

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1912.

FROM BEHIND THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR.

The Western Liberal.

Liberal organs have been quoting with approval a speech delivered in the House last week by Mr. Knowles, Liberal member for Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, in which he roundly condemned the Borden Government on the charge of not keeping its pre-election pledges. The speech was one of the random utterances to which Parliament has grown accustomed from Western members of the Opposition. Unsupported by argument or testimony, Liberal organs have nevertheless seized on it with avidity; the St. John Times among the number.

"The people of Canada," says the Times, "will appreciate the remarks made in Parliament yesterday by Mr. Knowles of Moosejaw, when the Government refused to keep its pledge to the West in the matter of grain elevators. This is already a Government of broken promises," declared the Moosejaw man. "It has broken its promise to the Protestants of Ontario in connection with a uniform marriage act; it has broken its promise to the Habitants of Quebec in connection with the repeal of the naval law; it has broken its promise to the depositors and shareholders of the Farmers' Bank, whom it pledged itself to recap; it has broken its promise to the Western farmers in connection with the control and operation of terminal elevators. But it kept its promise to the Manufacturers' Association and the highly protected interests in the establishment of a 'Tariff Commission.'"

It may be worth while to briefly consider these aims of omission and commission which Mr. Knowles seeks to lay at the door of the Government. Taking his allegations of bad faith in their order, we come first to the charge that the "promise to the Protestants of Ontario in connection with a uniform marriage act" has been broken. Mr. Knowles conveniently forgets that the Government, which has been in office less than five months, has already taken steps to definitely ascertain what jurisdiction the Parliament of the Dominion has on this question. Eminent counsel have been appointed to present every phase of the case before the Supreme Court of Canada, and, as the question of Provincial authority is involved, the Governments of all the Provinces have been invited to send legal representatives. If Mr. Knowles is to be believed, the proper course would be for Parliament to pass a law first and find out afterwards whether or not the act placed on the statute books was ultra vires. No responsible Government could transact the nation's business on that basis. It would lead to endless confusion.

The next allegation charges the Government with having "broken its promise to the Habitants of Quebec in connection with the repeal of the naval law." According to Mr. Knowles' line of argument the present Government having expressed its disapproval of the naval law, should have repealed it on assuming office, thus leaving the Naval Department, such as it is, in a state of chaos until such time as the British Government and the people of Canada had been consulted. Any such action would be justly condemned as childish to a degree.

Next we have the complaint that the Government "has broken its promise to the depositors and shareholders of the Farmers' Bank, whom it pledged itself to recap." This promise is a figment of Mr. Knowles' vivid imagination, specially invented for consumption in the West. The Government never made any such promise. If so, when? What the Government has done is to appoint Sir William Meredith, Chief Justice of Ontario, as a Royal Commission with full power to make a thorough and searching investigation into the affairs of the bank and to submit a report. The wisdom of this course, in view of the culpable carelessness of the late Minister of Finance, is not open to question.

Then we are regaled with the information that the Government has "broken its promise to the Western farmers in connection with the control and operation of terminal elevators." Section 13 of the Grain Act, which is now up for the third reading, gives authority to the Governor-in-Council "to construct, acquire, lease or appropriate any terminal elevator if Parliament has granted the money for such purpose. Mr. Foster has already informed Parliament that a grant of money to acquire terminal elevators at Fort William and Port Arthur will be asked for this session. Irresponsible gentlemen like Mr. Knowles desire to see the Government plunge headlong into the elevator business and purchase every terminal elevator in sight, regardless of the cost to the country. The principle has been established in the Grain Act and the policy will be carried out gradually and judiciously as circumstances permit. It may safely be said that the Grain Act, with its stringent provisions regarding the handling and transportation of grain, is the most important piece of legislation ever passed in the interest of the Western farmer.

It is characteristic of Mr. Knowles as a Western Liberal, that he has a final fling at the Tariff Commission, which he asserts the Government is creating to keep "its promise to the Manufacturers' Association and the highly protected interests." No speech by a member of the Liberal contingent from the Prairie Provinces would be complete these days without some sneering reference to "the interests" and the manufacturers. "The interests" is a term sufficiently vague to suggest all kinds of graft and extortion. The Eastern manufacturer is invariably pitted against the Western farmer and apparently ought to be denied the right to live. No defence of the Tariff Commission is necessary. It is well known that the wide scope of its investigations will include the products of the farm and the factory alike.

The speech of Mr. Knowles is typical of the narrow and sectional view taken by certain Western Liberals on great National questions. It lacks all the elements of fair minded criticism. Canada has problems in the East and problems in the West which demand impartial treatment by the Government of the day. No good purpose can be served by setting one section of the community against another. Liberal members from the West may be "agin' the Government," but they can at least have a single eye, according to their lights, for the welfare of Canada as a whole.

THE BRITISH COAL MINERS' STRIKE.

The strike of the British coal miners is already making its influence felt in the United States, where the demand for bunker coal has enormously increased within the past few days. While nearly everybody looks forward to an early settlement of the strike, it is admitted that no solution of the difficulty is possible this week. In the meantime the situation in Great Britain is becoming well alarming. Owing to the proximity of the large

manufacturing centres to the coal mines it is unusual for factories to carry more than a few days supply of coal. In point of fact they have depended entirely upon the mines to keep up their fuel supply and the majority of the factories had no room on their premises for the storage of more than a week's supply of fuel. This is particularly true of the great steel plants employing thousands of men, some of which have already shut down, and unless the strike is ended within a few days all of these big manufacturing concerns will be forced to close, throwing their employees on the street. Fuel for domestic purposes is also very scarce, and there is already much suffering among the poorer classes, who as usual are compelled to pay an increased price for a commodity which is absolutely necessary to them at this time of year.

While some persons are very optimistic as to an early settlement of the strike there are others who hold a distinctly opposite view and regard the present labor disturbance in Great Britain as one of the worst catastrophes that could possibly happen the country. The minimum wage demanded by the miners and assented to by sixty per cent. of the mine owners, would not be regarded in this country as an exorbitant demand, even should it carry along with it provision for a minimum production as well. In Great Britain the situation is altogether different. Through its free trade policy, which is supported alike by the miners and the mine owners, British manufacturers are brought into unfair competition with the productions of Continental Europe. As the standard of living upon the Continent is lower even than it is in Great Britain, the limit which the manufacturer can pay for the fuel he uses is largely fixed by the price paid by his competitors.

It makes no difference what the commodity produced if the consumer is compelled to pay any increase in the cost of production. The miner is entitled to a living wage and the man who furnishes the capital to carry on the industry is equally entitled to a fair return on his investment. If it can be shown that mine owners are fattening at the expense of their workmen public opinion will soon compel the settlement of the strike. If on the other hand it is made clear that foreign competition is the real cause of the low wages paid to British miners, also that the returns on the capital employed are also affected by this competition, the fight will be to a finish and may cause intense suffering to thousands of innocent persons before a settlement is reached.

There is no doubt whatever, that the Germans had planned to take every advantage they could of the miners' strike in Great Britain. The latest cable advices, however, bring the information that strikes have already taken place in several German coal mines. Up to the present they are not of a very serious character but quite sufficient to cause a general alarm throughout the Empire, as it is feared other miners will be affected and stop work. So far the miners' strike has had no effect on the steamship lines plying to this port, but if the reported conditions in coal exporting ports of Great Britain are correct it will not be long before St. John will have a direct interest in the outcome of the British miners' strike.

TRADE WITH THE WEST INDIES.

The Montreal newspapers contain a good deal of information regarding the proposed establishment by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company of a line of steamers between Jamaica and Canada, calling at Boston. The Canadian Pacific have now under construction two large steamships for the Pacific trade. This will release two of the steamers now on the route which have become too small to handle the increasing traffic of the company between Vancouver and the Orient. It is proposed to place these steamers on the route between Canada and Jamaica provided a subsidy can be obtained from the Government of that island and also from the Government of Canada. Negotiations to bring this about are now being carried on between the Government of Jamaica and a Canadian Pacific representative, and it is reported that the offer made by the company is likely to be accepted by Jamaica. Other despatches contain information that Jamaica is not going to send delegates to the Ottawa convention where trade between Canada and the West Indies is to be discussed and if possible a reciprocal arrangement entered into between this country and the various British possessions in the West Indies.

The West India islands have much produce that would find a ready market in Canada, and Canadians either grow or manufacture most of the articles required by those residing in the West Indies. As the products of the West Indies differ entirely from those of Canada the interchange of trade, under a reciprocal arrangement, would benefit both countries and ultimately tend to even closer union. It is not to be expected that reciprocity with the West Indies can be brought about in a day. The matter is one requiring the most careful consideration not only on the part of this country but, also, by the Governments of the various islands, all of which have varying interests.

The question of closer trade relations with the West Indies is one of vital interest to St. John and should be kept constantly in view. If a reciprocal arrangement be entered into and steamers subsidized to carry the trade between Canada and the West Indies, St. John should be their final port of call in Canada. The position of this city geographically fixes it as the best port in Canada to handle West India trade. We are nearer the western market than any other Canadian Atlantic port, and have better facilities for handling West India cargoes than are to be found elsewhere in this country.

While, at its inception, the West India trade might not be very great, it will soon increase in volume and become an important source of revenue to the city during the summer months when many of our wharves and warehouses would otherwise be idle. This is the growing time of St. John and no effort should be spared to secure as much of the trade of Canada for this port as it is possible to get.

Mr. Oliver, M. P., in the House of Commons, has been drawing a somewhat dark picture of the condition of the far Western farmer's lot, says the Montreal Gazette. Much that he said has also been said by papers in the West which support him and his party. People of late have been awakening to the fact that the East offers opportunities to the man who knows how to and will work on a farm, second to none in Canada; and in the East there is no need felt for special grain bills and Government warehouses and commissions to secure straight dealing between man and man. Eastern Provinces' land and colonization agents might do worse than print and circulate Mr. Oliver's speech, with other utterances of the kind they will find in Western papers; and a good title for the pamphlet would be "Stay East, Young Man."

Current Comment

(Ottawa Citizen.)

One woman's jealousy of another woman's hat caused the capture of the gang of \$20,000 hold-up men in New York. And to think that the day may come when a Government will go out on a marcelle wave or a presidential boom be punctured by a hatpin.

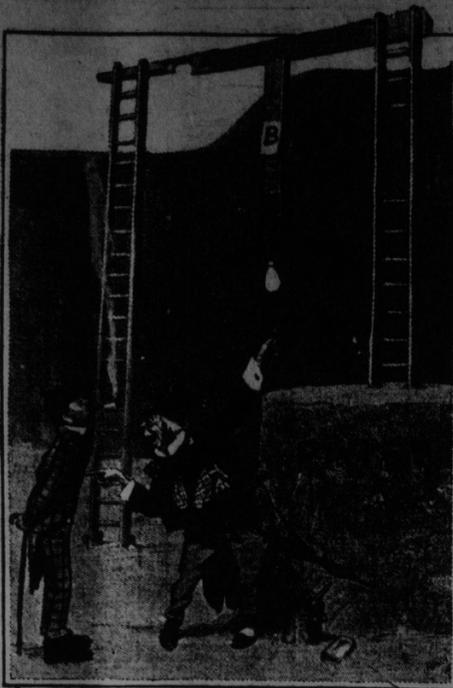
(London, Ont., Free Press.)

The Borden Government's enemies may say it is on the toboggan, but they know by experience that it is ready at any time to go out and fight.

(Duluth Herald.)

Teddy says his "hat is in the ring." He might have spoken with at least equal truth if he had said the bee is in his bonnet.

Latest Invention! Great!!



Smart Inventor: "That, sir, is the greatest fly-trap ever invented. You see, you bait the hook and wait until dark. Up comes a fly and climbs the long ladder; when he gets to A he touches a spring and switches on the light, sees the bait and crawls down for it; when he gets to B he touches another spring and out goes the light. He goes back and turns to the right to go down the short ladder, doesn't see the rungs missing, falls on the block of concrete and breaks his blamed neck!"

MORE SIGNS OF SPRING.

(By Bertin Brley.)
The bear's near done with his hibernation.
The furs in the shops have lost their station
(Made way in fact, for a spring "creation")
And new spring hats that are natty again;
The calendar shows the spring beginning.
And Lent is here when we cease from sinning
And lovers will presently have their inning
And the baseball fan is batty again!

The baseball gossip is in the papers,
With talk of "fends" and of "victory-shapers."
Each big league team now lightly capers
South where the air's less nippy again,
And the prophets begin their prophesying.
And there's talk of "selling" of men—
And "buying."
And it's evident there is no denying
That the baseball fan is dippy again!

For he sits in his office chair, forgetting
The world outside in its wintry setting.
And dreams of a day that is hot and sweating,
A summer day that is lazy again;
When the game is on and the crowd is yelling,
And the voice is loud and the heart is swelling.
So the dirge of winter is slowly kneeling,
For the baseball fan is crazy again!

MOST ANYTHING.

The full beard is unsanitary and discourages kissing.
How is this for a dress criterion:
Do you think it is becoming? she asks, appearing in her sweetest gown.
Don't bother about that! pushes the friend. It is perfect! It is simply delicious! My dear, it makes you look absolutely helpless!

Customer (who thinks he had made an impression, to waitress who has been gazing at him in an absent manner)—A penny for your thoughts, Miss?
Waitress—I was just wondering if you were a boiled rabbit or an apple dumpling.

DID YOU KNOW—

The expression "piping hot," originated in the custom of bakers in the old time blowing a horn or pipe through the streets to advertise fresh bread?
Witty persons seldom live by their wits.
The democratic house has raised the tariff on chewing gum. Now we know why our stenographer's a republican.
Duty done is the soul's fireside—Browning.

DREAMSTICKS



PERCY WAS MAKING ABOUT FIFTY MILES AN HOUR ON HIS MOTOR CYCLE WHEN HE RAN RIGHT INTO A TELEGRAPH POLE, WHEN THEY PICKED HIM UP HE ONLY MURMURED, "IF THE MECHANIC'S WIFE REFUSED TO COOK WOULD THE BOILER MAKERS?"
ANOTHER INJECTION QUICK!

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