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A Learned Disquisition on Governments and Politicians.

Observer" Sees a Remedy For All Our Ills in Confederation.

The Evening Telegram.

Our Sir—May I through your columns speak to the electors of the party on some subjects which personally would interest them. I am a native of Terra Nova, and have always been interested in its development and progress. I am also interested in government, as good government is a rapid progress holder the relation of cause and effect. However, I do wish that what I say be taken in a broad sense entirely, any more than in a strictly economic sense, in speaking of matters economic one must not speak of its political side as well. In the reasonable fusion of the two I wish to be understood.

A nation is an entity—a large family—its destiny is progress and enlightenment. There are three factors contributing to the realization of this destiny: (1) An energetic, intelligent people; (2) Natural wealth, and (3) A Democratic Government. If one of these is lacking, the nation, though it may be rich, it falls short, and its progress is retarded. This country was colonized in 1629, and there were attempts at colonization here that, but it was that, that marked the beginning of Newfoundland history—that is 338 years ago. Our English ancestors came here to prosecute the codfishery, which its waters teemed. Other people came also, attracted by the same lure. Many left the precarious and poverty-stricken England and Ireland and built up the little island of this country, fishing establishments. The aboriginal Indians were driven inland where they gradually suffered extinction before the invading army of their white invaders. This history by the way, the Pilgrims, fleeing from religious persecution in the Old World took their religion and the germinal ideas of the New World Democracy with them on the "Mayflower." They landed at Nova Scotia in 1620, and began American history. Jacques Cartier, in 1535, sailed up the St. Lawrence and began the colonization of Canada.

Newfoundland has not kept pace. These are very significant events, showing that Canada, the United States and Newfoundland are opening up to the civilization of the Old World at virtually the same time. Our country has not kept pace with its neighbours in progress and development. For this statement there need be no apology, a casual glance around us and we see the glaring truth of it. The cause must be sought in one or more of the factors that make for development: people, government or lack of presence of natural wealth. Then (1) its people, (2) its government, and (3) its natural wealth. They are the same race as those who have made the United States the richest and most compact nation on the face of the earth, who have made Canada a most fertile wilderness—into smiling corn fields, rich cities, wonderful industries, an inexhaustible source of national wealth; the Anglo-Saxon race, a race with astonishing energy, endurance and great genius, an uncon-

quarable race. The natives of this country have not deteriorated, they have not become effete physically or mentally, they have become bankrupt of ideas, they are the same race in another country. (2) Natural wealth, apart from the codfishery, which is but too well known, have we any other resources to which to draw. I will quote from the text-books: "The rocks around Notre Dame Bay are rich in metals and have yielded large quantities of copper. Bell Island in Conception Bay is extremely rich in iron ore and there may be other veins of equal value as yet undiscovered. On the West Coast, three distinct coalfields are known to exist of considerable extent, and containing coal of good quality." And again: "In the Codroy Valley there are 280 square miles of good agricultural land. Gold, nickel and antimony are mixed with some of the other metals. Asbestos is found around Bay of Islands. Petroleum oil is found at Parson's Pond and other places. Newfoundland lies in the natural forest belt of North America, and in the river valleys there are wide stretches of good timber. The Exploits and Humber rivers have tremendous water force possibilities." Now, the above are facts, the results of investigation and research through the country. They mean that our natural wealth is lying dormant, that we have as yet untouched resources, awaiting the plough and the pick-axe of farmer and miner. Indeed if our fisheries failed entirely, this country could support ten times its present population if only our hidden wealth were brought to the light of day.

Ignorance the Tool of Politicians.

The policy of the governments of this country has been one of isolation. It has striven to disconnect itself from the other parts of the new world. In isolation is stagnation and ruin. Most—not all—of its politicians have tried and to a great extent have succeeded in keeping the people in ignorance for their own self-employment. Ignorance has always been the sovereign tool of the political exploiter and the despot. Russia is a standing example. The demagogue's greatest asset is the ignorance of the electorate; with a few catch-phrases he can win all within hearing of his side. With a few empty words and a well-timed joke he can turn men's heads—and votes. This condition is a direct result of a lack of general education on the part of the electors. Our educational system is a standing disgrace to a people calling themselves free. If my readers require a proof of this statement let them visit some of the more isolated parts of the island. On the West Coast, from Cape Norman to Cape Ray, illiteracy is almost general. From Cape Ray to Cape Race, with the exception of some of the more important coast towns the condition is as bad. Along the East Coast, I speak conservatively when I say ten per cent. of our people are illiterate in this section. (I wish not to be misunderstood. I cast no slur on individuals when I speak of illiteracy. I discuss existing facts and not the individual misfortune). The oldest representative of New World colonization has not a University! Its highest dedication to the muses is a High School. A native of Terra Nova must go to Canada or America to get a qualification as Doctor or Lawyer, or what profession soever. This is not the most reprehensible feature. No effort is being made to improve conditions. We have a Department of Education, true, we require also a Department of Bell-Ringers to wake the Department of Education. Ignorance is the greatest deterrent to progress; general academic enlightenment its greatest asset.

An Anachronism.

Again, it is a generally recognized fact by political economists that



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without a railroad system, no modern nation can compete and take its true place in civilization. I have said that we are an isolated people; and our railroad system proves this in a great measure. Our narrow gauge railway is an anachronism, the introduction of a tallow candle into an apartment brilliant with electricity. Mr. R. G. Reid came to Newfoundland to construct a railroad, and with all due deference to that pioneer we have a pit track instead—the wonder and dismay of travellers coming to the country. In England and Scotland and in fact any European country, such a gauge is perhaps suited. They are all compact, populous countries; freights are transferred only short distances in short periods of time. This requires small cars and small engines. In Newfoundland our overland trade with Canada must go on three freights per week. This country can support 15,000,000 people; suppose we had that population and 5,000,000 were industrial workers, how could our produce be transferred from coast to coast with such antique railroad facilities?

A Tariff Barrier.

See another proof of our isolation in our trade barriers. The present Government has erected a solid wall between this country and Canada, a tariff barrier of 70 per cent., and this is protection! Too unfortunate we haven't a Cobden to tell our political geniuses what asses they are. This is isolation with a vengeance. We are taxed to-day 100 dollars per capita. In Canada, I believe, the per capita tax is 108 dollars. You say that is in favour of this country. Not so. Newfoundlanders are paying besides an inefficiency tax of 100 dollars per capita more. In Canada people are taxed for what they have, hold and enjoy. In this country we pay for what we never see. You are paying for your children's education. Do they receive it? They do not and cannot. The Government makes it impossible—speak of Government as an entity, and not as a party. We are paying for railroads that are not such. We are paying for political representatives who are as dumb in Parliamentary proceedings as the janitor employed there. We are paying for efficiency, and receive inefficiency. In the nature of things, governments will be more or less incompetent and unfitted to meet the demands of the age in which they find themselves. Our governments have never served the age in which they found themselves, but generally the succeeding one and in consequence have barely kept within hailing distance of neighbouring states.

Parochial Sentiments.

There is also a deficiency of national sentiment among our people. We think in terms of districts or towns, and not in terms of the whole country. Our people seem not to be interested in general development, unless it be also directly local, and politicians work on this sentiment; their platforms are local, and the promise of a grant of money to be spent in a community will generally bring more

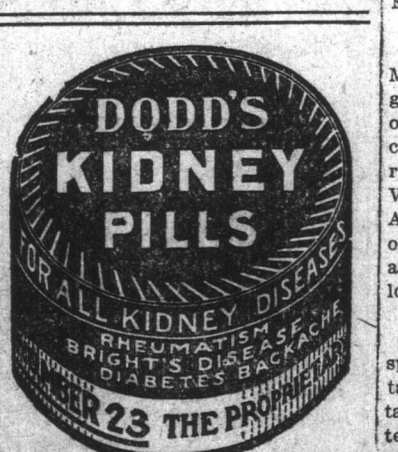
votes than the promise of a railroad to develop the whole country. Newfoundland is like every other country affected by the recent war. We are over \$50,000,000 in debt. This in itself is not much, but the country, the people are in a much worse condition as things are at present to bear a debt of that kind than other nations similarly affected. We are merely one quarter of a million people to pay this debt and keep up a variety of institutions. Newfoundland was never in the position she finds herself in today, it is incapable of standing alone. Our isolation will mean our ruin. We need to pool our resources by Confederation. It would mean the inauguration of this country into a great federation of states, having mutual interests. The most talented advantage to Newfoundland through confederation would be unhampered trade interchange and a centralized government. Our mines of coal and iron would certainly be developed to a far greater extent than at present. Newfoundland is the only part of British America that has not joined the union. Geographically we are in a more favorable position than Prince Edward Island. The union of that island with the Dominion has proven successful, and there is abundant evidence to believe that Newfoundland would be more so, as we are far richer in natural wealth. The consequent abolition of the tariff barrier would far more than offset any increase of taxation to the great majority of our people. This huge burden of taxation has been too long the sovereign tool of anti-confederationalists. Sane thought

on the part of the electors will surely exercise it.

I thank the Editor for space.
Sincerely,
OBSERVER.
Chelsea, Trinity District,
Dec. 6, 1921.

Should Stop Waste.

The herring fishery has been good at Bay of Islands the past two weeks and the people engaged in the industry are likely to have a prosperous season. Business has improved there wonderfully since the 20th of November and for the first time in two years everybody is buying all they require in the food line, and all the store hands are as busy as they can be. There were four of Harris's vessels from Grand Bank at Bay of Islands the past week loading salt bulk herring for the United States Market. One of Hollett's is also there loading. The price of the



herring from the net is from \$2.00 to \$2.50 a barrel.

There are two New York firms Agents at Curling buying Scotch Pack at \$14.00 a barrel, and are taking no herring under ten inches in length to fill the barrels. This is leading to a terrible waste of the herring that are netted, as about 40 per cent. are thrown away dead as too small to put in the barrel of Scotch Pack. The shore is strewn with scores of barrels of dead condemned herring from Humbermouth to Melven's and the people who value the herring fishing are disgusted that this practice is not stopped by the authorities.

These herring are good food and packed as "small" would fetch at least \$5.00 to \$7.00 a barrel in Nova Scotia and the United States. It is a criminal waste of good fish food, and if there is no law on the Statute Book to prevent the practice, one should be enacted at the first opportunity.—Trade Review.

The most captivating and useful Men's Winter Vests have now been greatly reduced at BISHOP'S. Any one of these would make a most acceptable man's gift and the drastic reductions place high class Wool Vests within reach of every purse. A new Vest is sometimes the means of making an old suit take on a new appearance and give many months' longer wear.

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