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THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH. ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY 14, 1900.

THE NICARAQUA TREATY. A bill of the parliamentary secretary for the foreign office, Mr. St. John, to a question in the house of commons yesterday, shows that Great Britain has neither received nor asked any sanction from the government of the United States for its consent to the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty.

This treaty which was made in the British and American governments, and which neither should obtain control over the proposed ship canal through Central America. For many years there has been a strong party in the United States in favor of the abrogation of this treaty, but until recently Great Britain would not consent. The willingness of the British government to abrogate the treaty is one of the things that has arisen out of the improved relations between the two countries.

When the excitement incident to the outbreak of war is over, people are sure to take a practical view of matters. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the government might have offered to raise a Canadian contingent sooner than they did—say a month sooner, or long before the declaration of war—what difference does it make now? The offer was made, the first contingent was organized, and our troops were on the way to South Africa before the date fixed for their departure by the Imperial authorities. If the government had made the offer every day in the week for three months before the war broke out, it would not have resulted in a single soldier leaving Canada a day sooner than the first contingent left. Suppose the colony of New South Wales did make her offer a day or two ahead of Canada, what is there in that circumstance to create excitement. Every colony cannot be first. Moreover, the legislators of New South Wales were in session when war was announced. What earthly good then can come out of all the jawing and fault finding which the Conservatives are now indulging in? What is the object of it? What useful purpose is to be served by it? If it will tend to stop all their unpatriotic grumbling we are ready to admit to our Conservative friends that the government could have acted full ten days before they did. We will admit almost anything to stop the scandal of the opposition trying to make out that the Liberals of Canada are not just as actively and warmly in sympathy with the empire as they are.

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS. We wonder if Sir Charles Tupper and his allies have passed to count the cost of success in the campaign to which they are now directing their energies. We wonder if Sir Mackenzie Bowell, who seems to have joined with Sir Charles in this attack, and the Conservative press in general, have stopped to consider just what is to be accomplished by their present efforts. Have they looked ahead before addressing themselves to the task now in hand? It is inconceivable that they are spending so much time and strength with

out being in earnest. They must mean to reach some goal. They may not expect to succeed; but it would be unjust to suppose that they do not desire to do so. To what end then are they aiming? What would victory mean to the people of Canada and the interests of the Empire?

Let us first see precisely what facts they are seeking to establish. We have read the speeches of the Conservative leaders, we have carefully read all the prominent and influential Conservative newspapers, and we think it will not be misrepresenting them if their purposes are summed up in this order:—

1st.—To prove that the government has demonstrated before the world of the empire in this crisis, if not positively disposed to refuse aid, at least unwilling to do so. That the people of Canada are not united in their sympathies with Great Britain.

2nd.—That other colonies have put Canada to shame by making their offers of help sooner than we made ours.

3rd.—That at least one minister of the crown is hostile to Imperial interests, and that as the Mail and Empire has bluntly put it, he hates Protestants.

4th.—That the refusal of the government to pay the full cost of our Canadian contingents is a reproach upon the loyalty and prestige of the Dominion.

There are variations of all these views; but the foregoing may be taken as fairly covering the scope and spirit of the opposition attacks upon the government.

It would not be a difficult task to disprove the contention involved in every one of these items. In the judgment of every fair minded man, we care not how active his sense of patriotism may be, it would be comparatively easy to show that the position of the Conservatives in respect of the views above stated is wholly untenable. But we desire to look beyond that aspect, and to have the people of Canada see just in what position we should be if the opponents of the government should succeed in making out a case—should succeed in convincing Great Britain and the world that their allegations are well founded.

We take it that the essence of our aid to Great Britain at this juncture is the help rendered to the needs of the empire's reserve strength in her colonies—a strength not shown on a demand for help, but freely and gladly proffered when it was not actually needed. To take out the voluntary element would be to wholly neutralize the effect of the demonstration. To even make it appear that the response was not enthusiastic would also do much to weaken the moral impression. And it would be positively fatal to the purpose in view if, while sending armed contingents to the front, it should be made clear that nearly half of the Canadian people, led by an influential minister of the crown, were disloyal in their sentiments and strongly opposed to helping Britain in her hour of peril. Yet these would be the results and the cost of Conservative success in the campaign which has been begun in Canada.

The repulsive hypocrisy of the thing stands out conspicuously, when it is remembered that these are the tactics of a party which claims to have a monopoly of practically all the loyalty and Imperial sentiment in the country. Who would be injured most by the triumph of the Conservative cause just now—England or Canada? The answer is obvious. If colonial help in time of war, voluntarily given, can enhance the prestige and strength of Great Britain in the eyes of the world, then Great Britain suffers to just the extent that the response of the colonies, or any one colony, is shown to have been grudgingly given, by a people only partly acquiescing in the act. Thus while the Conservatives are aiming a blow at the government, they are striking a still deadlier blow at the empire. While shouting out their friendship, and parading their loyalty, they are actually doing the work of an enemy.

WHAT KILLED SIR JOHN. In his speech the other day Sir Charles Tupper declared, with the tremulous pulled out, that Sir John Macdonald had worn himself to death in resisting the disloyalty of Liberals. This was not the first time that the leader of the opposition had made the statement; but reiteration does not make it any the less an empty bubble. Grit disloyalty never hurt Sir John. To the extent that the people heeded the warring of the old flag in 1891 it saved the Conservative leader from certain defeat. What killed Sir John, if political matters had anything to do with his death, was the rottenness of his own party. He died in the early part of the session of 1891, just when the exposures that drove Sir Hector Langevin, his right hand, into the obscurity of private life, and Mr. Thomas McCreedy to prison, were taking shape. Sir John knew what was coming. The facts had been laid before him. He saw the cloud of doom gathering over the Conservative party, and was enduring the shame that came upon all the people of Canada as the corruption of his colleagues was later exposed to the world. The dread and humiliation was too much for the veteran leader and he gave way under the strain. Sir Charles' story might be accepted in some foreign land; but not here in Canada where the facts are still fresh in the public mind.

A LOYAL GOVERNMENT. The opposition in the house of commons did not feel in very good spirits last evening. One thing that must have taken away their courage considerably was the statement made by the minister of militia in the event of the Leinster Regiment being required for service in South Africa that the government of Canada would

adrian Pacific Railway. Had it not been for the change of government and the closing of the office of minister of railways and canals by Mr. Blair, the completion of the work of deepening the canals might have been postponed for another quarter of a century. As it is, with a Liberal government in power, the work is done and the trade of Montreal will be doubled or trebled as a result of it; while the business of this port cannot fail to increase very largely from the same cause.

The Sun says that when the Liberals assumed the reins of power they found the country well governed and on the eve of prosperity. On the contrary they found the country very badly governed, the revenue too small to meet the expenditure, some services such as the militia totally neglected, employees of the public departments not promptly paid, and the accounts of one year thrown over into the next for the purpose of deceiving the people as to the amount of the deficit. All this is now changed; the revenues are sufficient to leave a handsome surplus over a liberal scale of expenditure; the trade of the country is increasing by leaps and bounds; while Canada in consequence of the adoption of a tariff giving Great Britain a preference of 25 per cent. stands in a position of favor with the mother country such as she never occupied before. It is quite like the Tories to be boasting of their loyalty with one breath and attacking the preferential tariff with the other, with their self-interest is always the first consideration. They are loyalists for revenue only.

The hostility displayed towards Great Britain by Tupper and other Tory leaders prior to the election of 1896 and the bitter manner in which they had attacked the preferential tariff were valuable warnings to the government as to what might be expected of them in regard to any future favors that might be granted to Great Britain. It is highly probable, indeed it is almost certain, that if the government had arranged to send a contingent before the Tory leaders had fully committed themselves to this policy Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. George E. Foster would have denounced it as a gross violation of the constitution, an interference with the prerogatives of parliament, a return to the despotic system which prevailed at the beginning of the century, a deadly blow at responsible government and a departure from the principles of liberty. It was well therefore to delay action until the public voice was heard and the Tories were in full cry on a false scent. Sir Charles is now estopped from objecting to the contingent or attacking the government because parliament was not called together before Canada troops were sent abroad. He has fired away all his political ammunition without having hurt any person, and now he has nothing but an empty barrel to point at the enemy.

A MERITED REBUKE. It is to be earnestly hoped that the lesson of recent events will not be lost on the leaders of the opposition. Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster had laid down a most belittling programme for the Conservative party to follow at the opening of parliament; but the plan, so nicely set out by these gentlemen, has been smashed to fragments. This experience ought to teach them that it is not well to declare a policy for the party until at least the parliamentary representatives of that party can be consulted. Sir Charles was big with a set purpose to face the government when Mr. Speaker should be in the chair, and was wholly impatient for the resolution all ready, setting forth that the government had been too slow in the matter of the Canadian contingents, and that the government should pay the entire cost of the Canadian forces while in the field. This, of course, involved a scornful repudiation of the intimation from the imperial authorities that it was their wish to pay our men from the British exchequer while they formed a part of England's army.

Mr. Foster was not less determined to make this matter an issue between parties, and so on all sides public expectation was on the tip toe as to what would be the precise phraseology of this sensational motion. Well, the occasion came; but Sir Charles sat down at the end of a three hours' speech, but no amendment was moved. Mr. Foster spoke for an equal length of time, but again there was disappointment in respect of the anticipated resolution. Wherefore this sad and disappointing decision on the part of the two leaders of a great party, the party par excellence of loyalty, the only party which knows its own mind and is always ready to declare it—the party whose capacity for administration is not only extensive but phenomenal? The reason is plain. It involves no reflection upon the sincerity of Sir Charles and Mr. Foster, when they made their threats. They meant to carry them out. They had solemnly resolved to valiantly challenge the government on this question. The opposition leaders, however, did not really realize what they had undertaken to do.

It is easy for ardent and indiscreet politicians to blunder when they are formulating a policy within the precincts of their own studies, or during campaign tours throughout the country. Their heads would have counselled these rash and impetuous leaders to first consult with the moderate men of their party before committing themselves to a definite and aggressive line of policy. The prudence of such a course was made apparent

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Although this action on the part of the Conservative caucus must have been a bitter dose for Sir Charles and Mr. Foster to swallow, being very much in the nature of a reproof on the proverbial "biled crow," it fully explains the collapse of the debate on the address. Oppositions, like governments are not exempt from the rule which requires that they must carry their party with them in any line of policy which they may take up. It is not a safe thing to disregard the opinions of supporters. Sir Charles Tupper, up to the moment that the caucus met, seems to have proceeded on the assumption that he and Mr. Foster could carry the Conservative party which they had taken in relation to the sending of contingents to South Africa. He has now learned the contrary. He was very plainly told at the gathering of Conservative members that he had already gone too far, and could not expect their support in blundering still further along an unwise course. He had been getting a good deal of kudos from certain jingoes in Canada who had supposed that they were the chief element in the Conservative party. It is well that these hot heads have also been rebuked.

A becoming spirit of humility ought now to possess Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster. Not often have party leaders been taught a lesson in this effective, though perhaps a severe, fashion. The people of Canada, it would seem, are not disposed to condemn the government for having taken two or three days to deliberate upon a momentous matter of policy. It is evident, at all events, that the great body of Conservative members of parliament realize this, and it will be in the interest of Canada's good name and prestige before the world if, as the result of what has happened, the Tory leaders should hereafter curb their impetuosity.

AN IMPULSIVE GOVERNMENT. The gravamen of opposition charges against the government is that action in respect of the Transvaal war was not taken soon enough. Reduced to their last analysis this is what nearly all the various complaints amount to. In view of all the facts that a safe position to take? If it was an error at all to hesitate was it not an error on the side of reasonable caution? Would the people of Canada feel any more comfortable than they now do if they realized that the government was liable to act impulsively in the matter of departing from established ways?

There was nothing lost either to Canada or the empire by giving two or three days consideration to the matter of taking part in the present war. It was a momentous question. There was no precedent to guide the administration. Canada had not taken part in any of Britain's previous wars. The practice under our constitution prevents the government from incurring financial obligations without parliamentary authority. To depart from this precedent course was a grave step. Did the government commit an offence in taking a few days of time to weigh their action?

Why should the Tories be so anxious to have an impetuous, hysterical and aggressive administration? Is it not one of the reasons—if not the chief reason—why they have a cabinet of fifteen ministers that have a cabinet of fifteen ministers that they should deliberate and take counsel together upon matters of policy? That is their duty; it is what is expected of them; it would be placing a high premium upon rashness if the people of the country should happen to sympathize with the opposition in their present attacks upon the government. It would be equivalent to punishing the government for exercising prudence and deliberation in a great and unprecedented emergency.

EUROPEAN INTERVENTION. We have heard a great deal of late in regard to European intervention in the present war between Great Britain and the two South African republics. The tone of the press of continental Europe is so distinctly hostile to Great Britain in its opinion that it is quite certain that several of the nations will do anything that they may for the purpose of lowering British prestige and interfering with British victories. At the present time any offer to interfere in the contest must be accepted as a proof of hostility to Great Britain and not as a move in favor of peace. In this war the Boers were the aggressors. They made a demand on Great Britain which they could not comply with. This demand was so presumptuous and insulting a nature that no nation could have paid any attention to it and maintained its respect or the respect of any other nation. The Transvaal republic demanded that Great Britain withdraw her troops

from South Africa and turn back any troops that were then on their way to South Africa. This coming from a power which is under the sovereignty of Great Britain was a gross and premeditated insult, and it brought on the war at once as it was intended to do. The idea of the Boers was to bring on the war so suddenly that they would be able to overrun Natal and Cape Colony before British reinforcements arrived. But for their own bad management this might have been accomplished. As it is they have reached the height of their power and from the present must continue to decline. Though they have won a few successes they have done nothing that is of any permanent value, and in the course of time they must be driven back and overwhelmed. The object in any European nation intervening at this stage of the war would simply be to place Great Britain in a humiliating position. The British have suffered reverses and have not yet had an opportunity of gathering to their full force to make an advance. Therefore, if the war was ended tomorrow, it would leave our mother country in a manner humiliated, and that in a contest they had done their best to avoid, and which was deliberately brought on by the two Boer republics for the purpose of driving Great Britain out of South Africa. Under the circumstances no movement in favor of intervention could be regarded by Great Britain as otherwise than hostile and intended to injure her.

The French have been seeing in the difficulties in South Africa an opportunity of being avenged for the Fashoda incident. The Russians think that the British troubles will assist them in weakening British influence in India. Germany believes that if the British empire can be so weakened as to be brought to the verge of dissolution, they will be able to pick up some of the territories now under the British flag. These views in regard to Great Britain are not the views of lovers of peace, but of warlike nations that are ready to make conquests on their own account and seize all the territories they can grasp from their neighbors. The motive, therefore, which underlies all this movement is one of hostility to British power and our mother country, realizing that this fact will only treat their advances with the contempt which they deserve.

As to the likelihood of intervention, we have no idea that it will be seriously pressed by either France, Russia or Germany against Great Britain, not because they love the British, but because they fear British power. These three nations cannot be united in an anti-British compact, although France and Russia might. But Russia is restrained by the consideration that any war against Great Britain would promptly bring Japan into the field and would have the effect of totally crushing Russian power in the Pacific. As it is, the Colossus of the North is filled with apprehension of the growing power of Japan. A contest between Japan and Russia in the Northern Pacific is certain to come sooner or later and is very unlikely to end in favor of Russia.

As for France the condition of that country is not such as to favor a war at the present time. It is said that France proposes to reopen the Egyptian question. Germany will take no part in any such movement so that France can do nothing alone. The great restraining cause which appears to keep these powerful military nations out of action is the fact that there is not one of them that could send an entire regiment across a mile of salt water without England's leave. There is no use for France to talk about reopening the Egyptian question unless she is prepared to do it by the exercise of force, and any French army which succeeds in landing in Egypt would only meet the fate which that of Napoleon did there in 1798, owing to the overwhelming preponderance of the British fleet. Now, as then "Britannia rules the waves" and is Mistress of the Seas.

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SUN LAMENTATIONS. Mr. S. D. Scott, of the Sun, is now in Ottawa, and is renewing his annual waiting on behalf of the political party to which he belongs. Mr. Scott sits for several months in the press gallery and weeps. He looks down on the seats to the right of the speaker, which are occupied by the members of the government and their supporters, and he sees nothing good there. All is wrong. The ministers never do anything that is right. They do wrong on purpose according to the Sun out of sheer cussedness, as the vulgar Americans say, and they do wrong, according to his authority when it would be much easier for them to do right.

When a newspaper reporter is engaged in work of this kind he is not likely to be very particular as to his facts. He is making very large drafts on the credulity of his readers when he makes the assertion that the government is always in the wrong and never by any chance in the right. He is making still larger drafts

of the change of government and the closing of the office of minister of railways and canals by Mr. Blair, the completion of the work of deepening the canals might have been postponed for another quarter of a century. As it is, with a Liberal government in power, the work is done and the trade of Montreal will be doubled or trebled as a result of it; while the business of this port cannot fail to increase very largely from the same cause.

The Sun says that when the Liberals assumed the reins of power they found the country well governed and on the eve of prosperity. On the contrary they found the country very badly governed, the revenue too small to meet the expenditure, some services such as the militia totally neglected, employees of the public departments not promptly paid, and the accounts of one year thrown over into the next for the purpose of deceiving the people as to the amount of the deficit. All this is now changed; the revenues are sufficient to leave a handsome surplus over a liberal scale of expenditure; the trade of the country is increasing by leaps and bounds; while Canada in consequence of the adoption of a tariff giving Great Britain a preference of 25 per cent. stands in a position of favor with the mother country such as she never occupied before. It is quite like the Tories to be boasting of their loyalty with one breath and attacking the preferential tariff with the other, with their self-interest is always the first consideration. They are loyalists for revenue only.

The hostility displayed towards Great Britain by Tupper and other Tory leaders prior to the election of 1896 and the bitter manner in which they had attacked the preferential tariff were valuable warnings to the government as to what might be expected of them in regard to any future favors that might be granted to Great Britain. It is highly probable, indeed it is almost certain, that if the government had arranged to send a contingent before the Tory leaders had fully committed themselves to this policy Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. George E. Foster would have denounced it as a gross violation of the constitution, an interference with the prerogatives of parliament, a return to the despotic system which prevailed at the beginning of the century, a deadly blow at responsible government and a departure from the principles of liberty. It was well therefore to delay action until the public voice was heard and the Tories were in full cry on a false scent. Sir Charles is now estopped from objecting to the contingent or attacking the government because parliament was not called together before Canada troops were sent abroad. He has fired away all his political ammunition without having hurt any person, and now he has nothing but an empty barrel to point at the enemy.

A MERITED REBUKE. It is to be earnestly hoped that the lesson of recent events will not be lost on the leaders of the opposition. Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster had laid down a most belittling programme for the Conservative party to follow at the opening of parliament; but the plan, so nicely set out by these gentlemen, has been smashed to fragments. This experience ought to teach them that it is not well to declare a policy for the party until at least the parliamentary representatives of that party can be consulted. Sir Charles was big with a set purpose to face the government when Mr. Speaker should be in the chair, and was wholly impatient for the resolution all ready, setting forth that the government had been too slow in the matter of the Canadian contingents, and that the government should pay the entire cost of the Canadian forces while in the field. This, of course, involved a scornful repudiation of the intimation from the imperial authorities that it was their wish to pay our men from the British exchequer while they formed a part of England's army.

Mr. Foster was not less determined to make this matter an issue between parties, and so on all sides public expectation was on the tip toe as to what would be the precise phraseology of this sensational motion. Well, the occasion came; but Sir Charles sat down at the end of a three hours' speech, but no amendment was moved. Mr. Foster spoke for an equal length of time, but again there was disappointment in respect of the anticipated resolution. Wherefore this sad and disappointing decision on the part of the two leaders of a great party, the party par excellence of loyalty, the only party which knows its own mind and is always ready to declare it—the party whose capacity for administration is not only extensive but phenomenal? The reason is plain. It involves no reflection upon the sincerity of Sir Charles and Mr. Foster, when they made their threats. They meant to carry them out. They had solemnly resolved to valiantly challenge the government on this question. The opposition leaders, however, did not really realize what they had undertaken to do.

It is easy for ardent and indiscreet politicians to blunder when they are formulating a policy within the precincts of their own studies, or during campaign tours throughout the country. Their heads would have counselled these rash and impetuous leaders to first consult with the moderate men of their party before committing themselves to a definite and aggressive line of policy. The prudence of such a course was made apparent

when Sir Charles and Mr. Foster met their followers in caucus. They were promptly and firmly called down. They were informed that the amendment which had been so carefully prepared must not be moved.

Although this action on the part of the Conservative caucus must have been a bitter dose for Sir Charles and Mr. Foster to swallow, being very much in the nature of a reproof on the proverbial "biled crow," it fully explains the collapse of the debate on the address. Oppositions, like governments are not exempt from the rule which requires that they must carry their party with them in any line of policy which they may take up. It is not a safe thing to disregard the opinions of supporters. Sir Charles Tupper, up to the moment that the caucus met, seems to have proceeded on the assumption that he and Mr. Foster could carry the Conservative party which they had taken in relation to the sending of contingents to South Africa. He has now learned the contrary. He was very plainly told at the gathering of Conservative members that he had already gone too far, and could not expect their support in blundering still further along an unwise course. He had been getting a good deal of kudos from certain jingoes in Canada who had supposed that they were the chief element in the Conservative party. It is well that these hot heads have also been rebuked.

A becoming spirit of humility ought now to possess Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster. Not often have party leaders been taught a lesson in this effective, though perhaps a severe, fashion. The people of Canada, it would seem, are not disposed to condemn the government for having taken two or three days to deliberate upon a momentous matter of policy. It is evident, at all events, that the great body of Conservative members of parliament realize this, and it will be in the interest of Canada's good name and prestige before the world if, as the result of what has happened, the Tory leaders should hereafter curb their impetuosity.

AN IMPULSIVE GOVERNMENT. The gravamen of opposition charges against the government is that action in respect of the Transvaal war was not taken soon enough. Reduced to their last analysis this is what nearly all the various complaints amount to. In view of all the facts that a safe position to take? If it was an error at all to hesitate was it not an error on the side of reasonable caution? Would the people of Canada feel any more comfortable than they now do if they realized that the government was liable to act impulsively in the matter of departing from established ways?

There was nothing lost either to Canada or the empire by giving two or three days consideration to the matter of taking part in the present war. It was a momentous question. There was no precedent to guide the administration. Canada had not taken part in any of Britain's previous wars. The practice under our constitution prevents the government from incurring financial obligations without parliamentary authority. To depart from this precedent course was a grave step. Did the government commit an offence in taking a few days of time to weigh their action?

Why should the Tories be so anxious to have an impetuous, hysterical and aggressive administration? Is it not one of the reasons—if not the chief reason—why they have a cabinet of fifteen ministers that have a cabinet of fifteen ministers that they should deliberate and take counsel together upon matters of policy? That is their duty; it is what is expected of them; it would be placing a high premium upon rashness if the people of the country should happen to sympathize with the opposition in their present attacks upon the government. It would be equivalent to punishing the government for exercising prudence and deliberation in a great and unprecedented emergency.

EUROPEAN INTERVENTION. We have heard a great deal of late in regard to European intervention in the present war between Great Britain and the two South African republics. The tone of the press