The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 1920

SIR ROBERT BORDEN.

A despatch from our special correspondent at Ottawa received shortly before going to press intimates that Sir Robert Borden's retirement from the Government may be expected at any time within the next day or two. A party caucus is to be held tomorrow, at which an announcement will probably be made, but whether the Prime Minister will hold on till the end of the session is not stated. As that event, however, cannot be more than a few days off, it is most likely that he will. In any case, he has earned the right to retire and take a rest, sadly though he will be missed.

THE NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a summary of the provisions of the new Bankruptcy Act, which comes into force on the 1st July. It has been taken from the Journal of Commerce, in which it appeared some few months ago. Certain amendments, however, to the Act have been passed at the present session of Parliament, and the more important of them have been incorporated in the summary.

The new Act is a milk-and-water adaptation of the English Bankruptcy Act, but it is at the same time very much in advance of any existing legislation on the subject in this country, the leading feature of the latter being perhaps its crudeness and utter inefficiency for modern business conditions. No matter how hopelessly insolvent a man might be, his creditors had no remedy against him except by suit, and whoever was first in the field had whatever advantage there was. Under the new Act a man's creditors can take such steps as will ensure an equal chance all round. Moreover, an insolvent debtor who gets into the Bankruptcy Court will have to walk somewhat warily in the future, as various pains and penalties are provided for those who contravene the provisions of the new law. Getting into debt again will be rendered more difficult, for any undischarged bankrupt who obtains credit for any considerable sum without disclosing the fact that he is at the time undischarged, becomes liable to fine and imprisonment. Failure to keep proper books of account while in business will also get a man into trouble.

A receiving order sets aside any unsatisfied attachment or execution, and the trustee in bankruptcy takes the place of the execution creditor. This provision, however, does not apply to any judgment or certificate of judgment registered prior to the coming into force of the Act against real or immovable property in this province, which became under the provincial laws a charge or lien upon such property.

The Act is a fairly comprehensive one, and it will probably be some time before its provisions will be fully understood; and while it is mild as compared with the English law on the subject, it is probably sufficiently advanced to suit Canadian business conditions as they exist at present.

THE SESSIONAL INDEMNITY.

Mr. Mackenzie King's somewhat naive suggestion, yesterday, that the proposed increase in the sessional indemnity provides an excellent subject for the Government to go to the country upon, did not appear to appeal very strongly to his followers, who want the increase any way and want it at once, whether the country feels it should be given or not. These gentlemen have throughout the session been protesting most vigorously against increases in expenditures on several accounts, but their zeal for economy seems to have evaporated very quickly when the subject of increased indemnities was brought up. Sir Robert Borden, while admitting that some addition to the present indemnity is only fair and reasonable, has his doubts whether or not the present time is opportune to make it, and it cannot be denied that Mr. King's contention that the people should be consulted is correct in principle.

Trustees of the people have at various times voted increased money to themselves from the people's funds, but no argument can make that pleasing. A proposition by this Parliament that the members of the next Parliament should have an increased indemnity would be a fair subject of debate. But a decision by public men to put public money in their own pockets without giving opportunity for any expression of the public will does not seem to be a right thing morally.

At the same time, there is no occasion to appeal to the country on the matter right away. If the people are to be consulted on it, they can be consulted later on, when other and much more weighty matters are put before them also. The amount of money involved in the increase is pretty nearly half a million dollars, and this, be it remembered, is an annual charge. If the increase is granted, the total amount of indemnities to Senate and Commons will exceed a million and a quarter yearly. Members of the British Parliament worried along for several years on fifteen hundred a year, and only those who need the money as a rule accept it. That Parliament sits each year for fully as long a time as does our own, and the sessional indemnity there now is two thousand only. Just why our legislators should need twice that sum has not been shown. However, the general trend of opinion among the members seems to be that an addition to the present allowance is necessary to enable them to properly discharge the duties of the position, and a resolution to increase it will probably carry without much demur.

WHEAT AND FOOD PRICES.

The descending prices of clothing and boots and shoes have not yet been accompanied by any considerable reduction in food prices, says the Bangor Commercial. Here and there is a lessening of prices for some article of food, but most of the staples remain high. The experts tell us that with the reduced acreage it is unwise to expect that farm crops in general will show any material reduction in price except seasonal as the perishable crops reach the market and there is a temporary surplus. This is probably true, and it is equally true that the stringency of the high cost of living will be with us so long as food prices maintain their present acceleration. Old clothes may be worn and shoes may be tapped and patched, but people must eat and must pay the prices asked for foods.

Many have felt that before the food prices generally tumble the Government, through the food administration, must remove its hand from the wheat market as it is now to do through the expiration of the period of a guaranteed minimum price for wheat. What is to be the outcome? Is the price of wheat to be reduced through the medium of supply and demand, is the demand to exceed the supply or are the speculators to get hold of the wheat supply and jack the price?

Those who have given the matter considerable thought and study think that if the supply of wheat is more than adequate to supply the natural needs of this country and furnish European countries with what they may desire at the prices ruling, then prices of flour are certain to drop and other food products will follow. The assumption that a drop in flour would be followed by a drop in many other food products is sound. When wheat goes down, the prices of other grains will follow suit. It will then cost less to feed the stock, and this would mean that the price of butter, eggs, milk and animal foods would be reduced.

According to this reasoning the basic food stuff is wheat that provides the flour. And so it is that the condition of the wheat crop is of paramount importance and therefore the public is interested vitally in the wheat crop.

All that we can go on at present is the Government estimate that is prepared with care by experts and based upon investigations made by trained agents in every wheat-growing section of the country. This says there will be about 504,000,000 bushels of new winter wheat and 276,000,000 of new spring wheat.

How will such a crop compare with other years and will it leave a surplus? This might be termed an average crop. It is not as large as the crops of the last two years by 160,000,000 bushels and 140,000,000 bushels respectively, but it is larger by 144,000,000 bushels than the wheat crop produced in this country in the two preceding years, those of the war, when we were straining every agricultural nerve in order that help in food might be extended to the Allies.

There is a bright side to the shield in the fact that there is a material surplus of wheat in this country, brought over from the record crop of last year, a carry-over of some 150,000,000 bushels, which will give an entire supply of 930,000,000 bushels, more than a third more wheat than has ever been consumed in this country in a single year and more than the combined domestic use and exportations of past years, even during the war when the wheat production in Europe was at its lowest ebb.

Therefore if the experts are right in their calculations and also in their analysis a surplus of wheat will cause prices of flour to tumble, and then many lines of foodstuffs will follow suit. And if there is to be such a decline it cannot be a great distance in the future.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

His Worship Mayor Schofield called the attention of The Standard, yesterday, to something which might be well copied by the citizens in general. During the afternoon he was waited on by a Boy Scout, who asked to be given some community work, as he wanted to win his community work badge. While not having anything just at the moment, the Mayor promised to see that he won the desired decoration.

Commenting on this application, His Worship expressed the wish that the spirit behind might characterize more of the citizens, and ventured the prediction that the boys who were members of the organization which taught such principles would make the place in which they lived "a better place to live in."

IN THE EDITOR'S MAIL

To the Editor of The Standard:

Dear Mr. Editor,—Permit me space for a few words in re the Prebiscite on the Prohibition question on July 10th.

(1) Let me confess that I myself quite misunderstood the effect of voting for the "Prohibition Act."

As this Act prohibits the sale of light wines and beers, I thought, with many others, that those who voted for it would not vote yea or nay on the question of light wines and beer. To my great astonishment I find that one can vote for "Prohibition," and also vote for the "light wines and beer," and that, if both carry by a majority, then the present Act will be amended so as to permit the sale of light wines and beer. I hope that this will be universally known throughout the province before July 10th. It will have an enormous influence upon the vote polled.

(2) My second point is this. All right-minded citizens will desire the promotion of Temperance in our beloved and beautiful province. Why cannot we give to each other—those in favor of the Prohibition Act, and those who are opposed to it, and those also who would like to see tried the sale of light wines and beers—the credit for being honest in the desire to promote temperance. We have the highest assurance that, whatever may be the result of the plebiscite, we shall never return to the "open bar."

We are all agreed as to the fearful evils of intemperance. We all desire to lessen the evil and to promote temperance.

We are not agreed as to the best means. Why are we told that, if we are "patriotic," "unselfish," "sane," and "right-minded," we will go to the polls on July 10th, and vote for the continuance of the present Prohibition Act. If that is so, then the opposite must also be true. We who vote against the Act will be showing ourselves to be unpatriotic, selfish, insane and evil-minded.

I affirm that this spirit is all wrong. Do let us all grant sincerity and truth and honesty of purpose to those who do not agree with us, and let all men and women go to the polls and record their judgment fearlessly and in all charity.

(3) I feel that I must state my own position on the question, as that of one whose character of patriotism, etc., is not likely to be in question. During the war, my work was entirely with soldiers. For the last year, it has been entirely with ex-soldiers. My appreciation and affection for them is just about the biggest thing in life to me. With my whole heart and soul I have endeavored to "lead them straight"; and in the social evils of impurity and intemperance I have tried by word and example to inculcate strength of character. Not only for their own sakes and for their families, but for their province, and for the good name and fame of the glorious Canadian Expeditionary Force I have urged Purity, Temperance, etc., upon all returned men. I have been a most ardent worker in the cause of temperance, realizing that while legislation can go some way in the matter, real temperance, like all other graces, must come chiefly through education.

Well, to make a long story short, I have found by experience that the present Prohibition Act, as administered, for the purpose of promoting temperance, has been tried for two years, and has proved a failure. I have seen more intemperance than ever before. I have seen men resorting to lemon extract and other things, yes, even to shoe-polish, in order to get something with a "kick in it." My own judgment is that this Act has failed in its purpose. I am, D. V., going to vote against it, and for "light wines and beer." If this latter should be tried, and it, too, fail after fair trial, then by all means throw it out.

I am led to make this statement of my own views, because I want to make it clear that such views may be held by one who at least may claim to be regarded as a decent man.

(4) Notwithstanding these views of mine, I admit that the Prohibition Act may possibly carry on July 10th, because of the commendable earnestness and organization of those who are in favor of it. The women have been canvassed far more than the men. I reverence womanhood. I take off my hat to women, for all that they have done and are doing. A considerable number will vote for the Prohibition Act, for I know how the question has been put to them.

But then, alas! side by side with these good women voting for the Prohibition Act, there will be ranged a large army of the scoundrels known as "bootleggers." Bootleggers and others who have been amassing wealth under the present Prohibition Act will most assuredly vote for the continuance of the Act. My chief hope is that there may at least be a majority in favor of light wines and beer.

Thanking you for space, Mr. Editor, I am,

Yours faithfully,
E. BERTRAM HOOPER,
Self-described as "The Soldiers' Padre."

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Leather Medals Looking Up.

(Kingston Whig)

Leather medals! We used to talk of them with derision. They are now more costly than bronze medals and universities may soon bestow them with a marked degree of pride

Simcoe County's Example.

(Toronto Globe.)

Simcoe County Council has authorized the purchase of 800 to 1,000 acres of waste land, upon which a start will be made in reforestation. The trees, it is reported, will be provided by the Forestry Branch of the Lands and Forests Department of the Ontario Government. If this movement should become widespread in the older and more settled portions of the province, the whole community living therein will be the gainer. The folly of the prodigality and recklessness in dealing with the forest wealth of Ontario in the past has been realized too late. Waste areas, damaging spring floods, the impossibility of proper systems of water conservation, and the lack of fair amounts of commercial lumber near prosperous farm centres in older Ontario are part of the price now being paid. The Simcoe County Councillors are to be commended upon their decision. If their example becomes epidemic future generations of Ontario will rejoice.

A Few Kind Words.

(New York Tribune, Rep.)

Nicholas Murray Butler richly deserves the castigation he has received from General Wood.

Dr. Butler's statement that a motley group of stock gamblers and others tried to buy a nomination for General Wood is not only false in fact but is an impudent insult to our best citizenship—to that great body of men and women who "saw" the war and its supreme issues while others were cold and who furnished the moral force which led the soldiers of the Republic, never yielding an inch, to drive on from Chateau Thierry to the Argonne. Nearly a million in the states where primaries were held voted for General Wood. Think of insinuating that this great multitude was bought!

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Mary Watkins was seting on her frunt steps yestidday in a peachy new dress looking at a big fotograff of herself, and I stopped going past, saying, Hello Mary, can I see it?

Meening the fotograff, and she sed, I dont like to show peeple fotograffs of myself, they mite thing Im vane.

Not me, I wont think so, I sed, and Mary Watkins sed, Are you sure? Do you cross your breth? and I sed, Yes, I cross my breth.

Well, heer it is, then, sed Mary Watkins. And she showed it to me, being a pickture of her in a big hat and a smile showing about one therd of her teeth, saying, I think its a awfilly pritty pickture, dont you, Benny?

Grate, I sed. Wich it was, and Mary Watkins sed, Its rely very flattering, dont you think its flattering, Benny?

I gess so, kind of, I sed.

How do you meen, dont you think Im as pritty as that pickture, sed Mary Watkins.

Sure I do, I sed, and she sed, You don't enything of the kind, because how can you wen you jest sed the pickture was flattering?

I did not, you sed so yourself, I sed, and she sed. You dont need to try to get out of it, Benny Potts, you sed you dident think I was as pritty as that pickture and I think youre perfeckly horrid, give it back to me immeditly. Im goin in.

Well G wizz, gosh holey smoaks, I sed.

Never mind ipologizing, sed Mary Watkins. And she grabbed the picture back and quick went in the house.

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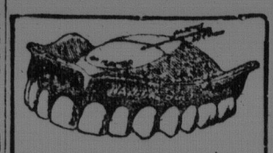

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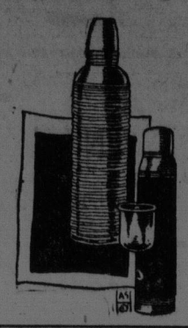

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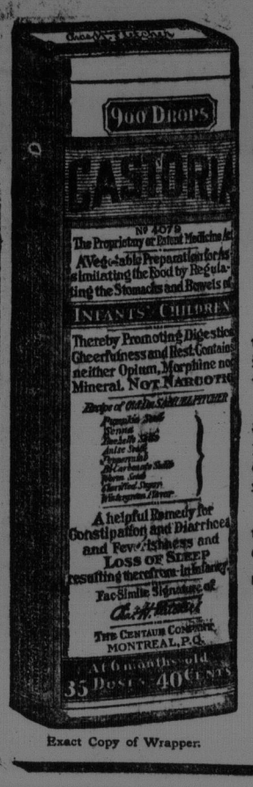

Exact Copy of Wrapper.

Regular W. C. T. U. Meeting Held

An interesting letter was read from the Provincial President, Mrs. Elizabeth Perry, of Summerside, P. E. I., at the regular meeting of the W. C. T. U. yesterday afternoon held in Orange Hall. Mrs. Hanselpacker read this communication which stated that Miss Agnes Slack, who will attend the International Temperance convention at Washington, D. C., at the end of September will be free from September 14 to September 25. It was suggested that Miss Stack be asked to address meetings in New Brunswick between these dates. This matter was left until the next meeting

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