150 for annual dues was ordered paid.

On motion of Commissioner Fisher, the tender of J. T. Knight and Co. for asphalt at \$27.75 per ton, was accepted, and the amount increased from 460 to 480 tons.

Commissioner Thornton moved that the sum of \$30 be accepted from the New Brunswick Power Co. in full payment of damages done to hose on March 15. Adopted.

On motion of Commissioner Fisher, the extremely high cost of opiates and low price of cigarettes this sounds like a direct charge of insane extravagance.

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Ferry Superintendent Waring said he recommended the sheathing as a matter of economy, not because he believed there was any actual danger to life under present conditions. Commissioner Bullock said the city engineer had prepared an estimate of the cost of the work, and the city would supply the necessary plan to the contractor. Mayor Hayes said he did not think the jury were justified in bringing in the verdict they did, from the evidence given. Commissioner Jones thought if there was any likelihood of the removal of the ferry terminal in the near future it would not be wise to make this expenditure at present. The mayor expressed the opinion that if any changes were made it would be to build a bridge.

The motion to call for tenders for the sheathing of the West Side ferry approach with oak was then put and carried.

On motion of Commissioner Bullock he was given authority to call for tenders for the painting of the ferry steamer Governor Carleton and caps and uniforms for some of the ferry employees. Commissioner Thornton asked if these contracts would call for the payment of union wages, and was informed that every city contract contained that clause.

Commissioner Bullock then read a communication from Milton Belyea, who was injured in the recent ferry accident, asking that he be paid forty-five per cent. of his wages for the time lost, the Compensation Board only having paid fifty-five per cent; he also asked for the payment of the doctor and medicine bills, the whole amounting to \$68.05, and moved the bill be paid.

Commissioner Fisher wanted to know why the Compensation Board only paid fifty-five per cent. of the wages, and was informed that was all the law called for. He remarked that when the city was buying its own liability insurance the amount of protection was seventy-five per cent., and the premium was a good deal less. At this stage some one remarked: "But they have a large office staff to keep up."

The committee then rose and the council adopted the various resolutions passed.

## Motive Lacking.

New York Herald: Head of Methodist Temperance and Moral Board says cigarettes supplied to American soldiers were filled with opiates by the "Tobacco Trust." Considering the extremely high cost of opiates and low price of cigarettes this sounds like a direct charge of insane extravagance.



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