

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH.

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Semi-Weekly Telegraph

ST. JOHN, N. B., SEPTEMBER 23, 1903.

THE DISASTER ON THE RIVER

It may be assumed that at the inquest following the burning of the David Weston and the loss of three lives, searching inquiry will be made as to the cause of the fire, the precautions observed to prevent a disaster such as occurred, and concerning the boats, life belts and fire apparatus carried by the steamer.

Two men, by their coolness, courage and decision in the face of a peril, prevented the loss of many more lives—the captain, who instantly gave the order to run the boat ashore when the fire was discovered and then devoted himself to saving the terrified passengers, and the mate, who stuck to the wheel, in spite of the fire and smoke which enveloped the pilot house, until the boat was beached, and who then became a very giant in the work of rescue.

Terrible as the affair was and imperative as it is the necessity for a complete investigation, it is well to record that the captain and crew appear to have behaved well and that forty passengers all were saved except the unfortunate lad who swung overboard in terror before his relatives could restrain him.

So safe has our river navigation proved in the past, now of the destruction of the Weston with the loss of three lives and the injury of many of the passengers, will be a great shock to the entire province. Who was responsible for it? The general opinion yesterday among passengers and crew appeared to be that a careless smoker had set fire to the cargo of hay which was so stowed that a spark from the pipe of one passing along the lower deck, or a match thrown away carelessly by such a person might have ignited it.

While this is true, a full investigation is nevertheless necessary, as it may disclose facts of value in preventing a similar or greater disaster at some future time. Some time ago an effort was made to save metallic small boats carried by steamers navigating inland waters, but the plan was abandoned. It may now be revived. If a careless smoker is responsible for the fire, it may be well to ascertain whether the usual regulation against smoking on certain parts of the steamer were strictly enforced.

Some talk which arose Monday as to possible suits for damages against the Star Line raises a question which can be settled only after a most thorough investigation of the circumstances attending the disaster. A coroner's jury, it is thought, will hear the evidence of the passengers

and crew without delay. It would be within the province of the jury to decide whether or not there was contributory negligence, and beyond that, to make any recommendations which appeared wise, with a view to preventing similar occurrences in the future. It will, no doubt, be deemed proper that the crown shall be represented at the inquiry, the scope of which will of necessity be extensive if the best interests of the public are to be served.

Conflicting stories as to the condition of the steamer's fire apparatus and as to the manner in which her cargo of hay was stowed, must be examined and the truth arrived at. Among river steamboat men yesterday there was much discussion as to whether any passenger steamer should be permitted to carry hay in its hold.

Some maintain that such a cargo is too dangerous to form part of the cargo of steam passenger vessels. Others believe that if it were stowed in compartments where the danger from fire would be reduced to a minimum, it might well continue to be accepted as freight.

This and other questions forced upon public attention by the disaster of Saturday should be inquired into with the utmost care. It may be that new legislation regarding river traffic will follow. The duty before the coroner, then, is one of unusual importance, and the public will observe with interest the manner in which it is discharged.

COMMENT ON CHAMBERLAIN.

Comment cabled from London on Mr. Chamberlain and the British political situation generally has been somewhat fragmentary thus far, and as much of it has been partisan also, Canadian readers have, perhaps scarcely realized how great an impression Mr. Chamberlain's course has made, even upon his natural political enemies. A certain class of newspapers announce that he is beaten for all time; that he has delivered himself bound into the hands of his foes. This is the extreme view of the extremists. His own view, as far as it has been revealed, is that while his proposals may be rejected at the next election, he will stand by them later on.

It is interesting to study at this juncture the opinion of one watching the situation in London for the New York Evening Post. The Post is a free-trade journal and editorially frowns upon Mr. Chamberlain and even more sternly upon Mr. Balfour, as one lacking the former's colonial Secretary's courage. But the Post's London correspondent is far from dismissing Mr. Chamberlain's course as hopeless, so impressed is he with the man's immense power as a campaigner. A summary of this correspondent's views is of timely interest.

Today, he says, the party of Balfour and Chamberlain "consists of four distinct camps. First the reactionaries, under Mr. Balfour; second, the preferentialists, under Mr. Chamberlain; third, the free-traders, under Lord Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Mr. Ritchie; fourth, the workmen, under nobody in particular. The reactionaries and preferentialists together make up about three-fourths of the party. Mr. Chamberlain is confident that all but an insignificant section of these will come under his banner. So soon as he makes clear his plans, which involve no increase but merely a readjustment of the present tax rates, so soon will the Chamberlainian candidates in the constituencies up and down the country, prepare to fight every man, of whatever political hue, who does not fly the Chamberlainian colors. Mr. Chamberlain may be all wrong and his policy may be doomed to ignominious collapse, under the cry of the 'cheap loaf' in danger, but a regard for the facts compels the unbiased recorder to state that the little band of free-trade Unionists and the incoherent mass of leaderless Liberals, whose most aggressive group is more concerned in the police court resistance to the education rate than in fiscal discussions, Mr. Chamberlain has given English Liberalism the chance of its lifetime, but there are no signs yet that Liberalism is alive to the fact."

Remembering the Post's attitude on fiscal matters the foregoing is a remarkable tribute to Mr. Chamberlain's power, and an open confession that the Chamberlain star waxes rather than wanes.

MORE RESIGNATIONS.

There are now four empty seats in the Balfour cabinet, the resignation of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Secretary for Scotland, having been announced yesterday, together with that of Mr. Elliott, financial secretary to the Treasury, who is not a cabinet officer. Apparently the Duke of Devonshire intends to stand by the Premier, satisfied with the fact that the government can no longer be held responsible for Mr. Chamberlain's policy coupled as it is in the public mind with a food tax. The Secretary for Scotland apparently leaves the government for the same reason which led Mr. Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton to resign, that is, the belief that Mr. Balfour has virtually abandoned free trade. Mr. Balfour has gone too far for three of his colleagues, and so let them, and not far enough for the Colonial Secretary, and so let him.

NOTE AND COMMENT.

Kings and Albert are one for political purposes. Now they may hold that joint convention that was talked about. Mr. Balfour has lost four of his seven cabinet colleagues and others are said to be on the edge of departure. Balfour is disturbed over the loss of

great extent, make common cause with the government, since his fiscal programme includes while it also outruns Mr. Balfour's, the other deserters will add weight to the free trade campaign which the government must meet and overcome if it is to escape defeat.

Fourteen of the eighteen ministers remain, and with the exception of that left by Mr. Chamberlain, the vacancies may, without great difficulty, be filled with stronger men than those who have resigned if the impulse toward defection does not carry off still more of the cabinet ministers. As it stands, the loss of so strong a man as the Duke of Devonshire might weaken the government beyond remedy. If Mr. Balfour succeeds in filling up the gaps in his official family and does not go to the country until the campaign of education planned by the government has lasted some months, he probably will have a fighting chance for victory, though at this time it is not known how far the Liberals will succeed in taking advantage of the opportunity created for them by the fiscal "heresy" of their opponents. If the new issue causes the various factions hostile to the government to unite under the leadership of Lord Rosebery, the government, assailed because of its fiscal policy, its Education Act and the War Office scandals, will be in desperate case. The battle is one which will excite and hold the keen interest of the world, for nearly every country will be affected in no small degree by the result.

AN ESTIMATE OF LAURIE.

Commenting upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech at the banquet following the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce at Montreal, the Liverpool Post again compares him with Gladstone:

"This journal once ventured on what was felt to be a very daring appreciation of the fact that of all living statesmen, the one who had most of the qualities of Mr. Gladstone was Sir Wilfrid Laurier. We are not ashamed to re-examine this in reading the speech which the Canadian Prime Minister has delivered at the banquet of the Montreal conference of Chambers of Commerce. The speech which Sir Wilfrid Laurier has made appears to us to be the very speech which Mr. Gladstone would have made in the same place and from the same point of view. There is no nonsense in it—no mere phrases—no shibboleths either old or new (the latter usually the worst)—no ignoring of economic or political facts—no slurring over, as if they were words of difficulties which are sure to arise. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has not to lay aside compliments for his compliments are not mere compliments. He notes that the Mother Country and the Colonies are both to part with the systems under which they have been prosperous. He sees little that is practical in the new proposals. He marks in the feeling of the present time a slight change in the old view, that no two colonies have anything like the same tariff. He frankly says that Canada would like a preferential tariff for corn, and would wish that Great Britain should propose it. But he adds with not a word of concession that Canada does not desire this unless there can be mutual concessions. And, says he, the systems under which they have been prosperous, the independence and freedom of the colony. Nothing would be worth having, not even the maintenance of the British Empire, if Sir Wilfrid Laurier says, at the expense of any of the political rights which the colonies now enjoy. Such honest and statesmanlike words as these tend to clear up a situation which the Montreal 'trend' has flatteringly obscured."

The London Chronicle spoke of Sir Wilfrid's words as a formal rejection of the Chamberlain proposals by Canada. The Premier did not say that the Canadian Parliament could not or would not make a fiscal agreement with Great Britain for a term of years. Such an arrangement could be made without lessening Canada's autonomy and might be made if it appeared best for Canada and the Empire. Sir Wilfrid's candor will tend to make Mr. Chamberlain more careful to propose no arrangement which the self-governing colonies would feel bound to reject.

DON'T BUY ANY BIRDS.

Surveyor-General Dunn speaks plainly and sensibly about the partridge under the law the killing of these birds is prohibited for two years. The sportsmen will regard the law, but the men who shoot for the market will not stop shooting while that market exists. This year and next any person found with a partridge in his possession will be fined \$10. But the law may be evaded. If it is the persons responsible will be those who tell their butler or groom quietly that they must have a few "birds," and so tempt him to retain their trade by supplying the demand secretly.

The Surveyor-General, therefore, asks all good citizens to practice self-denial and obey the law. It is a request which should not be necessary and it is addressed only to the sportsmen whose taste for partridge overcomes their scruples and causes them to lead others astray.

Two years will soon slip away, and the observance of the law for that period will give the much-hunted ruffed grouse a chance to multiply with the result that after the brief respite they will be so numerous as they were "when we were boys" and the breed-leader was unknown. It is the Surveyor-General's intention to enforce the law rigorously but he relies greatly upon the forbearance and co-operation of the public at large.

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trade expected there through the Canadian Pacific's establishment of a St. John-Annapolis steamship service.

The Sultan assures Russia that he will institute the long delayed reforms in Macedonia. Apparently, though, he will first exterminate the Macedonians.

Mate William Welchey, of the David Weston is the Jim Bludsoe of the St. John. Like John Hay's Prairie Belle the Weston was "the oldest boat on the line."

"Will Canada Secede?" is a question discussed editorially by the Boston Post. The secession movement is not exactly keeping people away from work or meals in this part of the country.

Had Mr. Fowler, of Kings, had his way he would have subordinated the interests of this constituency and the province generally to his personal ambition. His sense of proportion is out of gear.

The stories of cowardice on the part of the crew which so frequently follow disasters to steamships in other countries are happily lacking in connection with Saturday's disaster on the river.

Lord Methuen said of the colonial troops, in his testimony before the war commission: "The shrewdest men I have ever had to deal with are the colonials; anything they do not know is not worth knowing. They were quite the Boer's equal in everything but courage, in which quality they excelled him greatly."

Harper's Weekly says, in concluding a review of the Alaska Boundary matter: "We have deemed it important to review the history of the case, in order to show that the Canadians honestly believe themselves to be right in their interpretation of the Treaty of 1825, which defines the Alaska boundary. We hold that our construction of the treaty is the proper one, but we have no intention of imposing unwelcome motives to our opponents. We have no doubt that the case will be tried on its merits, and if the court, being equally divided, shall fail to render a decision, reasonable people will conclude that a great deal can be said on both sides."

Major-General Laurier says Mr. Fielding's budget speech was the match which ignited the Chamberlain powder. It is a fact that the Finance Minister fired a shot which echoed round the world and that it was the cornerstone of the Colonial Secretary's programme. General Laurier speaks wisely when he says this country should not be exploited for the purposes of British politics. Canada has not asked that the British fiscal policy be altered on our account. It is recognized on all sides that Great Britain should solve the fiscal question only with regard to the best interests of the Empire. Laurier gives no advice at this juncture. He simply awaits the issue, but has interest in the great battle begun overseas in the Empire.

Mr. Alfred Austin, made poet laureate by Lord Salisbury, wrote some graceful verses on the death of the great leader. A nobler note than the laureate's is struck by Mr. Harold Begbie in the London Times. Here are a few characteristic lines:

He was our stubborn heart, our steady brain when faction's rancor was loud, He was the eye of England that could not be blind to eloquence. He was too proud To sweep his crown of state before the crowd, Too proud to stumble with the driven herd, Salient he held his way, the fact behind the word.

His soul was on the mountains while his feet Went where the great peace of Europe trod; Above the throng he saw the Judgment Seat Beyond the frontiers of our star the rod.

He walked the earth, he found his God, Faith ordered all his days; untouched by shame He walked with truth, and drew no splendor round his name.

THREE SONNETS.

EAGLER OF TIBERIOUS. They say at Capua that Tiberius bound To Spanish scholars, how the fertile land In the abysses, from the rocks that hang, Beating above the sea, were burnt by and by; And now, at last, when he was overthrown, The shape that made so desperate a stand, It shook the earth. 'Tis now, fair'st empty mail, Yet truth and struggle with the life it had.

There is a startling legend that is known To Spanish scholars, how the fertile land For years was ravaged by a robber-band, Led by a knight with visor ever down; And once as Templar and crusader died, It shook the earth. 'Tis now, fair'st empty mail, Yet truth and struggle with the life it had.

There is a tale of Faustus, that one day Lucretia the Venetian, then his love, Had, while he slept, the ruthless to remove His magic ring, when fair as a god he lay; And that a sudden, horrible decay, It shook the earth. 'Tis now, fair'st empty mail, Yet truth and struggle with the life it had.

There is upon Life's hand a magic ring, The ring of Faith; it goes, it's gold of gold; Remove it not, lest all life's charms take Remove it not, lest straightaway you behold Life's checks fall in, and every living thing Grow, all at once, unutterably old.

The grist mill owned by Chas. Leard, about two miles from Victoria, near Capad corner (P. E. I.), was burned to the ground Friday afternoon. The fire was caused by placing lumber on top of the drying kiln. The loss is estimated at \$1,500 to \$2,000 with no insurance. Mr. Leard has only recently purchased the mill from B. D. Howatt son of Brudenell.

Let's Get Together on the Clothing Question.

What's the use talking?—there isn't anything in or out of St. John to touch the values we are giving. Don't believe it? Go see what other stores are giving. Then come here—that's the way to believe. We want you to buy here only when you have convinced yourself that you can save money by so doing. Yes, we promise you lower prices and a higher standard of tailoring—and we are ready to deliver goods the moment you call for them.

Fall Styles Are Now Ready.

Table listing clothing items and prices: Men's Suits, new fall styles, \$5.00 to \$20.00; Men's Overcoats, new fall styles, 5.00 to 20.00; Men's Reefers, 3.75 to 7.50; Men's Ulsters, 5.00 to 12.00; Boys' Sailor Suits, new styles, ages 3 to 10, 75c to \$12.00; Boys' Reefers, ages 11 to 16, 1.50 to 5.00; Two-Piece Suits, ages 3 to 12, comprising Yoke Norfolk, ages 6 to 12, \$2.50 to 6.00; Sailor Norfolk, ages 3 to 8, 3.00 to 6.00; Double Breasted, ages 6 to 12, 2.00 to 5.00; Russians, ages 3 to 8, 3.50 to 6.50; Three-Piece Suits, ages 9 to 17, 3.00 to 10.00; Young Men's Suits, latest styles, 5.00 to 13.90; Boys' Reefers, ages 11 to 16, 1.50 to 5.00; Boys' Ulsters, ages 3 to 10, 4.00; Boys' Raglanette Overcoats, ages 6 to 10, 3.75 to 6.50; Young Men's Raglanette Overcoats, ages 15 to 18, 5.00 to 15.00.

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GREATER OAK HALL, KING STREET, COR. GERMAIN, ST. JOHN. SCOVIL BROS. & CO.

Mr. Phipps' Hen.

A few days ago my neighbor Mr. Phipps, observed a yellow flail of some kind issuing from the waterspout on the smoke-house. Upon examining it closely he ascertained that it was the yolk of an egg. For several successive days it continued to drip from the spout, and Mr. Phipps was perplexed about it. He hadn't noticed that the weather had been raining comet, or that there was any particular quality in the shingles of the smoke-house roof that would be likely to induce them to indulge in a spontaneous production of oysters. He determined to watch, and on the following day he observed his Shanghai on fly to the roof of the smokehouse, settle down right over the waterspout and lay an egg. Mr. Phipps had not the remotest idea what it was, so he let the hen lay on for several days, while he thought of a plan for discouraging her from operating in that particular spot.

One day, however, when he went out, he found the hen sitting on top of the coupe, manifestly with the impression that an earnest effort would enable her to hatch out the egg. This seemed to Mr. Phipps so wildly unreasonable that he resolved to prevent the hen from engaging in such a delusive undertaking. Accordingly he tried to "shoo" her off of her nest. She looked blandly down at him, winked twice in a knowing way, and refused to budge.

Mr. Phipps' friend Rogers, who lives next door, climbed over the fence and advised him to get a ladder and pull the hen off. Mr. Phipps did so, and then Rogers said that if it was his hen he would simply plug up the hole.

Mr. Phipps drove a plug in the spot and descended. As soon as he reached the ground the hen flew up and began to try to hatch out the plug. Rogers said that he thought she might perhaps be scared off, so he threw a piece of brick at her, but it missed the hen and went straight through Phipps' dining-room window.

Then Rogers said that if he owned a hen like that he would stop her if he had to blow her up with powder. So Phipps got four ounces of gunpowder and packed it into the lower end of the spout, and Rogers touched it off with a match. It merely sizzled out like a young volcano, and set fire to Phipps' trousers-leg.

Rogers then said the powder ought to have been "tamped." So he put another charge in the spout, and then drove a white plug in, leaving a gimlet-hole for the slow-match. The experiment was in a degree successful. There was a fearful bang, and the next minute Phipps' eccentric chicken was sailing out toward the celestial constellations, with a plug in her claws. She came down, down, down, and then she came down upon the spot-hole, expressing by a screech or two, her surprise, but as resolutely disposed as ever to give her attention strictly to business.

Advertisement for Schofield Bros. featuring a matchbox illustration with the text: 'ESTABLISHED A.D. 1851. MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS MAKING MATCHES, no wonder he is CANADA'S GREATEST MATCH MAKER. All brands carried in St. John warehouses. SCHOFIELD BROS., Selling Agents.'

that was to turn the garden-hose on her. So Phipps got out the hose, and Rogers took the pipe and played a half-inch stream rather to enjoy it, for she cackled a little in displeasure, and Rogers told Phipps to turn the water off while he climbed on the roof to get a better crack at her. So, while Rogers was going up the ladder, holding the pipe against his breast with one arm, Phipps, who must have misunderstood him, suddenly turned the water on again, and the stream struck Rogers in the nostrils, nearly choking him and causing him to let go his hold on the ladder, and fall to the ground. When he got up he said that a man who would own such a hen as that was, in his opinion, no better than a pirate and a pagan, and so he got over the fence and went home.

Phipps went after him and apologized, and then he asked Rogers to lend him a shot-gun so that he could kill the chicken. Rogers agreed, and he climbed back over the fence with the gun in his hand. Phipps took the gun and fired. He missed the chicken and blew the entire copula off of the smoke house. Then Rogers said that there were some men who knew no more about firing a gun than a tom-cat knows about idleness. So Rogers took the weapon, aimed it very carefully, and pulled the trigger.

About one shot hit the hen, and the remainder struck her in an adjoining lot, exciting her so that she hooked a boy and threw him over a live-rail fence. The hen flew up on top of Phipps' house and cackled as if she had laid two hundred eggs a minute for the last quarter of an hour. Phipps proposed to fire at the hen again, but Rogers sarcastically intimated that if he did he would probably hit Mrs. Phipps, who was shaming milk in the cellar. Then Phipps told Rogers to shoot, and Rogers did so with the result that he missed the chicken and broke eight panes of glass in Phipps' garret window. Then Rogers said Phipps must have spotted the gun by foolish with it, and he climbed the fence again and went home. Just as he reached the house Phipps threw a stone at the hen scaring her so that she flew down, called through Rogers' kitchen window, knocked two pitchers and

tearful off of the dresser, and frightened the hired girl into hysterics. Rogers rubbed in, grabbed the chicken, wrung its neck, and went out to the fence. As he tossed the carcass over to Phipps he said: "There's that indecent, infamous chicken of yours; you take it and keep it. And I give you notice that if you come fooling around here with any more such diabolical birds, hens, or roosters, I'll blow your head off if I'm hung for it."

Then he went into the house, and Rogers and Phipps don't speak when they see each other at meeting.—[By Max Adler.

A Terror Tamed.

Dick Deadeye was a bandit bold, a bandit fierce was he, who hid up stages, trains and things, here in the west country. He'd lie in waiting in a place where chaps-as-a rule—was head times more than was required to ransom Ellen Stone. "Hands up!" he yelled one day; the man who drove chewed not the rag; he knew Deadeye would give him ten per centum of the swag.

"Climb down an' git in line!" unto the passengers he yelled; they quick obeyed as he growl'd when they are upward bold. From out the stage a female came, Dick Deadeye quaked with fear, as near him drew the ancient dame and seized him by the hair. "You scold-for-nuthin' wretch," he cried, "you rattle of the past, I've sought you far, I've sought you near, and here you are at last!" "I'm all impudence now to hear what story you kin tell!" And then she pulled him by the ear into the chapsarral! Again he growl'd, and when the stage came scatched his head. "That 'yar be Deadeye's 'yer best!" come "yar from the States," he said. —Denver Post.

The famous Miss Sullivan was arrested for drunkenness on Union street last evening and as usual she put up a fight, and it took four men to drag her to the police station. "You are lucky, Miss Bossie, in having nothing to worry about in this hot weather!" "Haven't I, though? You have no idea what a lot of trouble it is to keep looking cool and comfortable!"—Denver Times.