

The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., MARCH 17, 1919

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THE McQUEEN REPORT.

It is expected that the McQueen report will be tabled in the legislature this week. In anticipation of the findings of the commissioner he has been subjected to savage attack, and it is therefore well to point out that it is not Commissioner McQueen who is on trial. That gentleman is not a member of the legislature. He has not been charged with or suspected of any improper conduct as a representative of the people. He was simply authorized to secure sworn evidence regarding the activities of certain members of the legislature and other persons associated with them, and submit a report on the same. The evidence taken has been published. It amazed and shocked the people of the whole province. It proved that certain public men had been guilty of conduct the exposure of which should have been followed immediately by their withdrawal from public life. They have not resigned their seats, however, but appear to have decided to defy public sentiment and go on as if they had been exonerated instead of exposed and condemned. It is not at all necessary to wait for the McQueen report to form a judgment on their acts. With the sworn evidence before them the people judged and judged aright. The bringing down of the report is merely interesting because after it has been produced the members of the opposition party who are not involved in its findings must stand up to be counted as men who condemn or who have decided to be apologists for the wrong-doers. The people at large want to know whether patriotism or partisanship is the stronger passion in the breasts of these gentlemen, and their action after the McQueen report comes down will be the answer. This province has acquired a most enviable reputation in regard to its politics. The other provinces will judge it by what the legislature does with the McQueen report, and the immediate whose conduct made that report necessary. This is by far the most serious matter to come before the house during the present session. It goes to the root of everything that relates to public men and public measures. No long speeches or solemn protestations can obscure the glaring facts brought out in sworn testimony. The issue cannot be dodged. Is the legislature to be purged, or political wrong-doing winked at by those elected by the people to give the province clean and honest government? The answer to this question lies with the members on both sides of the house. It is not an ordinary bill before the house might be, a matter for argument and two sets of opinions equally worthy of respect. It is a simple question of right and wrong, and should be settled in such a way that no future legislators would care to risk a similar exposure and penalty. We should reconstruct our politics as the very first step in bringing about a better state of affairs in New Brunswick. The government that has the courage to inflict the penalty wherever wrong-doing is exposed within its jurisdiction will not only command public approval but confer an immense benefit upon the province. Too long the sneering comment, "They're all alike," has been current in our politics. A very grave responsibility now rests, not only upon the government, but upon the members of the house. The people will judge them by their acts.

JUDGE HUNT'S ADVICE.

The Times commends to the St. John school board, the superintendent, principals and teachers an extract from the report just issued, of Dr. Hunt, K. C., judge of the juvenile court in Halifax, who in his first ten months in office dealt with 220 cases of delinquent children. In setting down some of the causes of delinquency he speaks of home conditions, and says—

"Owing perhaps to the cost of living, the conditions in some of the homes are not what they should be. The high rents, the poor and small, overcrowded tenement houses and apartments, with no room for family gathering go a long way to break up home life, and send the younger member of the family to spend their evenings in the street. In connection with this I strongly advise that the halls connected with our school buildings should be open every evening in the winter, for use of our children with their parents. In this way the children could be sheltered from the street temptation."

The suggestion of Judge Hunt is that of a man who loves children, who realizes that the relations between parents and children have been greatly changed by modern conditions, and that society must interest itself far more than ever before in the welfare of the boys and girls during the time they are not in school. In New York rooms in school buildings are open in the evening for pupils whose homes are poor and crowded, so that they may read or pursue studies under cheerful conditions, but the same buildings are open also for the benefit of the parents. In other words, as Chief Supt. Carter says, the school building is the social centre. It cannot be so utilized in St. John until changes are made in the buildings, but at least

the assembly halls may be used, to the great benefit of the neighborhood. The school board will be very ill-advised if it permits any reactionary influence to stand in the way of a legitimate use of the school buildings of the city.

THE FIGHT WILL GO ON.

The city council will have the unanimous support of the citizens in refusing to accept the Carrier report on the New Brunswick Power Company as the basis of legislation. That report came as a complete surprise. It was, as Mayor Hayes observed, a company report. It would have the city pay interest and dividends on watered stock, and also produce a surplus reserve to add another half million to the \$3,100,000 which the commission says should be recognized. It would also relieve the company of the obligation to pay the city about \$12,000 per year which it now pays. Legislation based on that report would be a gross injustice to the city, which refuses to recognize any such valuation as is there placed upon the property of the company. The choice of a commission was obviously unfortunate, although that was not discovered until too late. The enquiry made may be of value, but the conclusions arrived at must be resisted to the limit. This was the view expressed at an important and representative meeting in the mayor's office on Saturday, and action will be taken to make it effective. Now is the time to settle accounts with the company and guard the city's interests for the future.

A correspondent submits as one reason why people do not build houses in St. John the following paragraph from a Montreal paper:

"A Montreal contractor in a large way of business remarked the other day, 'Why should a speculator put his money into building at the present time (where everything in the cost of materials and labor is so uncertain) when he can obtain a good investment in Victory Bonds and has no taxes to pay upon them?'"

The answer to the question is evidently "Safety First."

The rapidity with which soldiers are now being shipped home to Canada should tend to speed up the plans to re-absorb them into civilian life under conditions favorable to them. Every public man deems it appropriate and necessary to declare that everything possible must be done for the benefit of the soldier. So far so good, and the time has come to see that it is done. Lp-service will not serve. The soldier is here.

There were no friendly overtures at the meeting of the Allied and German representatives when the handing over of the German merchant fleet was agreed to. The Germans signed because they had to, and the Allied delegates were stern and unbending in their manner. The Germans are not yet penitent. They yield with a very bad grace to the inevitable.

The Boy Scout movement should be encouraged until it includes the largest possible number of boys. It gives them healthy interests and discipline, and teaches them to be manly, honorable, and useful. It will help to solve the boy problem.

Every report that comes out of Russia, telling of the Bolsheviks, is a story of savagery and murder. Their rule is infinitely worse than that of autocracy. They are today the greatest menace to world-peace and progress.

From the number of letters received by this paper there is evidently a very keen public interest in the school enquiry now in progress, and a desire that it be thorough and impartial.

It is said this will be a critical week in labor affairs in England, and that Mr. Lloyd George is expected to return to London to deal with the situation.

That St. John band which played at Westminster Abbey at Princess Patricia's wedding was highly honored, and its members will have one cherished memory of their overseas experience.

The Standard learns that the Foster government is not ready to go on with business. Let the opposition call off its orators and the Standard will soon be undeceived.

The Duke of Devonshire presided at the General Council of the Boy Scouts in annual meeting in Ottawa on Saturday. He's "a good old scout."

Starvation confronts thousands of people in the Caucasus region, and it will be extremely difficult to get food to them.

If Germany is asked to give up the west bank of the Rhine and refuses to do so there may be further work for Gen. Foch.

A false alarm was rung in from box 32, corner of Duke and Sidney streets, last evening at about 10.15. The department responded quickly, but were unable to find any trace of a fire.

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THE ANXIOUS DEAD.

O guns, fall silent till the dead men hear. Above their heads the legions pressing on! (These fought their right in time of bitter fear And died not knowing how the day had gone.)

O flashing muzzles, pause and let them see The coming dawn that streaks the sky afar! Then let your mighty chorus witness be To them, and Caesar, that we still make war.

Tell them, O guns, that we have heard That we have sworn and will not turn aside; That we will onward till we win or fall; That we will keep the faith for which they died.

Bid them be patient, and some day, anon, They shall feel earth enwrap in silence deep— Shall greet in wonderment the quiet dawn, And in content may turn them to their sleep.

—From "In Flanders Fields," a collection of the late Col. John McCrae's verse just published by Wm. Briggs.

BACKWARD CHILDREN.

St. John, March 14, '19. To the Editor of The Times: Sir—I am a reader of your paper and saw where several people gave their opinions on school matters. I would like to give my idea of the same. Regarding so-called backward children, one-half of them are in such a position that

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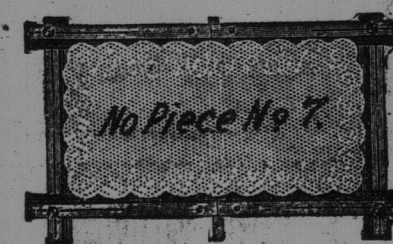


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BRIDGE PERIOD BETWEEN SIGNING OF THE TREATY AND ITS RATIFICATION

Proposal of Modus Vivendi Pending Action by U. S. Senate

Paris, March 16.—(By the Associated Press).—The American peace delegates are considering bridging over the period between the signature of the peace treaty and the ratification of the treaty by the United States senate by a modus vivendi, declaring hostilities ended as of date of the signature, so as not to delay the resumption of normal trade, while affording the senate the necessary time for consideration.

The matter of calling a special session of the senate immediately after the signing of the treaty, which may be within ten days, has also been under consideration.

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BURNED TO GROUND.

Moncton, March 16.—The residence of James Powell, C. N. R. machinist, in North street, was burned to the ground Saturday. The fire is thought to have originated from a defective fuse. There is no insurance.

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