

# The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1922.

## BETTER LEAVE IT TO THE POWER COMPANY.

The Globe appears to think that Mr. F. B. Taylor's offer on behalf of the N. B. Power Company to undertake hydro distribution on the terms suggested by Mayor Schofield "constitutes a very clear, very definite, and a very explicit confession of faith in Musquash by the Power Corporation, which has all along been declaring a lack of faith in the possibilities of the Provincial development." Our esteemed contemporary seems to pursue a very peculiar method of reasoning. The Power Company, as far as we know, though we have no authority to speak for it, has the every reasonable individual, no doubt that the Musquash development has some—and it may be considerable—power, but the doubt is whether the required amount of power will always be there when wanted. During parts of the year there will probably be many times the amount of power needed, and at others there may not be nearly enough. This fact would not bother the Power Company at all because of its steam stand-by. The Company would deliver current from Musquash as long as it was there to deliver; and if and when it failed, it could fall back on its own plant. That is the only reason for Mr. Taylor's offer.

There is little, if any, advantage to be gained by the Company in taking current from Musquash, that is why it has never made any offer either to the Power Commission or to the City. It has been pointed out in these columns time and time again that 1.5 cents is what it costs the Company to produce current at the present time with coal costing what it now does. The trifling difference between that figure and the 1.2 of the Power Commission is not worth bothering about, particularly in face of the fact that coal is coming down in price, and consequently the Company will probably be able to produce at even less at no distant date.

The Globe further says that "there may yet be time for the Power Company to save itself a finish fight with the community." Judging by the provisions of the bill sent up to the Premier, it is the community, not the Company, that is afraid of a "finish fight." The Bill intended to leave the Company bound hand and foot, so that it could not fight, no matter how badly it wanted to. We can only repeat what we said yesterday, that if the community is wise, it will at once express its willingness to let the Power Company distribute the Musquash current on the 6.23 basis. If it refuses, and decides to enter into competition with the Company, it is merely laying up for itself the nucleus of future trouble, the ultimate dimensions of which cannot be adequately estimated.

## SETTLING UP.

Great Britain has notified France that the three years' agreement for the postponement of interest on war debts, which expires next month will not be renewed. In connection with this, it has informed the Allies, that having been called upon to pay interest on what is owed to the United States, it reserves the right to call upon the Allies to pay the interest on what they owe. Thus the pressure begun by the United States Government passed along from creditor to debtor, and the creaking of the machinery will be great.

It is intimated at Paris that the French reply will be that the question of paying what is owed to Great Britain is bound up with the general question of inter-Allied debts which must be dealt with as a whole, because the piecemeal payment would hamper settlement. This is a rational reply, and the most efficient method of settling up would be to take the question of international obligations as a whole, ascertain what each country can pay, cancel the rest and get international financial relations on a basis of reality. But this the United States has refused to do with respect to the Allies, and France with respect to Germany. Until the creditor nation and the chief debtor nation are brought into the negotiations unknown quantities will remain which will vitiate the results arrived at.

Ferment to the demand on France for interest in the remark of Lloyd George in his speech Monday week in the House of Commons: "If we insist on payment by a war-exhausted country, it should be by no means confined to Germany." The moral is that if France, with resources that Germany lacks, finds difficulty for the present in paying what it owes, it should be ready to admit that Germany may have some difficulty of the same kind.

same sort and to grant time for re-organization. Time is the essential thing for straightening out the affairs of all these embarrassed countries, and it is to be hoped that the American Government will not be disposed to push into bankruptcy any country which is doing its best to pay. But time itself will not set matters right unless a clear road to rehabilitation is marked out. A country strangled by debts which it can never pay can find no credit, make no effective start toward economic revival, and fiscal sanitation. The Allies can pay something, Germany in time can pay a good deal, Russia eventually may make good. But the actual balance sheet of the world can never be struck until all such mutually interdependent payments are considered as a whole. Some debts may have to be cancelled, others postponed for a long term of years, as is provided for in the measure for the relief of Austria, which has been passed by the United States Senate and is still to be voted upon by the House. The necessity for such a general settling up is likely to be demonstrated before America gets far with its bill collecting.

## THE LEGISLATURE WILL NOT STULTIFY ITSELF.

Reading The Telegraph and The Times, anyone would think that the Provincial Government went into the hydro business simply and solely to benefit St. John. There is nothing whatever on the records to show that there was any such intention. At any rate, whatever the intention may have been, it certainly was not Mr. Foster's intention to put any existing power company out of business, for he said (see Official Report, 1920, p. 88) "It must be remembered that this Commission will come into competition with people who have, in good faith, invested their money in the development of power projects in the Province. It is necessary for them to have a reasonable return on their investment. The Government does not propose to compete with these people in such a manner as to jeopardize the security of the investments made by them." That is clear enough, and it was on the strength of this assurance by the Premier, that the Legislature passed the Bill. The Times may well say that the Legislature would stultify itself if it were to pass the Bill sent up to it, in the face of the Premier's above quoted statement.

Another bill passed by the Legislature gave the N. B. Power Company authority to pay a dividend of eight per cent on its preference stocks. Now we'll quote The Times yesterday, "The Legislature of New Brunswick cannot in fairness take from people 'with one hand what it has given them with the other.' No friend it cannot, but that is just precisely what you are insisting that it should do."

The Times is quite right when it states that the Power Company has no monopoly for the supplying of light and power, and also when it further states that the people have a right to get light and power at cost. The Power Company has expressed its willingness to distribute the Musquash current without profit, which is the same thing as at cost, and that is all that consumers can get if the city puts up its own distribution plant. If the City only knew with a reasonable degree of certainty what "at cost" was going to amount to under civic distribution, it could safely make some estimate of its probable future position in the matter. But no such estimate is possible with any degree of accuracy. Therefore we say accept the Company's offer to distribute the current at 6.23. Consumers will then know the worst, at any rate.

In view of some of the verdicts that have been rendered by juries in this Province within the last year or two, it probably ill-became any Provincial newspaper to criticize the jury which pronounced Rescoe Arbutnot guilty of causing the death of Miss Virginia Rappe. That particular jury of twelve men may have acquitted him, but a much larger, and more influential jury, public opinion, will not let him off so lightly. No decent moving picture theatre will ever dare to show him on the screen again. His career is over.

"When the Musquash development has been paid for, the only cost will be that of upkeep of the plant and transmission service." Just so, but the City will have to go on paying the same old rate all the while, and won't own one single inch of wire of the plant. St. John is asked to pay the whole cost of installation, interest, sinking fund and replacement charges, and the Province will own the whole outfit in the end. What cost of business is this, the City?

Our friend, The Times, needs a new proofreader. Apparently four words were left off the end of the short article in yesterday's issue, entitled "The Philanthropist." They were "Yes, Sir—by Him!"

Last evening, someone dropped an envelope in the editor's mail box, which contained a half sheet of paper on which was written: "As of old the people cry—Not this Man, but Barabbaas." Now Barabbaas was a robber." We do not know just what cryptic reference is intended, so we leave it to our readers to figure it out for themselves.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

### Special Merit in the Civil Service. (Ottawa Journal.)

The case of Dr. Charles Saunders very strongly emphasizes the necessity of the Civil Service Act, and just as strongly emphasizes the need of more leeway in recognizing conspicuous merit. Dr. Saunders is a scientist, in the words of his work over a wide field, while a member of the Central Experimental Farm staff, he developed the Marquis wheat, which is so far superior to the Red Fife that it has become the staple of the wheat of the western provinces. It has been worth countless millions to the farmers of the West and the country. In fact, it would be quite impossible to set a monetary value on Dr. Saunders' discovery. Yet that was but one of several outstanding services which this gifted specialist gave to the Dominion.

The salary paid to Dr. Saunders was fixed by the new classification. It was relatively small—\$6,120, or about one-fifth of what a good baseball player earns in a year. His devotion to duty slowly wore down his health, and he has found it necessary to retire. All that is open to him is the opportunity afforded by the Calder Act, under which he would receive an allowance of \$1,450. He has served 23 years. Having regard to his unreckonable services to agriculture, this pittance is not only woefully inadequate, but is manifestly unjust. The Minister of Agriculture, in referring to the matter in Parliament a few days ago, expressed the hope that some way would be found of implementing the sum which the Calder Act allows.

There is here no thought of criticizing the Calder Act. It may be a just measure for the rank and file of the Civil Service. That is not the point. What does stand out as a reproach against the public service, however, is that the present scale of salaries does the hands of Ministers in giving proper recognition to extraordinary merit, and to that extent it excludes men who could not only earn a special salary but could contribute enormous value in return. It is enormous, it is distinctly wasteful. The result is that good men are constantly leaving the service because they can find a better market for their skill outside. This is the country's loss, and it is because it has not enough elasticity in its Civil Service system to enable it to engage the best men and pay them what they are worth.

"Canada invests enormous sums of money, and to that extent it excludes men who could not only earn a special salary but could contribute enormous value in return. It is enormous, it is distinctly wasteful. The result is that good men are constantly leaving the service because they can find a better market for their skill outside. This is the country's loss, and it is because it has not enough elasticity in its Civil Service system to enable it to engage the best men and pay them what they are worth."

"I have just visited a large number of factories in the United States, and I have been amazed by the high degree to which research departments have been developed. There are magnificent laboratories, with every kind of apparatus, and staffed by the ablest men of science. They are not only investigating the immediate difficulties presented by manufacturing processes, but are spending years in the constructive investigation of scientific problems perhaps only remotely connected with the practical work of the factory. Why do they do this? Because they know that the thorough exploration of the way and wherefore of any factory process. Modern industry cannot afford to do things by rote of thumb. True progress depends on accurate knowledge and understanding."

If it pays American industry to expend millions every year on scientific research, it surely ought to pay the Dominion to invest a few hundred thousand in similar work. We need it just as much as do our neighbors. From the standpoint of individuals in that work, like Dr. Saunders, it pays to be just.

### Sharing the Blame. (Westminster Gazette.)

For the economic calamities of Russia today Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues must again shoulder a large share of responsibility, for they kept her at war during critical months when she might have been tackling her economic problems. That the Bolsheviks contributed lavishly to her ruin is obvious, but it is at least true that a comparatively short period of peace has been needed to teach them the error of their ways. If peace had been permitted to them earlier, they would have been able to learn their lesson more quickly. In any case, it is essential today that the Russian cornfields should be speedily restored, in order that an impoverished Europe may produce cheap grain for hungry millions of starving to buy dear grain from America.

### India on Trial. (London Times.)

When every allowance is made for India's lack of experience of Parliamentary institutions, and for the amazing and often irrelevant majority of many of her politicians, the conclusion is still almost inevitable that neither of Delhi nor in the provinces are the new institutions proving as successful as they have been in England.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Mr. Parkins took my sister Gladie out this afternoon, and when they came back he invited her to stay for supper on account of supper being ready and him still sitting there. And we all went in the dining room and pop came down with a half scratches on his face on account of just having been shaving. I saw him with his new strata razor, ma saying, Willyum, look at your face.

In no conversation, and pop. And he sat down and ma sed to Mr. Parkins, Mr. Parkins, what do you think of a man that insists on using a strata razor just because somebody gave it to him altho he endangers his life every time he uses it, just look at his face.

I invariably use a strata razor myself, Mr. Potts, and I never cut myself, and Mr. Parkins. Is that not pop as if it didn't make any difference to him. Ah, look at my face, sed Mr. Parkins. I saw it, sed pop, and Mr. Parkins sed, Yes indeed, I don't see why anybody needs to cut themselves with a strata razor, why I wouldn't think of using anything but a strata razor and look at my face.

I did, sed pop, and Mr. Parkins sed, His really very simple, you nearly half to know how, that's all, 'tis a neat matter of knowing how, I used my strata razor only this morn'g and look at my face. It still looks the same to me, sed Pop. And he kept on eating without saying anything, and Mr. Parkins kept on talking and not about his face, on account of goberly thinking pop was tired of hearing about it. Which he probably was.

It is necessary to point out that the grant of the constitutional reforms now on trial was by no means unconditional. In the famous announcement made in the House of Commons on August 30, 1917, to which we gave our warmest support, His Majesty's Government clearly declared that they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. The Home Government promised progressive advancement if the experiment had favorable results; but there is an evident implication of possible reverse steps if Indians do not cooperate in the fulfilment of their new duties and responsibilities.

After the Strike—What? (The Villager.) Once upon a time the labor wisp could sting industry to more efficiency, to more honesty, to new inventions, to greater production, but that is all over. Efficiency has got past the limit, and production has its back against the wall. The public perceives the truth well enough, the truth that the strike is by no stretch of the argument any longer for the community but against the community. Whichever wins a strike now, employer or workman, the account is charged to the consumer. That is why the day of the strike is over. It is nothing to cheer about. The strike served its country well. The question now is, after the strike what? There won't be a vacuum, you know.

Well Fed. Mistress—"Marry, I hope you took good care of my pets while we have been at Margate?" "Indeed, I did, mum; only once I forgot to feed the cat." "Oh, no, mum; she ate the canary and the parrot!"—Spare Moments.

The Recall. "This said that absence conquers love," quoted a husband, in writing home to his wife, from whom he had been some time away. "I hope, dear, it won't be so in your case." "Oh, no," she replied in her next letter, "the longer you stay away the better I shall like you!" He came home by the next express.

in the Market. Grinnan—"What are you going to take for that frightful cold you've got?" Barrett—"I'll take anything you'll offer. Do you want it?" Quite So. "What is a synonym, James?" asked the teacher. "It's a word you can use when you don't know how to spell the one you thought of first," replied Jimmy, cheerfully.

Looking Ahead. Edith—"Shall we go over to the Diffs to play whist, or shall we ask them over here?" Edgar—"Oh, let's go over there, then, if we get tired we can leave and come home."

The Dead Things. Miss This—"Don't you think my new dress is just exquisite? They all say so." Fannie—"Oh, lovely! I think that dressmaker of yours could make a clothes-prop look graceful."

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