

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1918

## The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY 12, 1918.

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### THE WAR SITUATION.

The French press is not disposed to take the peace proclaimed between the Ukraine and the Central Powers as a settlement likely to last for any length of time. The Ukrainians and Bolsheviks have not yet come to terms, and there may be new developments. The view is expressed, however, that the old Russia will not be restored, but that the former great empire will be broken up. Speculation as to the future is more or less idle, but the Allies face the existing fact that Russia is out of the war, and that means a harder task for the Allied armies.

President Wilson has replied to the German chancellor and the Austrian foreign minister. He regards the speech of the latter as more peaceful and friendly in tone, but makes it clear that the United States will stay in the war until Russian militarism has been crushed. He says: "What we are striving for is a new international order based upon broad and universal principles of right and justice—no mere peace of shreds and patches." Contrast this with the boastful remarks of the Kaiser, who asserts that the Germans will only negotiate as victors in the war. He says: "The victory of German arms must first be recognized. Our troops under the great Hindenburg will continue to win it. Then peace will come."

The Allies have been unfortunate in their eastern relations. It becomes necessary for Britain, the United States, France and Italy to rely upon their own resources and disregard any possible assistance from other quarters. Russia today is a rabble. What she may be tomorrow none can foresee. Many times since the Car was overthrown it has appeared that a central authority around which the people could rally was really in sight, but all predictions based on such appearances have been falsified by the facts. Russia has taken the count, and for the present is down and out. The Kaiser's boast, so far as Russia is concerned, is apparently well founded.

There is, however, nothing of a depressing nature in today's news from the British headquarters in France. We are told that the great offensive is close at hand, whether the initiative is taken by the British or the Germans, and that a very confident feeling prevails on the side of the Allies. The weather conditions have so improved that some of the ground is already dry and fit for fighting, and it is said the great trial of strength may come within a month. The enemy is reported to be making intense preparations, and pouring in both German and Austrian troops; but it is declared the British still have the advantage in numbers of men and guns, and that the result of the winter's preparations will be seen when the great struggle comes.

### THE PATRONAGE EVIL

The government at Ottawa has taken an important step in the direction of the promised reform which will shatter the patronage evil. The civil service regulations published today will go a long way, if properly carried out, to prevent the appointment of incompetent persons to the service. There has been far too much of this, in the inside as well as the outside service, and there is not a department which is not loaded up with persons a good business man would not keep in his employ for a day. The government can go far to improve the conditions, and certainly it should insist upon merit in all new appointments.

The government should, however, go much further, and the Times believes the new legislation would heartily approve of such legislation as would ensure the elimination of patronage on a much larger scale than the civil service act proposes. There would be much less bitterness in partisan warfare if it were made certain that the defeat of one party by another would not lead to a wholesale distribution of leaves and fives. The union government can deal boldly with this whole question, and ought to do so at the coming session of parliament. The country is ready for the reform, and only requires leadership at Ottawa.

### PERTINENT QUESTIONS.

Touche the matter of the New Brunswick Power Company's coming application for legislation to enable it to get more money from the province, the Globe asks the citizens of St. John these questions:—

"The legislature is called to meet in less than a month. The power company has given notice of its purpose, and we have its case ready. What about your case?"

"Can you afford to leave the decision to the legislature without taking steps to see that the facts are presented in their true light?"

"Can you afford to leave your representatives unsupported to deal with this tremendous issue?"

"Can you trust your city council to make the fight for you?"

"Can you trust the city solicitor, alone and unaided, to prepare the case and speak for you in this emergency?"

The citizens of St. John have been "gassed," and now they are awaiting an electric shock.

### SKINNING THE PEOPLE.

One of the most illuminating portions of Auditor MacIntyre's report deals with the increased interest charge (which of course the people who use the street cars or purchase gas, electric light or power must pay to the company) that was levied as soon as the New Brunswick Power Company assumed control, although the increased revenue had to come from the same old plant.

Prior to March, 1917, dividends had to be paid on stock and bonds to the value of \$2,007,000. The new company increased this to \$3,100,000, some of it paying seven per cent instead of six. There was thus an added amount of \$69,120 to be got somehow out of the same old plant. But another \$1,999,000 of common stock was also issued, and of course the plan is to make it interest bearing as soon as the money can be squeezed out of the people.

The man who knows very little about large financial transactions, and may be puzzled by masses of figures, but no difficulty in understanding what this means. Whereas the people were asked last year to pay enough into the company's treasury for service rendered to provide interest on \$2,007,000, they are now to be asked to pay interest on over \$5,000,000, without any more or better service. This may be all very fine for the gentlemen who get their feet under the table and formulate plans to exploit the city in the interests of high finance, but it is not all very fine for the people who pay. They would prefer to get a much better service for what they pay at present. It is because the company has a franchise given by the people that it is able to do business, and therefore every citizen has a personal interest in the present attitude of the company to get for one service or another a little more of his money.

But there is another illuminating paragraph in the auditor's report. It is the effect that in its first nine months the company was able, without the proposed increase in charges, to pay the increased interest and dividends above referred to, and still have a surplus of over \$8,000. In other words, its own record does not show any need of increased charges, unless it is to provide dividends on the \$1,999,000 of common stock, the issue of which was wholly unnecessary.

If any attempt is made to secure legislation to enable the company to increase its charges it must be fought to the bitter end, and every other citizen and town in the province, and every rural constituency, is interested—for it may be their turn next. The committee of the Convention of New Brunswick Municipalities which has to do with legislation should be able to represent at Fredericton at the coming session. Because of past indifference the people have suffered. There must be a much more careful scrutiny of apparently innocent bills, and of the lobbyists who frequent the halls of the legislature in session time.

In the meantime every citizen should study Auditor MacIntyre's report, talk it over with friends, get a perfectly clear knowledge of what it sets forth, and make it clear to all candidates for civic or other honors that the public interest is not to be sacrificed for the benefit of the exponents of frenzied finance.

Toronto Star.—"All wars are dynastic wars. They spring either from the rivalry of those who wish to rule or from resistance to some attempt to impose rule upon people against their will. Left to themselves, the common people would not make war, except to defend their own liberty and their own right of self-government. Real democracy, if universally established, would put an end to war. This is the significance of the emphasis laid by President Wilson upon the importance of the democratization of Germany, and the breaking down of the autocracy which set the world in flames to further its own ambitions."

The Austrians are again very active on the Italian front. The improvement in the east encourages them to pursue a more aggressive policy against Italy. Once the Italians failed to hold their ground. Let us hope they will not fall again.

The yell that went up this morning when the boys and girls learned that one-session days would prevail at school till the end of March proved that the school board had won a new and large set of ordent friends.

All Germany is rejoicing over the collapse of Russia. Nothing short of a smashing defeat on the western front will bring the Hun to terms.

"Holy Russia" has given place to groups of warring peoples, each eager to set up housekeeping for itself. The strong man has fallen to appear.

Once more King George, at the opening of parliament, urges the British people to prosecute the war with all the vigor they possess.

"Mrs. Temple's Telegram" at Imperial tonight.

## A STATEMENT BY PREMIER FOSTER

(Daily Telegraph)

The Telegraph yesterday directed the attention of Premier Foster to a letter published in the Standard and signed by Commissioner McLellan, in the course of which the commissioner attributed certain statements to Hon. Mr. Foster. The Premier said:—

"I never asked Commissioner McLellan for a copy of the MacIntyre report. He volunteered to lend me his copy, and I took it from him. I showed it to nobody. I discussed it with nobody. I communicated none of the contents to anybody. In his letter he attributes to me statements I did not make. I did refer to the probability that the Power company would employ money in attempting to lobby its bill through the house. I said nothing which could possibly be construed into a statement or opinion that members of the legislature could be influenced or would be influenced by money, or by anything else. These are the facts in brief. I only refer to the matter at all because the letter in question misrepresents the facts. That is all there is to it."

### NEW REGULATIONS FOR THE FISHERY LOT

Legislation to create new regulations for the leasing of fishing lots in the harbor of St. John will no doubt be introduced at the coming session of the local legislature. For some time it has been felt that the present regulations, calling as they do for the leasing of a lot anew each year, do not work out satisfactorily, particularly that clause which states that all lots must be disposed of on Jan. 2 and not before nor after.

In event of a new fishing lot being discovered it is impossible for the city, under the present regulations, to dispose of the lot at its own price. A price is offered by the man who seeks to secure it. An instance was noted last season where a man desired to secure a lease of a new fishing lot, but owing to the nature of the regulations the city could not place it in the market nor could the man gain permission to use it.

It is understood that legislation will be sought permitting the city to dispose of fishing lots at any season of the year, as it chooses, and that these lots be leased for a term of years instead of twelve months as the city may deem proper. There are many adherents of the new plan while, of course, there are those who feel that the present system, which has been in vogue for some time, is still sufficiently broad to take care of the needs of the fishing lots. The bill has not yet been completed in draft and it may be that additional changes and improvements will be introduced before it finally reaches the legislature.

### Use of the Hammer.

A British gunner who had successfully passed a blacksmith's course was home on furlough, wearing the hammer and pliers on his arm, when he was asked by a civilian, who asked what the decoration was for.

"Oh," replied the gunner, "I'm an army dentist."

"I see," said the civilian. "Of course the pliers are for extracting teeth. But what is the use of the hammer?"

"Well, you see, it's like this. Some of the boys are so nervous, we use the hammer to chloroform them," was the reply.

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Ladies' \$5.00, \$6.00, \$7.00 Button and Lace Goodieys, Welles Boots, mixed sizes, \$2.25 per pair.

Ladies' \$5.00 and \$6.00 Button and Lace Goodieys, Welles Boots, mixed sizes, \$3.00 per pair.

Ladies' \$8.00 and \$6.50, High Cut Lace Colored Boots, mixed sizes, \$4.50 per pair.

Ladies' \$10.00 and \$8.00 High Cut Lace Colored Boots, mixed sizes, \$6.00 per pair.

Ladies' Tan Rubbers and Tan Foot Holes, medium and small sizes, \$5c. per pair.

Ladies' Fine Rubbers, medium heel and toe, all sizes, 65c. per pair.

Men's Special Rubbers, all sizes, 90c. \$1.10 per pair.

Men's "Hart" Boots, \$2.00 per pair off.

Men's High Grade Boots, \$1.50 to \$2.00 per pair off.

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## O'CONNOR'S REPLY TO HIS CRITICS

Still Believes Price of Eggs is Unjustifiable—Has Nothing to Extenuate

Ottawa, Feb. 12.—W. F. O'Connor, cost of living commissioner, discussing his recent report on the quantity of eggs sold in cold storage on January 1 last, declared today that he has nothing to extenuate his statement.

"Ever since I commenced this series of investigations," he said, "I have been astonished at the blind self-assurance with which practically all persons with whom I have to deal in my official capacity, assume, and sometimes go further and state, that I know nothing about the subject with which for the time being I am engaged. This is a dangerous assumption, as any who may recollect recent history will realize."

"I said that the prices charged for eggs were unjustifiable and I still believe they were unjustifiable. Whether the price paid for the eggs was too high or whether the cost of holding the eggs was higher, whatever may be the cause, I said that an increase in egg holdings of forty-eight per cent, on January 1, 1918, as compared with January 1, 1917, was unjustifiable and I still believe it to be so. I stated that these goods ought to be placed on the market at once or they would rot, and unless they are placed on the market during February they will rot. Further than that, if the bulk of the eggs have been placed on the market since January 1, the date to which my report referred, further action will not be necessary."

"With respect to what I said, I have nothing to extenuate and hope that no longer as I am to be permitted or may choose to remain in my present occupation, as cost of living commissioner, I shall not be deterred by any means or course of action whatever, from doing what I consider to be my duty with respect to the promise. Whenever my conduct as cost of living commissioner is unsatisfactory, I have no doubt that I shall receive an intimation to that effect whereupon I shall no longer be cost of living commissioner."

"It would be preposterous," Mr. O'Connor concluded, "to expect me to reply to those who tell me are based upon the reports obtained from the books of the various companies affected."

## NO WARNING OF SHIFTED BUOYS

Halifax, Feb. 11.—The commission appointed by the federal government to enquire into piloting affairs was astounded this afternoon near the close of the second session, by an announcement by Captain Lettice of the harbor pilot boat, Captain Lettice declared that the naval people shifted buoys without warning and that, vessels coming up in the fog narrowly escaped going ashore at Sambro Ledges.

Chairman Robb showed his astonishment when Captain Lettice declared that one of the vessels which had a narrow escape because of the buoy having been shifted without warning was the Olympic.

"Accept that statement slowly," said Chairman Robb to the witness and Captain Lettice proceeded:—

"A light moved six miles southeast from the Portuguese Shoals buoy off the harbor and was painted in black and white. Just about the start, I think, the pilots were notified. Then in the fall of 1916 this same buoy, or one similar of the same shape and color, was placed at the entrance of what they called 'The Swept Channel.' Again no one was notified. The result was that ships coming up to the buoy in the fog supposed they were making the position shown in the chart and steered westward so that they narrowly escaped going ashore on Sambro Ledges."

It was then that Chairman Robb asked Captain Lettice if he could give the names of any ship which had this experience.

"Well, Sir, I could," said the captain, "in fact one of them was the Olympic." "No notice of this shift was given to the pilots," asked Chairman Robb.

"Absolutely none," replied the captain, "nor to anyone else that I know of."

Another development of the enquiry was the evidence of J. E. DeWolf, one of the Halifax pilot commissioners. Mr. DeWolf said that some six or seven years ago the marine and fisheries department asked the pilot commission to draft new by-laws. The commission, assisted by Hector McInnes, K.C., did this and the new by-laws were sent to Ottawa. No notice was taken by the department. "They treated us with contempt," said Mr. DeWolf. "We never heard a word and I urged upon the commission to resign in a body as a protest."

The other witnesses examined were Secretary Crofton, of the pilotage commission; Captain Neil Hall, port warden; Captain Rudolf, harbor master; Mr. Caldwell, agent for Robert Reford Company.

The inquiry is being pushed rapidly forward and will not likely continue for more than a couple of days.

First Tommy—"Blime me if I ever knew these Frenchies had so much learning."

Second Tommy—"No?"

First Tommy—"Why, every last mother's son of them can speak French."

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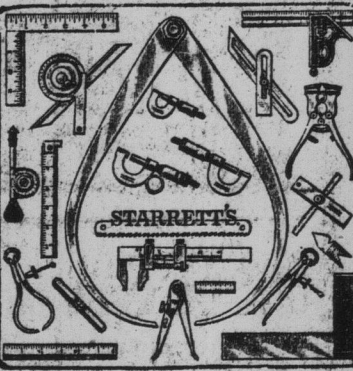
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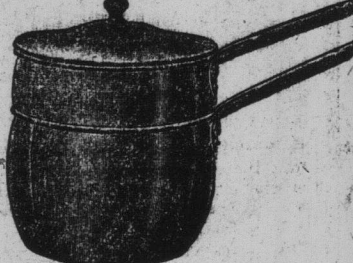
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## AN ENTENTE ALLIES FRATERNAL ALLIANCE

London, Jan. 7.—(Correspondence of the Associated Press).—The "British-American and Entente Allies Fraternal Alliance" is the name of a new patriotic association which was inaugurated at a luncheon attended recently by the Lord Mayor, the Greek minister, the Roumanian minister, Mr. H. Buckler, representing the American ambassador, Prince Borghese, representing the Italian ambassador, and other prominent city men.

The chairman said the object of the alliance was to associate the men and women of all nations comprised in the Entente in a common bond of mutual interest and that its immediate purposes were:

To pledge themselves to a steadfast support of the government in the prosecution of the war to a righteous victory, to overthrow Prussian militarism and render it incapable of further evil.

To advocate the formation of a league of nations to help in winning the victory and afterwards to ensure for the world an abiding peace.

To decline to admit Germany or any of her allies to that league, or to give them in any way until the crimes committed in this war had been expiated.

Their further object was to strengthen the hands of the government by awakening the people from a state of passivity and inducing them to respond to the government's call for help.

A resolution pledging those present to further these objects was carried unanimously.

## QUEBEC ELECTIONS

Quebec, Feb. 11.—Nominations were held today for the majority and Aldermanic elections which will take place next Monday. The forthcoming election will be held under the new redistribution through which the number of wards is reduced from thirteen to six and the number of aldermen from twenty-five to twelve.

There were five aldermanic acclamations today so that there will be seven contested seats and for the majority Mayor Lavigne, who is again in the field, will be opposed by Ald. Martin Madden. Up to about 5 o'clock it was thought that Mayor Lavigne would be elected by acclamation, but at the eleventh hour Ald. Madden entered the arena.

The nominations in the district wards are as follows:

Montreal ward—Seat No. 1, Ald. Jos. Mercier (acclamation).

Seat No. 2—Ald. C. J. Lockwell and J. A. LeSage.

Champlain ward—Seat No. 1—Ald. Jos. Collier (acclamation).

Seat No. 2—Ald. A. A. Lantier (acclamation).

St. Jean Baptiste ward—Seat No. 1, Ald. H. Bedard (acclamation); Seat No. 2, Ald. U. Gaudin and F. R. Genest.

St. Roch's ward—Seat No. 1, Ald. J.

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Two Million Jews Reported Starving

New York, Feb. 12.—War relief funds raised by the Jews of America are now being distributed among the people of their race in Poland and Lithuania, it was announced by a commission sent to Europe by the joint distribution com-

mittee of the American fund for Jewish war sufferers, which returned here recently.

More than 2,000,000 Jews in Poland and Lithuania are starving, the commission reported. There is no work and the conditions in which the people are living have caused epidemics of typhus in many sections. In Warsaw the newspapers carry regularly advertisements, which are reported the deaths of Jews from starvation.

## BRITONS AND ITALIANS REFUSE TO QUIT AND SO BLOCK THE STRIKE

Buenos Aires, Feb. 12.—The railway strike apparently is falling through the refusal of Italians and Britons to quit work. These men have declined to leave their posts notwithstanding the threat of Spanish agitators to destroy property.