

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, THURSDAY MORNING, DEC. 23, 1909.

CANADIAN NAVY BILL IN PARLIAMENT.

It is quite probable that when the naval programme of the Government is brought down in the House of Commons next month the ministerial side will give outward signs of more general agreement than will be found in the opposition. In the first place some sort of agreement on the Government side is necessary to the existence of the administration. It will not do to bring down a programme which even a score of ministerial members will oppose. A revolt of that dimension would throw the whole party into a first-class panic. Therefore if so many refuse to support the policy, and their determination cannot be changed, the policy itself will be changed. The Government may count on the pretty solid support of its party for any navy bill brought down, because it will not bring down any bill which any considerable number refuse to support. The revolvers will make the measure. Then to save the ministry, and incidentally to save themselves, Liberal members will vote for a scheme that they do not like, and which they privately admit that they do not approve. They have done it in the past and will do it again. It will be acquiescence rather than support, but it will meet the case.

On the Opposition side there is no such obligation of agreement. The Conservatives are absolutely free to approve or disapprove the Government scheme, or to approve of some features while condemning others. They are not under a party obligation to oppose the Government when they believe it to be right. Certainly they are under no obligation to support a scheme which they do not believe to be sound. This is not an ordinary party question, as the course of proceedings has already shown. It is not a question in which party tactics should stand in the way of public duty. On this matter Government supporters in the House may find it necessary to suppress their real opinion. So much the more reason why members on the other side should be frank, honest and independent.

The unanimous resolution of last year may be quoted as binding the Conservative members. Undoubtedly so far as a member's expression of opinion consults him the Conservative members who in council approved and authorized Mr. Foster's original resolution are bound by its terms. This resolution declared that Canada should contribute to the naval defence of the Empire. To that plain declaration of principle the Opposition members were probably committed by a resolution of their own, and they should not abandon it without giving a good reason.

The resolution which the House adopted was Mr. Foster's with large additions by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The Premier would not allow the motion to pass without this appendix respecting Canadian construction and Canadian control. Mr. Foster was not satisfied with the substitution. Neither was Mr. Borden. Most of the Conservative members were in the same frame of mind respecting it. But the resolution had to be that or nothing, and they let it go. So the motion was declared to be unanimous, but it was so by consent or rather by silence, and not by approval.

This year the House will be asked to do something more serious than submit to the mutilation of a resolution. The legislation which will be introduced is the adoption of a permanent policy. It is a situation in which each member is under peculiar and unusual personal responsibility to speak and vote according to his individual convictions. That duty belongs to Government supporters as well as to Opposition members, but whether dissenting ministerial members allow themselves to be stamped, or are able to mutilate the Government policy, the Conservatives should be true to themselves.

THE TRUE DISCOVERER.

Commander Peary will now get part of his due, but he has been cheated of a portion of the fame he made his own. The world does not keep up applause over a great achievement so long that a man can easily afford to lose the first and best of it. Commander Peary coming from the polar conquest, trailing clouds of glory, found the civilized world already heaping its honors on another. Dr. Cook said that there was glory enough for two, and this might have been so had the two been comrades, or even friends, or had their claims been unduplicated. As it worked out the dispute between the two claimants diverted public attention from the achievement itself. Commander Peary lost his chance to go on a triumphal lecture tour while his fame was fresh, and the fortune which he would have made has been greatly reduced. It may be that a few people, seeing how a record may be faked will have doubt about the genuineness or accuracy of Peary's claim, though it has passed the examination of a society of experts. Commander Peary is now officially recognized as the true discoverer of the Pole, but his fame will shine with a milder radiance because Dr. Cook crossed his orbit.

THIS IS A CONFESSION.

We are told that it is not proper to condemn the Sawdust deal before the inquiry is concluded. But it happens that in this case the facts which condemn the deal are admitted. The middleman declares on oath that he bought the wharf for \$700, and sold it to the Government for \$5,000. There is not the slightest doubt about either figure. Nor is there any doubt that the Government could have bought the property for the price that the middleman paid. So whatever may come out in the remainder of the inquiry it will remain

main true that the Government paid seven times the market price for the property.

The future inquiry may or may not throw some light on the division of the \$4,300 spoils. It may show whether the Government ever intended to use the property. Perhaps it may go a little further in tracing the history of the negotiations between the department and the middleman. If the final destination of the plunder shall be discovered it will be worth while. There may be a question whether he can be compelled to give it up. These features of the case may be discovered when the evidence concerning them has been given out. But the case is complete and confessed so far as concerns the payment of \$5,000 by the Government for a wharf that was for sale at \$700.

CANADIAN OR BRITISH.

The Halifax Chronicle thinks that it has discovered a political party in Canada which is willing to contribute money to the naval defence of the Empire, but refuses to offer men to sail and fight in the ships. Whereupon it rolls its eyes in a kind of fine frenzy and compares these politicians to those who in other days hired Hessian and Swiss mercenaries to do their fighting.

We do not know of any public men who advocate the programme which the Chronicle discusses in this wise. Those who believe that Canada should have paid for a Dreadnought would certainly not oppose the idea of Canadian men serving on the ships that Canadian money bought. But whether the ships are built in Canada or Britain, the service will be open on even terms to men from both sides of the Atlantic.

So we should suppose. But perhaps the Chronicle expects to find in the naval bill a condition that no person but a Canadian shall serve on one of the ships of the Canadian fleet. If that is the provision there will be some point in the Chronicle's tirade. Otherwise the point is missing.

Perhaps the Chronicle can tell us what percentage of Canadian-born men are found among the private soldiers of the permanent force now stationed at Halifax.

THE STANDARD.

Mr. James H. Crockett, managing director of The Standard, who has since last March given his attention largely to the affairs of this paper, has asked his fellow directors to accept his resignation in order that he may devote his time more fully to the Frederickton Gleaner. Mr. Crockett now finds it possible to carry out his original intention to withdraw from the management after the organization should be completed and the business in good running order. This circumstance furnishes occasion for the Telegraph to supply the misinformation that "The Standard has not proved a financial success," and that "there have been many dark rumors in regard to the future of The Standard," and so far they have not been found to be authentic. If the Telegraph finds it an agreeable diversion from its own financial activities to add to the rumors that are not authentic, there is no objection on the part of this journal. The Standard's success at the present early stage in its history exceeds the expectations of its founders. It is not yet making anybody rich, but has established itself as a journal which the people buy and read and believe, and the future of such a paper is well assured.

SHIPS AND SHIP MONEY.

The London Telegraph's naval expert points out that the comparison between the number of German and the British Dreadnoughts "building" is always misleading. If Germany has the same number under construction as Britain, the latter country is making the greater progress. This is because Great Britain builds a Dreadnought from start to finish in less than two years, while in Germany it takes three years. Therefore when the two nations are turning out the same number of ships each year, Germany would have three on the stocks for Britain's two. The Telegraph writer attributes a large part of the German navy scare to the failure to observe this important fact.

In the opinion of this writer, Britain can keep the lead in spite of all that Germany can do. She can build ships in more places and build them more rapidly. But of course there is the additional question of paying for them. This is the problem that confronts the British taxpayer, as it does the German. It is the cause of the oppressive features of the budget. It turns the attention of the people to the expenditure of customs taxes. Ship money must be found now as three centuries ago, and those who go in search of it find trouble and sorrow.

MR. ASQUITH REASSURED.

Mr. Asquith says that Great Britain need have no fear of German naval superiority. Britain is safe to hold her lead for next year and the year after.

This is quite encouraging. But it was Premier Asquith, Mr. Haldane and Sir Edward Grey, his leading ministers dealing with military and foreign affairs, who promoted the scare by telling of the German programme, and picturing in the language of panic the possible consequences. The message of re-assurance was due from the chief promoters of the fright.

When the danger speeches were made the Lloyd-George budget was to be defended. Nothing short of a war scare could justify such a budget at that time. Now the agitation has gone beyond the limits proposed and the ministers are applying soothing remedies.

A SPIRITED PARTY.

The Conservatives of Lunenburg, who were defeated in a provincial by-election a few weeks ago, took the field again immediately in a federal by-election. They have again failed, but only by some 250 majority, which was a rather close vote for that riding. This fight was certainly worth making and is a splendid example of the kind of courage and persistence which in the end makes victory sure. The Opposition captured the town of Lunenburg and divided Bridgewater. Had they won the election these Conservatives of Lunenburg would have been overwhelmed with praises and congratulations. They are no less deserving because they came a little short of victory.

People are taking notice of the fact that in the competitive appointments made to the Third Division in the civil service by the commissioners 27 of the 57 went to women. The Montreal Gazette sees in this a prospect of a large increase in the number of clever women seeking admission to the service, seeing that the law allows them the same pay as men. But it should not be forgotten that while the Third Division is open to both sexes, women may not compete for positions in the two higher ranks. Naturally this tends to increase the proportion of clever girls who compete in the one division open to them.

Nansen, who has refrained until now from saying anything on the question of Peary versus Cook, says that he knew it all the time. If only he had mentioned his suspicions to his friend the King of Denmark, or his other friend, Dr. Torp, of the University of Copenhagen, he might have been a benefactor.

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CHRISTMAS HYMNODY

A correspondent writes:
"In your issue of December 18 there was an article upon Christmas hymnody which contained some inaccuracies of statement that I feel impelled to call your attention to."
The writer says of the Latin hymn for Epiphany by Prudentius: "The English version of this hymn is by an American hymnologist, Edmund Caswell." It is by the English translator Edward Caswall. Canon Oakley's hymn continues:
"There are two more carols by American authors, Mrs. Alexander's 'Once in David's Royal City,' and John Caswell's 'Hark, the Sound of Holy Voices.'"
Neither of these writers was American. Mrs. Alexander, who wrote 400 hymns, mostly for children, was born in Ireland and was the wife of the Bishop of Derry, and John Caswell was an Englishman. His hymn here referred to is 'Hark, What Mean Those Holy Voices?'
The opening lines of Wesley's famous Christmas hymn are not:
"Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the new born King."
The correct lines are:
"Hark, how all the welkin rings
Glory to the King of Kings."
The writer also speaks of "Charlotte Elliott, the bedridden poetess." Charlotte Elliott, to whom he refers, was not bedridden. Her sister said of her:
"From early years she was more or less an invalid, and consequently her life was one of much seclusion, offering but few incidents and little variety. Her life was a hidden one. She always rallied during the summer months and was able to pay visits to friends at a distance."
At Montreal she visited Normandy, Paris, Scotland; travelled for months one year after another here and there, on the Continent or in Switzerland, and made long visits to different parts of England.

MARRIAGES.

McFarland-Lisson—At Trinity church, Sussex on Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 1909, by Rev. Canon Scott Neales, M. A., Wm. Alken McFarland, of the Parish of Sussex, and Ellen Octavia Lison, of the same parish.

DEATHS.

Vassie—On the 21st inst. at 25 Mecklenburg St., Charlotte, young daughter of the late William Vassie, age 22 years.

Hillyard—At his residence 222 Douglas Avenue, at 12 o'clock noon, on Wednesday, Dec. 22, Henry Hillyard, aged 62 years.

Funeral from his late residence on Friday, at 2:30 o'clock. Service at St. Luke's church.

DEATHS.

Mrs. Wm. Alterton.
Word was received yesterday of the death at her home in Jacksonville, Carleton county, of Mrs. Wm. Alterton, a sister of the late Sir S. L. Tilley. Mrs. Alterton on the 18th month celebrated her 90th birthday.

She is survived by two sisters, Mrs. T. R. Hamilton, of this city and Mrs. Harrison, wife of Rev. George Harrison, of Quebec, also by a large family of children and grandchildren. Mrs. Alterton for the past twenty years has made her home with her son-in-law, Mr. Samuel Harper, at Jacksonville. She is remembered by a few of the older citizens of St. John. In the section where she lived Mrs. Alterton was held in high esteem.

THE FIRST PANTOMIME.

John Rich has the credit of producing the first pantomime ever seen in England. This was performed on December 26th, 1717, at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Rich had found himself unable to compete with the legitimate drama at Drury Lane, so he brought himself of the comic masques occasionally performed in scenic and mechanical effects the manoeuvres of the pantomime ballet. The result was "Harlequin Executed," which the advertisement of that day described as "A New Italian Comic Scene, between a Scaramouch, a Harlequin, a Country Farmer, his Wife, and others." There was all the business with which we have been familiar from childhood, but turned into palaces, shops into gardens, houses into trees. Of course the "earnest student of the drama" protested against this innovation, but Harlequin, Columbine and Co. have maintained their hold on public favor until the present year of grace.

PROBATE COURT.

Estate of James Donahue.
In the probate court yesterday, the matter of the estate of James Donahue, deceased, came up. He died intestate, leaving his wife, Mary Ann Donahue, and five sons and seven daughters. Mrs. Donahue was appointed administratrix. There is no real estate. Personal estate is \$750. John Kerr, K. C., is proctor.

CIRCUIT COURT.

The case of O'Donnell vs. Ruddock, which was scheduled to be tried before His Honor Mr. Justice McLeod with-out a jury yesterday morning, in the Circuit Court, was adjourned until Wednesday next at Admiralty Court Chambers. Messrs. Hazen and Raymond appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr. S. A. M. Skinner for the defendant.

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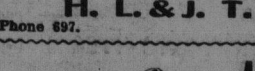
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