

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 1921.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS

Most people will be inclined to agree with Dr. Baxter that discussion of the Address is a more or less perfunctory duty and for that reason should not be unduly prolonged. The fact that the Address has now been passed will therefore be regarded with a certain amount of satisfaction by the people, who would be apt to regard a lengthy debate as waste of time. The House should now be able to get down to business, but it is not very likely to make much progress for some days, on account of so few bills having been introduced. Government legislation which should properly be brought in early in the session is always left till late, and the more important it is, the later it is brought down.

If the matter of length was any criterion of the value of a speech, Premier Foster's deliverance yesterday would be a masterpiece. It cannot be said of it that it was more remarkable for what it omitted than for what it contained, for he seems to have omitted nothing that has happened in the last few years. It offers scope for very little criticism, because, to use a common expression, "there's nothing to it." It is simply a eulogistic commentary on the Government's policies since coming into office, that tends more to amuse than instruct.

Although Mr. Foster carefully avoided inviting the Farmer group to cast their lot with the Government, in specific terms, he took particularly good care to point out every reason why they should do so. In fact he expressed his surprise that the Farmer leader should have ventured to differ with the Government at all, considering the marvelous things that it had done for the agricultural community since coming into office. Mr. Foster very conveniently forgets that the agricultural policies his Government has carried out were practically all initiated by his predecessors, to whom most of the credit for whatever degree of success may have been attained, is due; and the Farmer leader's criticism was caused by the present Government's failure to keep along the same successful course. However, Mr. Foster does not despair; he is going to "keep the latch out" for the Farmer group, in the hope that some cold day they will wander into the Government fold.

The Premier's explanation, if it was intended as such, of the discrepancies between Price, Waterhouse & Co.'s report and the report of the Comptroller-General is no explanation at all. This reference must be to last year's report, wherein the Comptroller's statement gave one set of figures and Price, Waterhouse & Co. gave quite a different statement for the same items. Both could not be right.

Mr. Foster is apparently perfectly satisfied in his own mind that, New Brunswick is now enjoying the most beneficent government in its history; and if he can only succeed in inducing the "various groups" to throw in their lot with his party, for better or worse his happiness will be complete.

THE BUILDING QUESTION

With the approach of Spring the thoughts of men employed in the building trades, or who hope to be thus employed, and of all who are interested in the growth of the city and the business outlook, turn naturally to the prospect for a season of building activity.

St. John needs some more houses if there is to be any notable increase in population. The present supply does not more than provide for the present demand. A few more families would produce overcrowding and while there is no immediate danger of any particular rush of newcomers, the city should be prepared to accommodate such as do come to a reasonable extent. Not less the city needs the employment that would be provided in constructing these prospectively needed houses.

Work is scarce, and while the farms will draw away a number of men when cultivation starts, the outlook is that labor conditions will not be buoyant during the summer unless there is a good programme of construction work under way.

What is the prospect of a house building campaign not only to accommodate newcomers but also to provide proper accommodation for people already here, who from various reasons find they need more and better living facilities? It would take a blind optimist to say that it is bright. It takes a good deal of confidence, and some mental reservation, to say that there is any such thing as a prospect of that kind at all. Hope as we may, there is not the evidence of preparation to promise that very many of our recent lots will be adorned with new dwellings this year.

For one thing the cost of building materials is high. Lumber prices have gone down from the peak of last autumn, but they are still far above the

prices people have been accustomed to pay; so far above that level that only the prospect of phenomenal rents or an influx of buyers ready to pay fancy prices would induce people to build at the cost involved. Material prices however, are on the right road. They are tending downward, and so far as they affect the situation it should improve.

Another factor which has militated to a considerable extent against building, is that of taxation. A proposal is now before the Municipal Council to give exemption from taxation, except for school taxes, on dwelling houses constructed within the next few years. This certainly would provide some measure of relief for the tenants, upon whom the burden of paying the taxes falls; but it would scarcely lighten the cost of building for the man who had to foot the bills. Whatever burden is placed on a house in the way of taxation, is passed on to the owner to the tenant. It will need more than exemption from taxation to create a building boom, badly though more housing accommodation is needed. The only man who would benefit under such a scheme would be the man who builds a house for his own occupation.

KINDERGARTENS

The remarks made at the meeting on Monday night of the School Trustees on the Kindergarten question, do not appear to meet with very much public approval. Not that this is to be wondered at. Billed down to its lowest basis the position seems to be this. If Kindergarten is of any value at all, it should become a part of the regular school system. If it is not any good, why are there so many in operation both in this country and other parts of the world?

Dr. Bridges quoted his sister's opinion that Kindergartens are of small educational value. They are not intended to be of any particular educational value. Children go to Kindergarten from four years old, and no one expects to teach a child even the elements of education at such an age as that. The first thing for them to be taught is discipline, and as a correspondent says, how to sit still. They can be taught the alphabet and how to make figures just as well in Kindergarten as in Grade I. It sounds passing strange to hear that "existing Kindergartens are detrimental to discipline in the primary department of the public schools." This statement will be found hard of belief by citizens generally; but if it is a fact, then let the School Trustees take over the Kindergarten and make it conducive to discipline.

A U. N. B. MEMORIAL

The movement which is on foot among the friends of the U. N. B. for the erection of a Memorial Hall, in recognition of the sacrifices made by members of the University on the battlefields of Europe, will undoubtedly meet with the support it deserves. Speaking generally we do not think that a memorial to fallen heroes should take the form of a building which is proposed to turn to utilitarian purposes, because in course of time the memorial feature is very liable to be overlooked. In the case of the U. N. B. however the situation is different, the proposed Memorial Hall will be a purely University affair, which will keep its memorial character for all time. Probably no more fitting remembrance of the U. N. B. men who gave their lives for the honor of their country and the safety of civilization can be suggested, than a building in which those who follow them at the University can assemble; and which will remind them whenever they enter it, that if it be true that "He serves best, who gives most," then the heroes who fell on the bloodstained battlefields of Europe served well indeed, for they gave all they had to give.

One finds it difficult to believe that the Government seriously contemplates the removal of the Post Office Inspector and his staff and the offices of the railway mail service from this city. Here is a new post office, in which special arrangements for the accommodation of these services were provided when the building was erected, and from which the business has been satisfactorily directed. Why want to change all this? The proposal seems too preposterous to discuss; and until more is known about it, it will be as well to do so.

Mr. A. R. Mosher of the B. R. T. is reported as having declared at Moncton on Monday that railway employees are not getting enough pay and should have more. As far as we understand the matter, employees of the Canadian National Railroads are being paid on the scale allowed American railroads under the McCauley award, and many of these men are consenting to a cut in their wages because they feel that conditions demand it.

IN THE EDITOR'S MAIL

The Editor of The Standard.
Dear Sir:—It was with the greatest amusement that I read the report of the Board of School Trustees meeting at which their decision regarding Kindergarten was reported. Amusement that in this enlightened age a body of men could be found concerned with the education of young people and yet so far behind the times that they have failed to grasp the advantages of a teaching which has been of the utmost value to thousands.

To members of the School Board of St. John, it would seem that everything new is somehow regarded that it takes many years to prove the worth of any new system to their minds. This fact was also clearly shown in their treatment of the plans proposed for the instruction of backward children, methods which are in use in every progressive city and the need for which has been most clearly shown by not only the splendidly qualified medical inspector of schools, but by the long suffering teachers themselves.

Going back to the kindergarten proposal, it was understood that the Board if unable to make room in the school buildings, might take over an existing run free kindergartens financed for a number of years by the Free Kindergarten Association. This could be done without adding one more scholar to the already overcrowded school buildings and still continue its good work.

Might a more taxpayer ask how many members of the Board, outside, perhaps the Superintendent of City Schools himself, have ever visited a kindergarten and seen the method of teaching which inculcates in the smallest children, morals, manners, patriotism and cleanliness, to say nothing of manual training and habits of discipline. If the question has been asked deeply and the decision, to have none of it, made after a long period of research, perhaps the citizens might have some respect for the Board's opinion. As it is, the matter would seem to have been hastily shelved by a Board who really know very little about it. As one who knows, by experience, the value of kindergarten training, I think you are giving me this space to protest against the Board's decision and to ask for reconsideration.

Yours truly,

A Worker With Children.

To the Editor of The Standard.

Dear Sir:—The report in your paper this morning of the discussion that took place at the meeting of the School Trustees last night on the Kindergarten question, has astonished me, that I had to send out for a Telegram to see if your reporter had not misunderstood what he heard. I cannot understand how people, professing to be ideas as these expressions, "I have heard of exception teachers have said to me what an excellent beginning for the regular school system Kindergarten is. The little ones are taught what is often one of the most difficult things for a child to learn, how to sit still and attend, and to behave. Kindergarten prepares a child's mind for the reception of knowledge; the exercises they get each them to think, and surely no one is going to be so foolish as to claim that the instruction they get in cutting out paper flowers and such like, will do them harm. As to the assertion that Kindergarten makes children impatient, I never heard such an absurdity. It does anything, it makes for civility. It seems to me that people who hold such views are were expressed at the Trustees' meeting, must be getting into their second childhood.

Yours truly,

A DISGUSTED PARENT.

Moncton, N. B.

March 21, 1921.

Dear Sir:—I note with much interest the Government purposes reconstruction of the Directorate of the Maritime Provinces. This is of vital importance and the people in the Maritime Provinces should watch it closely. Is not this a good time to advocate the Unit System? You will remember it was recommended by the Maritime Board of Trade Conventions in 1919 and 1920, asking that the Unit System be adopted and that the Maritime Province Unit extend from Montreal East to St. John, Halifax and the Sydney with branch lines already acquired or to be taken over. It should be in a sense entirely separate, that is the management should be given central and held responsible for the results; in order to succeed we must have the best men that could be secured and as this is a very important part of the Government Railways and the success of our work in the Maritime Provinces depends largely upon how this part of the road is handled, we must endeavor to secure what we think would be the best possible way to carry on the Railroad work down here.

I also note with much satisfaction the possibility of reducing the expenditure largely in the Maritime Provinces in the Post Office Department, appointing two men to do the work now being done by six. This points towards Maritime Union, and public men throughout the provinces will interest themselves in his matter and endeavor to secure what we believe will be a better condition of things.

I note what the President of the C. P. R. says regarding the great difficulty and recommends strongly emigration. This is another point that we must watch carefully.

Yours truly,

J. E. MATTERS.

St. John, N. B.

March 22nd, '21.

Dear Sir: Editor:

Surely there must be some mistake in the report of the School Board wherein Dr. Bridges is quoted as saying that no country has Kindergartens in their public schools except the United States.

Japan made it a part of their school system as early as 1904, and the last statistics say 125 public kindergartens and 98 private ones. Cuba and the Philippines have lately adopted it. I do not know whether every State of the United States has it, but I do know that last year 28 kindergartens

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAGE

It started to drizzle while we was eating breakfast yesterday, me thinking, Heck, I bet I'll have to wear my rubbers to school. Rubbers being my most unfavorable things to wear, and it kept on drizzling and pop sed to me, Mother, don't forget to see that Benny puts his rubbers on.

Me thinking, Darn it all. And pop finished his breakfast and went down to the office and I thawl of a good idea to influence ma not to make me wear my rubbers, saying, Hail ma, did I ever tell you about a fearsome dream I had once about a boy that had to wear rubbers just because it was drizzling a tiny little bit.

With ma kepp on eating her egg without saying weather I ever did or not, and I sed, Well G, ma, I dreamed there was a boy just about my size, and one day it hardly wasn't raining at all and the boy had a feeling something fearsome was libel to happen if he wore his rubbers, but he had to wear them just the same on account of his mother making him, and sure enuf he hadem hardy got outside wen a bull started to chase him with horns, and if he hadn't of sed his rubbers on he could of got away easy, but his rubbers kepp him from running fast on account of sticking to the pavement, and the bull cawt up to him and bucked him up on top of a house and he fell down the chimney and stuck half way and nobody ever herd of him agen, and he was jest about my size, ma, wats you think of that, ma?

Wat, I wasn't lissenin, I was thinking of something elts, sed ma.

O goah, holey G, ma, it took me about 5 minuits, I sed.

Im sorry, and O by the way, dont fale to put your rubbers on, sed ma.

Wich I did.

teachers were graduated from the Normal School at Toronto and 44 at Ottawa, and the Ontario school law makes special provision and describes what the room for the kindergarten should be like.

Montreal City has had Kindergartens in their public schools since 1891, and two teachers who were trained here in St. John have positions there. AN OLD TEACHER.

THE LAUGH LINE

"You cannot please everybody, and nobody knows it better than a preacher in a small town."

Preparedness.

"Say, Doc, I promised my wife a sea-skin coat, and now the market's gone against me and I've got to tell her it's all off. What's the quickest cure for hysterics?"

Commercial Candour.

"Irate householders, why be swindled in a clumsy manner? Fetch your second-hand clothing to me and be free of the 'unimproved style.'"

Advertisement in London daily.

Furnished An Alibi.

"Yessah! Brudie Tump sho' flogged me, and flogged me plenty! He knocked me down and drug me around and beat and mauled me twell mah tongue hung out."

"What you'll gwine to do 'bout it, sah?"

"Do! What kin I do? De gentleman done disavow de 'whole incident'!"

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