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The Klerksdorp Disaster.

The news of the disaster which was suffered by a British force in the vicinity of Klerksdorp in the Transvaal Colony, on the 25th of February, was rather exasperating reading for the British public. An occasional slight reverse was of course still a thing to be looked for, but it was certainly hoped that the war had passed that stage at which a British force of between six and seven hundred men, supplied with artillery, could be cut up by the Boers and put entirely *hors du combat*. This is a serious offset to the success which elsewhere had of late attended the British operations against the enemy. In a despatch from Pretoria dated March 3, Lord Kitchener gives the following rather meagre account of the lamentable affair: Lieut. Col. Anderson, who commanded the British force and who has returned to Kraaipan, Cape Colony, with nine officers and 245 men, reports that when his advance guard was within ten miles of Klerksdorp during the morning of Feb. 25th, the Boers opened a heavy rifle fire on the troops from the scrub. The burghers were driven off and the convoy resumed its march, when a more determined attack was made on the convoy's left flank, the Boers getting within a hundred yards and stampeding the mules harnessed to a number of waggons. The attackers were again driven off. At about 6.30 in the morning the rear guard was attacked by a strong force of Boers, and simultaneously another body of Boers boldly charged the centre of the convoy and stampeded the mules in all directions, throwing the escort into confusion, during which the Boers charged and recharged, riding down the separated British units. The fighting lasted two hours, during which the two British guns and a pom-pom almost exhausted their ammunition. A detachment of two hundred mounted infantry from Klerksdorp attempted to reinforce the British, but were held in check by the Boers. The British casualties in killed, wounded and men made prisoners reach the total of 632. In addition the Boers captured two guns, The Boers were under command of their General Dalarey whose force is estimated at from 1500 to 1700 men.

The Marconi Contract.

The contract between the Dominion Government and the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, which has been laid on the table of the House of Commons by the Minister of Finance, provides that the Government will contribute \$80,000 towards the erection of a station in Nova Scotia, according to plans and specifications prepared by Signor Marconi himself. Should the station cost more than that amount, the additional expense will be borne by the company. The company agrees that the rates to be charged for messages between Canada and Great Britain shall not in any case exceed the rates charged for similar messages between Great Britain and any other parts of North America. If the company's operations are successful it undertakes to transmit general messages at rates which shall be fully 60 per cent. less than the rates now charged for cablegrams between Canada and Great Britain. In other words, whereas the present rate for general messages is 25 cents, the company will charge not more than ten cents per word. The rate for Government messages and messages for the press is not to exceed five cents per word. The company will, as far as possible, use Canadian machinery, material and labor in the construction of the station in Nova Scotia. The Government undertakes that all messages received by the company, or intended for transmission by the company, shall be sent over Government telegraph lines, now existing, or which may hereafter be con-

structed or operated by the Government, at rates not higher than those charged to others for ordinary commercial messages.

An Inside and an Outside View.

There was an interesting discussion in the House of Commons at Ottawa the other day on the subject of party favoritism in the distribution of public funds. It was charged on the part of the Opposition that public funds were granted for the erection of Post Offices or other public buildings in counties which returned supporters of the Government, while the claims of counties which returned Opposition members received no consideration, although the need might be as great or greater in the latter instances as in the former. A part, if not the whole substance, of the reply to this complaint was that in this matter the Government was but following the example of the Conservative party when it was in power. If the Liberals were in danger of forgetting that when they were in opposition they soundly denounced such a policy, the Conservatives were abundantly able to refresh their memories. Mr. Borden's remark, that the public expenditure should be so arranged on a permanent basis as to remove it from the sphere of party influence, is right if practicable. It is a great evil in politics that constituencies should be bribed through an expenditure of public funds based upon partizan interests. It is evident, however, that the time for a political party to bring forth fruit meet for repentance is when it is in power and not when it has been consigned to the outer shades of opposition. The Conservatives in the day of their opportunity sadly failed to effect a reform in this matter, and the Liberals seem to be making a similar misuse of their day of grace. A close study of practical politics is apt to remind one of the story of the Dutch grocer who had sausages to sell for twelve cents a pound, "But," said a would-be purchaser, "Smith, across the way, sells them for eleven cents." "Then, vy don't you puy vrom Schmidt?" inquired the grocer. "Oh Smith don't have any today." "Vell," rejoined the sausage-seller, "ven I don't haf any I sells 'em vor lefen zends too." The opportunity for establishing wholesome precedents and for enacting reformatory legislation is with the party in power, and the stronger a Government is the greater is its opportunity and its consequent responsibility in this respect.

Results Encouraging to Marconi.

Mr. Marconi is again on this side of the Atlantic, engaged in the work of perfecting his wireless system of telegraphy. The steamship Philadelphia by which Mr. Marconi came to New York was able to keep in communication with the electric station at Poldhu in Cornwall during a large part of the voyage. Actual messages—not mere signals—we are told, were received when the ship was 1,550 miles distant from the Cornwall station, and signals such as were received in Newfoundland, constituting the letter S, were received when the Philadelphia was nearly 2,100 miles distant from Cornwall. The much greater distance over which messages were received in this instance than in any other is said to be due to the improved apparatus with which the Philadelphia was furnished. The success of the experiments connected with the voyage of the Philadelphia would seem to go far toward demonstrating the practical value of the Marconi system for trans-Atlantic service, for if messages can be received by a vessel at sea from a station 1,550 miles distant, there should not be any difficulty in sending messages between a powerful electric station on the coast of Cape Breton and that at Poldhu in Cornwall. These recent experiments are said also

to have demonstrated the fact that messages can be sent by the Marconi system in such a way that they shall be received only by one station and not be liable to interception by other stations. Another vessel within the radius of transmission and furnished with wireless receiving instruments and nearer to the Poldhu station than the Philadelphia, did not receive the messages intended for the latter. In explanation of this isolation of the messages we are told that the instruments are tuned to a certain pitch with regard to the oscillation of the electric waves, an explanation which can hardly be said to be very illuminating for the ordinary reader. Within a few months Mr. Marconi expects to have stations, more powerful than that at Poldhu, erected in Cape Breton and on Cape Cod. Meanwhile the Poldhu station will be materially strengthened and when this work is completed the conditions will be secured for testing the commercial value of the system for trans-oceanic communication.

Provincial Prohibition as a Practical Issue.

The Government of Nova Scotia has been asked by a delegation representing the views of a Prohibitionist Convention held in Truro in January, to introduce a prohibitory liquor law for that Province, and we understand that petitions will be presented to the New Brunswick Legislature, now in session, asking for similar legislation in this Province. The Nova Scotia Government, so far as we have seen, has not yet announced its intentions in respect to the request which has been presented, nor have we any information as to the probability of prohibitory legislation being introduced in either Province during the present sessions of the Legislatures. Our own belief is that it will be wisdom on the part of prohibitionists not to press for such legislation at the present time. The temperance sentiment in both Provinces is strong and is strongly reflected in the Legislatures. If the temperance people of the country make it plainly understood that they want prohibitory legislation along the lines which have been followed in the enactments of the Manitoba and Ontario Legislatures, they will doubtless be able at almost any time to obtain what they demand. It is, however, we believe the opinion of a good many prohibitionists, and it is certainly our own opinion, that it will be wise for us not to be hasty in this matter. It is well to remember that it does not lie within the power of the Provincial Legislatures to prohibit the manufacture or the importation of liquor, and whether such prohibitory legislation as the Provincial legislatures can enact will prove an effective means of prohibiting the local traffic is a question that admits of reasonable doubt. We therefore believe it will be wise for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to await developments in P. E. Island, Manitoba and Ontario. Whether the prohibitory legislation introduced by those Provinces shall prove a success or a failure, their experience can hardly fail to be valuable to us. Meanwhile such amendments as will make the Scott Act and the other liquor laws of the Provinces as effective as possible should be sought and obtained, every effort should be put forth to develop and educate the temperance sentiment of the country, and when the time shall come, as we trust it soon will come, for these Provinces to take a forward step in temperance legislation, it will be taken so intelligently and with such unanimity as to forestall any danger that it will have to be retraced.

The Imperial war office has offered two prizes of £500 and £200 for the best type of ambulance. The high commissioner for Canada is sending the conditions of the contest, but as the entries are to close on the 15th inst., Canadian firms intending to compete will have to cable their desire to enter. They have the privileges of withdrawing after they receive.