

The St. John Standard

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THE PORT QUESTION.

If the Borden Government had taken a leaf out of the book of the Laurier Government it might have continued the policy of making promises regarding the port of St. John for election purposes, and possibly The Telegraph and Times would have continued in their former happy state of expectancy. St. John, however, embarked on the big job of creating a harbor at Courtenay Bay, and also commenced work on the construction of an important system of piers on the West Side. It was going ahead with both jobs with reasonable diligence when the war intervened, holding up public development projects all over Canada and some other countries, too. If the Government had continued its programme for St. John during the war, its expenditures would certainly have provoked serious criticism all over the country; and the fact that it felt it necessary to largely suspend operations here owing to circumstances over which it had no control is no good ground for assuming that it has abandoned its intention of providing the port of St. John with facilities adequate to the requirements of the winter trade of Canada.

The Government is at present largely occupied with setting its financial house in order and cleaning up war affairs. But it should soon be able to consider its interrupted plans of harbor development, and the success of the Victory Loan may make it possible to take them up where it dropped them. Before the war the Government was definitely committed to the programme of developing both the ports of St. John and Halifax as traffic needs demanded; it can do no less now—in fact with its growing merchant fleet it has a direct interest in proper harbor development that it never had before. It is reasonably certain that the Canadian Government will not spend money on harbor development at Portland, to the detriment of the claims of either St. John or Halifax, and there is no good foundation for the institutions from some quarters that the Government has been, or is, pushing its programme at Halifax, while ignoring St. John. The Borden Government built a landing quay at Halifax, but it is not provided with sheds or any facilities for handling cargo. This quay has seldom been used even by passenger ships for the big ship captains have condemned the berth on account of a heavy undertow. Apart from this at present nearly useless quay, the Borden Government has provided Halifax with exactly as many cargo-ship berths as it provided St. John with under the contract with the Maritime Construction and Dredging Company. And nothing has been done to compensate Halifax for the important deep-water terminals at Richmond ruined by the great explosion. The Borden Government may have spent more money at Halifax than it has at St. John, but as regards results it has not played favorites, and at present St. John is, as compared with Halifax, better equipped for the accommodation of cargo boats than it was before the war.

It is right enough that the Government should be asked by the city for some definite information regarding its future development plans before it gives control of the harbor. The Ministers might have answered these demands by general promises after the fashion of some former Ministers. But the Minister of Public Works refused to commit himself to any promise until he had an opportunity to visit St. John and look into the situation himself. Such an attitude on the part of the Minister seems reasonable—at any rate it does not justify skepticism as to the Government's intentions towards the port.

WHAT IS NATIONALIZATION?

The Telegraph says that it must be distinctly understood that placing the harbor in control of a Government Commission is not a step towards nationalization. It does not explain what it means by nationalization, but it insinuates that if the commission pursued the Montreal policy of making the harbor pay its way it would be somehow placed at a disadvantage with respect to the competition of Halifax and Portland. Commissioner Bullock told the City Council only the other day that under civic control the harbor had in the long run paid its way, and it does not appear so far to have suffered very much from the competition of Halifax and Portland. Of course the commission might go ahead and make big harbor improvements, and attempt to meet the expenditures by heavy charges on the existing traffic—a course which would doubtless handicap the port. It might, for instance, extend the breakwater to Partridge Island, and charge the interest and sinking fund on the cost against current harbor revenues. That would certainly hurt the port. But the Government builds breakwaters everywhere, and there is not much more reason why the port of St. John should bear the cost of

Partridge Island breakwater than that Montreal should bear the cost of the thirty-foot channel of the St. Lawrence. In any case it may be taken for granted that the commissioners appointed to administer the harbor will be St. John men, and that they will have a due regard to the best interest of the port. If they deem it necessary to make expenditures which are not a fair charge upon the traffic of the port, or calculated to injure it from a competitive point of view, a way no doubt can be found (as at Quebec) with the assistance of the City Council and Board of Trade to induce the Government to bear the burden—at any rate until such time as the increasing traffic or other consideration warrants it being placed upon the port.

The Telegraph appears to fear that with a Government Commission in control of this port St. John might somehow find itself in an inferior position as compared with Halifax, where the Government railway has built and controls the docks. If the railway management can build and manage harbor facilities cheaper and better than a commission the proper procedure would appear to be to hand the port of St. John over to the National Railway management, though, perhaps, that would not meet with the wishes of the C. P. R. It may be gathered that The Telegraph regards the Halifax situation as nationalization, and it appears to assume that the National Railways could spend money on harbor development at Halifax without regard to the Government or Parliament, while the St. John Commission's expenditures would be limited by its ability to pay interest. In the past getting money for harbor development has been a matter of business or politics, or both, and a great part of the expenditures on L. C. R. terminals at Halifax were made under a Liberal regime. It neither business nor political enterprise does St. John have to take of its hat to Halifax, and business will doubtless be the principal consideration in future.

If a Government Commission takes over the harbor of St. John it will then become a national enterprise, as much as Halifax harbor is under a Government Railway Commission. If they have nationalization in Halifax, we will then have nationalization in St. John. The Government and the nation will then have a direct interest in both ports, and it will have to guarantee the money for the development of both ports. With two of its own lines of railway running to St. John the Government will hardly ignore its claims to port development. If the Government builds docks at Halifax as part of its railway enterprise, the cost will become a burden upon traffic or the nation as much as its expenditures at St. John will. Export rates from Montreal and points west are the same through Halifax or St. John, and the shorter rail haul tends to influence the Government in the same way as the ocean differential influence the shipping companies—that is in favor of St. John. Controlling both ports and great railways the Government might exercise the whip hand over the steamship companies, and the fact that they seem to have no fear of the Government taking control at St. John has considerable significance. Shipping companies using St. John would not want to be diverted to Halifax, for then the Government would be in a position to take the lion's share in the division of the freight rates.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

The British Government's new scheme for Ireland is being roundly criticized by all sides to the Irish question, which is scarcely a matter of surprise. The idea now appears to be to make the Council of Ireland, which is to be the connecting link between the two Legislatures, a larger body than was first intended. The latest proposition is that the Council should consist of forty members, nominated in equal proportions by the two Irish Parliaments. Such a Council might at any rate be a symbol of the unity of Ireland; it would be large enough to carry on much administrative functions as might be delegated to it. The whole scheme may be materially altered before it runs the gauntlet of Westminster, but the Government's purpose appears to be to make self-government for Ireland a developing process, dependent upon the good-will shown in the operation of the initial instalments. It is suggested, for instance, that the Imperial Government would be willing with no great delay to transfer to the All-Ireland Council the administration of Customs and Excise, if the two Irish Parliaments show a disposition to make the best of the powers that will be conferred upon them at the outset. Nationalist Ireland is reported to be opposed to the scheme for an all-Ireland Parliament. The Nationalists favor partition on the basis of county option, which they think would result in only the four northeastern counties claiming the privilege of setting up

an Ulster Parliament. The Nationalists are apparently more concerned to retain the three Ulster counties in which they are dominant within the sphere of the Dublin Parliament than to have them under the Ulster Parliament, where they might be of some assistance to the Nationalist minorities in the remaining Ulster counties. This is doubtless a characteristic attitude. According to their own contention, Ulster tyranny would crush their party supporters in the four northeastern counties, but they are quite content to leave their friends without the support they might expect from the Nationalist majorities in the other three counties.

The British Government does not appear to believe that their new scheme stands much chance of acceptance. But they are determined to offer a measure of self-government far more generous than the Nationalist leaders asked for in the past, and to leave to Irishmen the responsibility of rejecting it. Apparently prominent English politicians who have in the past opposed home rule in almost any form are ready to support the Government's effort to find a settlement of the Irish question. Ulster, too, is growing less intransigent. Carson's attitude is not as great as it was, and the fact that the Irish proposal is being put forward as part of a scheme of Federal devolution which will set up Scotch and Welsh Legislatures is having an effect on Ulster's attitude. The greatest obstacle now is Sinn Féin.

While that group of enterprising politicians are in the ascendency over the greater part of Ireland the setting up of a Parliament at Dublin would probably only prove a sounding board for a new proclamation of the Irish Republic. Sinn Féin has established a reign of terror over large portions of Ireland, analogous to that which prevailed when Mr. Balfour took over control of affairs three years ago. But the adoption of terrorist tactics is not the argument of faith in a cause, or a sign of strength. The triumph of Sinn Féin at the last elections was in the nature of a fluke; in spite of the large number of members returned the Sinn Féin vote was small. Sinn Féin had its strength in rural Ireland, largely because of its unqualified opposition to conscription; the Irish farmer wanted his sons at home because the war gave him an opportunity to make money. Today rural Ireland is prosperous in a degree never known before, and the Irish farmer knows very well that his prosperity depends on the English market. While Sinn Féin served his purpose during the war, it may be doubted whether he wants to follow Valera's idea of setting up an Independent Republic. At any rate he will think twice before he gives himself wholeheartedly to a movement which may at length provoke England to closing her markets and destroying the prosperity of rural Ireland.

The Times wants the Farmers' Party to adopt the policy of bringing the McGiverns branch up to standard so as to make it easier to route transcontinental traffic to St. John. Evidently it has no hope that the Foster Government will live long enough to extend the Valley Railway to connect with the Transcontinental at Grand Falls, which would serve the purpose just as well.

Apparently The Telegraph and Times believe that the present Government at Ottawa will remain in power indefinitely or they would tell us what the policy of the Liberal Party is in respect to the port of St. John.

WHAT THEY SAY

Lively Times Likely, (Vancouver Province.)
 The glances of parliament proposed for Ireland will be erected within stone throw of each other.
 Same in Canada, (Baltimore Sun.)
 When the miners said: "We can

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Yesterday afternoon Mrs. Wilkins came to her front door and called me, saying Benny, will you come in and mind baby while I go around to the store?
 Which I went in, and the baby was in its go cart in the kitchen drinking milk out of a bottle with a thing on the end, and I sat there watching it and wondering why they never eat anything but milk, thinking, I bet its superstitious, I bet they eat anything you give them.
 And I picked up some bread crumbs off the kitchen table and pulled the bottle out of the baby's mouth and put the bread crumbs in, and it swallowed them without any expression, me thinking, Didnt I say it was only a superstitious?
 And I cut some little pieces of onion off of a half of an onion and put them in the baby's mouth, and it swallowed them with a little expression, but not much, me thinking, Gosh, I bet it was tired of milk long ago and nobody knew anything about it.
 And I took a stuffed olive out of a bottle on the dresser and put it in its mouth, and it swallowed it with the most expression yet, so I put 3 more olives in and it swallowed them all.
 And then I heard Mrs. Wilkins coming back, so I quick put the bottle back in the baby's mouth and sat down on the chair again with a expression as if I had never bin off of it, and Mrs. Wilkins gave me a sent of 3 apples, and I went home and sed to ma, wat do you think would happen to a small size baby if it ate bread crumbs, onion and stuffed olives?
 O, it would probably die, thats all, sed ma.
 O, good nite, O, I thawt. And I kept on wondering wat happened, and rite after supper I went around and rang the Wilkens door bell, and Mrs. Wilkins came to the door and I sed, Hows the baby, Mrs. Wilkins, is it still alive; I mean is it all rite?
 Sertainly, wy in the world shouldnt he be, sed Mrs. Wilkins, and I sed, I didnt say he shouldnt be, I was just going by and I thawt Id ring the bell and talk wite.
 O, that was very sweet of you, yes, the baby is quite well, thank you, sed Mrs. Wilkins. And she shut the door and I went home again thinking, Didnt I say it was nothing but superstitious?

not fight our government," they put into new words the fundamental and eternal fact that no class of Americans can rule all classes of Americans.

Another Idea.

(Winnipeg Free Press.)
 Civil servants at Ottawa may have to punch the clock. Might not be a bad idea to arrange something of a similar nature for the M.P.'s and Senators.

Ontario's Fine Moral Outlook. (Hamilton Herald.)
 So Premier Drury favors another referendum on the prohibition question—a referendum calling for abolition, non-use prohibition. And Attorney-General Bannay, he is whetting his knife for use against race-track betting and violators of the Sabbath day. Theirs is the good even if it becomes necessary to duplicate all the jails and keep 'em full.

A BIT OF VERSE

THE MOUNTAINS.
 The little brooks go singing along their smiling way;
 The rivers speak in deeper tones; like best of muffled drum
 The ocean surges thunder and toss their mighty spray.
 But the mountains stand immovable and dumb!

The trees have whispered secrets for those who listening pass;
 There's language of the flowers for all who patient seek;
 Myriads of tiny voices sound in the waving grass.
 But the mountains stand in silence—they may not, cannot speak.

All Nature speaks expression in tones that rise and swell,
 So sings the joyous human, so grows the angry brute,
 The wedding chimes at midnight, the evening passion bell,
 But the mountains stand and listen—their peaks and valleys mute.

Only to those who love them, the mountains neese send—
 Those who have left their shelter, over the world to roam;
 To them, like a strain of music, or the urge of a waiting friend,
 The still small voice of the mountains whispers: "Come, come home!"

A BIT OF FUN

Involitive Rules.
 The new doorkeeper at the local museum evidently had the rules by heart before taking over the job. "Here, sir, you must leave your umbrella at the door," he said to a

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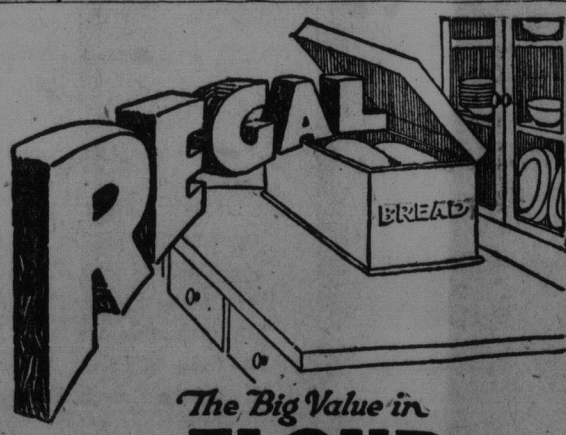
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