

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 1916.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H.M. The King TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

THE VALLEY RAILWAY.

To those who have carefully followed the criticism levelled by opposition newspapers against the new proposals of the St. John Valley Railway, and who, also, have some knowledge of the facts of the case, it is apparent that the whole purpose of the opposition is to distort and misrepresent the action of the Government and the causes leading up to it.

In the first place the criticism is inconsistent both in tone and contention. Up to a few weeks ago opposition newspapers were shrieking for the completion of the railway from Gagetown to St. John at an expenditure of millions of dollars and, at the same time, demanding that the Dominion Government should practice most stringent economy in connection with all public works during the period of the war. In one breath, calling for large and immediate expenditures of public money and in the next demanding that the financial resources of the country should be carefully husbanded. What could any government do to meet criticism so absolutely unreasonable?

It may be pointed out that the objects originally sought by the construction of the St. John Valley Railway were two-fold; first, to provide transportation facilities for the productive portions of the St. John valley not already opened to railways, and second, to secure an independent railway connection between St. John and the Transcontinental Railway which, at that time, was to be leased to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company.

As to the first goal that has been very largely attained by the construction of the line from Gagetown to Centerville, which has been in operation for more than a year, and the most important thing to be done now is to secure connection with St. John. This the Government is arranging to do by the west side route to Westfield, not Westford as incorrectly stated by the opposition press, and from Westfield to St. John, over the rails of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The latter is but a temporary arrangement intended to provide connection with St. John until an independent entrance for the Valley Line can be built. It has already been pointed out that the routing of the line on the western river bank will provide connection with the docks at West St. John and, later, there will be the connection with Courtenay Bay terminals.

Those familiar with the situation know that the returns from that portion of the Valley Railway at present in operation have not been sufficient to meet the interest on the bonds. The extensions outlined will, it is believed, be profitable and to provide these is the most important and, consequently, the first thing to be done.

It has long been realized that the construction of the National Transcontinental Railway from Grand Falls to Montreal was the worst blow this province ever received, yet not a Liberal opposed it. It was the advertised platform of the late Laurier government that the N. T. R. in its entirety would be taken over and operated by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, but in its construction there was so much shameful graft, theft and waste that operation as a private road was impossible and the company repudiated the bargain. Consequently, operation and maintenance of that road have been thrown absolutely upon the country. Under war conditions it would be an inexcusable waste of money to saddle the country with another railway line which, except for a comparatively few miles, would tap practically the same territory. Whatever benefit St. John can secure by an independent connection with the N. T. R., will be attained by the connection being made at McGivney's Junction by the Canada Eastern with the Valley Railway at Fredericton and thence to St. John.

This benefit can be gained by the west bank route just as easily as by that originally selected and when it is known that the comparative statements of cost show a difference of some \$2,800,000 in favor of the west bank it is the plain duty of the governments interested to save that

money, particularly as it can be done without impairing in any way the efficiency of the road or its value to the country. Objections to such a businesslike proposal arise from some other consideration than that of the country's welfare.

A NEW METHOD NEEDED.

One of the speakers at last evening's recruiting meeting referred to the fact that the Province of Saskatchewan had been asked to introduce its opinion that unless results in New Brunswick improve very materially it may be advisable to consider some such development here. An old and trite phrase has it that a bird that can sing and won't sing must be made to sing. Applying this principle to the matter of recruiting, it would be fair to say that a young man who can fight and won't fight should be made to fight. Whether conscription would be the best method of bringing about such a result is an open question. Certainly, it should not be suggested except as a last resort.

There is, however, another plan by which young men might be persuaded to don the King's uniform, a method which would exempt all married men or those with dependent relatives, to whose support they must contribute. If the large employers in this province would manifest sufficient interest in the cause of Empire to enforce a registration of their employees, select from the staff the young unmarried, physically fit men, and put the proposition squarely up to them that if they will not fight in the cause of Empire, they cannot expect to retain employment in an industry being operated under the protection of the Empire flag. The Standard ventures the opinion that there are, in the ranks of the clerks, mechanics and other workers in this province a sufficient number of physically fit young men without family ties to complete all the units now in formation or to be formed. It would not be necessary to take one married man or a man engaged in any undertaking the interruption of which would be a disadvantage to the community.

That the young men are not offering as they should, can be abundantly demonstrated by a visit to the rinks, theatres, bowling alleys, billiard halls, cafes and other popular places of amusement. In the Young Men's Christian Association, for instance, there are classes of young men engaged in physical training of a sort which would prove highly beneficial to them as wearers of the khaki. Why do they still wear gymnasium shoes rather than army boots? A visit to any large business house in St. John will reveal scores of physically fit young men holding positions which, temporarily at least, could be filled by women. The question may well be asked why?

What is the value of nightly recruiting meetings, of such organizations as citizens' committees and others similar in character, if the men prominent in the conduct of these meetings and at the councils of the recruiting organizations do not bring influence to bear on the eligible recruits in the ranks of their own employees or those with whom they are brought most closely in touch?

When the war broke out The Standard office contained thirty-three adult males. To date The Standard's honor roll numbers eighteen names, and others are likely to be added. The departure of those young men has been a serious inconvenience to this newspaper, but in not one case was a dissuading word uttered when they manifested a desire to enlist. We regretfully parted with them and will hold their positions until their return, for this newspaper recognizes the futility of asking others to make sacrifices we are not prepared to make ourselves.

So far the great mass of the business men of St. John have shown lamentable lack of interest in the campaign to secure recruits for the Empire's armies. All the work in connection with the movement has been handled by a very few. And yet the business is one in which every man in this city and province should be vitally interested. Why the apathy?

Surely it is high time for a change of method. Round table conferences and entertaining meetings have failed in their purpose. The time is at hand to take the next step.

BAND INSTRUMENTS PRESENTED TO THE 115TH BATTALION

Interesting function in M. R. A's yesterday morning—Mrs. James F. Robertson officiated.

The presentation of the band instruments to the 115th Battalion, by Jas. F. Robertson, took place in the large carpet hall of M.R.A. Ltd., yesterday morning at 11 o'clock, before a very large number of spectators, chiefly employees of the establishment, Col. P. V. Wedderburn, Major Peters and bandmen of the 115th Batt.

Mrs. James F. Robertson, in a very bright speech, said, on behalf of her husband I take much pleasure in presenting to the 115th Batt., these band instruments. Col. Wedderburn wished that Mr. Robertson would have the presentation in the armory where the public might be present and other nice plans were suggested; but Mr. Robertson preferred having those around him whom he said had helped him make his money, and so we are all gathered here as one large family. Mrs. Robertson spoke of what great help a band was to a battalion and quoted an instance when at one of the battles where the soldiers returning from a long march weary and discouraged, when one soldier procured a toy bugle and drum, which at the sound seemed to put new vim in the men and they marched on and were victorious. It was the one wish of Mr. Robertson that the band should be played for the first time on Sunday at the march out to St. John (Stone) Church, where Mr. Robertson has for many years been a member, and that it would also be a dedicatory service for the band.

Col. Wedderburn, in a very clever speech, thanked Mr. Robertson on behalf of his, the 115th Battalion, and said, when scenes were not as bright to them as now, when they were far away the band would ever remind them of the kind donor and the well wishes that had been expressed. God Save the King was then sung in a very hearty manner and three rousing cheers and a tiger given for Mr. James F. Robertson and followed by, "For He is a Jolly Good Fellow." Three cheers were given for Col. Wedderburn and the 115th Batt. The band headed by Major Peters, with the new instruments, amidst great applause, marched out to German street and back to the armory.

Amongst the guests were Mrs. T. E. G. Armstrong and Mrs. H. F. Pudding, daughters of Mr. James F. Robertson, Mrs. Richard Hooper and Miss Hooper.

The instruments are of the best that could be procured, and the 115th band, under the direction of Band Sergeant Perkins, an excellent musical organization, and one that will do credit to the new instruments.

CANADIAN PATRIOTIC FUND.

The following amounts have been contributed to the fund:

Monthly: Wm. Barton, 50c; Rev. F. P. Dennison, \$1.00; H. J. Roberts, \$2.00; H. S. Bell, \$1.00; Mrs. P. Keen, 50c; Jas. McKinney, \$1.00; Mrs. Christiansen, 50c; Mrs. J. Malcolm, \$1.00; Mrs. H. King, \$1.00; Augustus Pitt, 50c; Daniel Griffiths, \$1.00; W. J. McGivern, \$2.00; E. N. S. Stewart, \$1.00; Charles Kain, \$2.00; Mrs. Parlee, 25c; Miss Arthur, 25c; Mrs. Sydney Kerr, 50c; Miss Francis, 50c; Joseph Doherty, 25c; Mrs. Dexter, 50c; E. R. Marshall, \$1.00; M. Reardon, 50c; M. Moore (2 mos.), \$1.00; Robert Murray, \$1.00; M.



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And if you don't own one you can go around
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And your company sets in the back seat.
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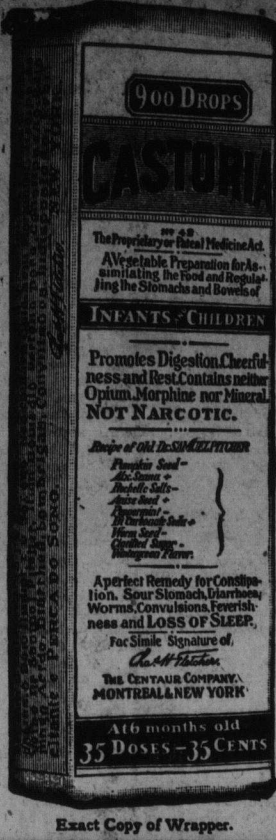
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