

The Standard

Published by The Standard Limited, 32 Prince William Street, St. John, Canada.

TELEPHONE CALLS:
Business Office Main 1723
Editorial and News Main 1746

SUBSCRIPTION.
Morning Edition, By Carrier, per year . . . \$5.00
Morning Edition, By Mail, per year . . . 3.00
Weekly Edition, By Mail, per year . . . 1.00
Single Copies Two Cents.

Chicago Representative:
Henry DeClerque, 701-702 Schiller Building,
New York Office:
L. Klebahn, Manager, 1 West 34th Street.

SAINT JOHN, WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1911.

A GENERAL ELECTION.

Will there be a general election for the Dominion Parliament? And when? The signs point to an affirmative reply to the first question. Look at the estimates and count up the list of individual items covering almost every known possibility upon which public money could be expended. Note the multitudinous wharves, public buildings, harbors and river improvements, each with its appropriation of from \$500 to \$50,000, at every conceivable place where such things can be built, and often entirely irrespective of trade or public necessity.

For Nova Scotia 129 appropriations for harbors and rivers, involving an expenditure of \$461,436 appear in the further supplementary estimates for 1912; for New Brunswick 40 like appropriations, involving \$234,250; for Quebec 102, involving \$748,150 and for Ontario 51, calling for \$718,600, whilst the West gets 27 similar appropriations calling for \$570,000. This further supplementary estimate calls altogether for \$17,020,580, which, added to the preceding estimates, makes a total of \$156,000,000 authorized to be expended in one year.

Never before has such an estimate been laid before a Canadian Parliament. Contracts are being called for construction of the Hudson Bay road, though no route has been yet definitely selected, nor has the Government decided as yet on the Bay terminus, whether it shall be Churchill or Nelson. The \$38,000,000 guarantee to a great railway company, is hurried through at the closing hours of the session. The much heralded announcement of \$5,000,000 to be expended on our own harbor of St. John is obviously intended to catch the public ear. These points to ledger influence, to the baiting and seduction of sections of the electorate, to the stimulation of the appetites and the quickening of the sympathies of contractors of all grades, to the exchequer of employees and contributions to be levied on the employers.

All this looks like election. Then for three months an army of census takers and enumerators have been in process of selection and formation, the selection being without exception from amongst the faithful followers, and the formation so arranged as to work to the party advantage of the Government candidates. This softens and mellows the ground and promotes the conditions for a bountiful harvest of votes.

Then again the Grand Trunk Pacific is being pushed forward, and heavy expenditures are being made, which in more ways than one will be made to work in favor of the Government. Provisions for increases to the salaries of outside service officers have been particularly in evidence, and the amount so provided foreshadows a near opportunity for the recipients of the increases to testify their gratitude to a Government that has long delayed what justice has long demanded.

Tons of party literature have been distributed and are still going out to every quarter of the country, in which is set forth in florid phrases the claims of the party in power, the virtues of the ministers, the prosperity of the country, and the beauties of the tariff-fielding compact. To all this add the imminent public meetings, the activities of the patronage committees, and the re-vivification of the parish and county organizations.

Lastly we must consider the plight in which the Government and party find themselves, tied to a pact which they cannot force through Parliament, faced by an Opposition which practically dictates the business of the House and does out temporary supplies with a sparing hand. Honeycombed with disaffection and dissatisfaction in the party itself, with weak ministers in front and doubtful support in the ranks, it is not surprising that the Premier may wish to stake all upon the venture of an election and end or mend a situation which is becoming intolerable.

As to the time that the election may be called on there is more doubt. If the United States Senate smother the Reciprocity Bill, as undoubtedly is being attempted by the strong opposition developed against it in that body, there would seem to be no reason for an immediate appeal. In that case the Reciprocity Bill in our Parliament would be abandoned, and the Government would take time to mend if possible its shattered fences, and draw together its divided forces. In 1912 would then be the earliest probable date of an election, either June or October.

If, however, the Senate passes the measure, two things have to be considered in fixing the date of appeal. The Census enumeration of population will have been completed by the first of July, and it is possible to have the returns tabulated in time for legislation on the appointment of members in early October. We incline to the opinion that the Government will wish to appeal to the new electorate, and will take full advantage of the added representation in the Prairie Provinces, where it believes the Reciprocity feeling is strongly in its favor.

How many new members will be called for under the population returns we do not know, but the number will be considerable and the new members will go entirely to the West. Quebec will, of course, have the old number, 65, but the other Eastern Provinces will lose some they now possess, and the West will gain both in actuality and by comparison. If the Government redributes before calling on an election, which seems probable, the date could not be earlier than November.

Then there is the question of supplies. As it now stands supplies will run out on September 1st, and with empty coffers the two or three months before an election could be completed and the new House convened, but it would present very serious difficulties of administration. All this could be avoided by an agreement between the parties to perfect redistribution, and pass legislation on the understanding that the Reciprocity Bill be withdrawn and an appeal made to the Country. That is all the Opposition have been working for, and they are anxious to submit the policy to the new and enlarged electorate at the earliest possible moment.

This reasoning places the probable date of elections somewhere in November. But the Government may persist in passing its measure before going to the Country. If so, trouble will begin at once on the re-assembly of Parliament in July. The Opposition have expressed their determination to prevent, if possible, the passage of this bill, and on two grounds:—the pernicious character of the bill itself, and the passing of such

drastic and far-reaching legislation without submission to the electorate.

The Country is behind the Opposition in these particulars, and with this conviction and knowledge Mr. Borden and his supporters will be justified in fighting the measure to the uttermost. In such a fight all parliamentary tactics are admissible, even to the refusal of supplies to a Government which has, in the belief of the Opposition, ceased to hold the confidence of the Country. In the event of such a contest the date of an election depends on the fortunes of war, but would not be very long delayed.

The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be this: An election is imminent, the issues involved are vital to Canada and the Empire, and there should not be a moment's delay in preparing the electorate to thoroughly understand these issues, and in organizing it so as to ensure the full effect of its opinions. To this end every Conservative organization should get busy and keep busy until the great contest is rightly concluded.

THE VALLEY RAILWAY.

Mr. Pugsley stands pat. In an interview published in the Times last evening he says that Mr. Flemming's statement does not alter the situation, and in effect that he does not propose to change his attitude towards the St. John Valley Railway project. Mr. Pugsley is for Intercolonial operation and Intercolonial operation only. This is not surprising as Mr. Pugsley has shaped the Federal legislation himself and adapted it to suit his own purposes.

But in doing this it has escaped Mr. Pugsley's observation that under existing legislation Intercolonial operation is impossible. Both parts two and three of the local act provide for a railway through Lakeville and Centreville and by no other route. The report of the survey of the railway through these villages shows that such a railway as is proposed by Mr. Pugsley cannot be built. The grades called for are not possible by the Lakeville-Centreville route. If a railroad is to be built to meet the requirements of the Federal Act to be operated by the Intercolonial it cannot pass through the villages of Lakeville and Centreville. It must go nearer the river and away from these villages. Yet the Provincial Act says that the road must be built by way of Lakeville and Centreville, and this route was suggested by Mr. Pugsley himself.

Mr. Pugsley must have been acquainted with these facts when he made the statement he did. He is not unfamiliar with the route. It has been discussed time and again. He must also have made himself familiar with the engineer's report. It is the most important document dealing with the situation. Mr. Pugsley charges Mr. Flemming with suppressing information, which is not the fact, but surely Mr. Pugsley will not profess ignorance as to the engineering difficulties which attend the construction of the road via Lakeville and Centreville, and which practically prevent the adoption of Intercolonial operation until authority is obtained to alter the route.

In another part of the interview, Mr. Pugsley says: "Mr. Flemming also refers to the fact that when I was in the Provincial Government I favored the construction of a line from Quebec across Maine, to be operated by Mackenzie & Mann; but circumstances have greatly changed since then. Since that time the country has committed itself to, and is about completing the construction of a new transcontinental railway, and one of the strongest arguments in its favor is that it is built from ocean to ocean wholly upon Canadian territory."

Surely Mr. Pugsley is mistaken as to dates. The National Transcontinental Railway (with executive offices in the Pugsley building, St. John), was under construction in New Brunswick when Mr. Pugsley made the speech in the Legislature from which Mr. Flemming quoted. If this is correct, and there is very strong evidence that it is, there has been no change in the circumstances. The country was already committed to the construction of a new transcontinental line built "from ocean to ocean wholly upon Canadian territory."

So far as Mr. Pugsley's references to the credit of the Province being risked are concerned it may be well for Mr. Pugsley to recall the various railway construction schemes in which the Province became involved and for which its credit was pledged while he was one of the chief guardians of the public treasury. The International Railway across the northern part of the Province without a Western connection outside the Province received a subsidy and had its bonds guaranteed by the Government. Then there was the New Brunswick Coal and Railway Company. This company started in with a guarantee which ended in provincial ownership.

With these object lessons in view it is remarkable that Mr. Pugsley should be animated with such a keen desire to protect the treasury of the country now that he has ceased to have any control over it or any part in shaping its legislation. Besides there is no guarantee that forty per cent. of the gross earnings of the railroad under Intercolonial operation would be sufficient to pay the interest on the bonds guaranteed. If we take Mr. Pugsley's own figures as to the cost of construction of the Valley Railway the men who build it will be compelled to risk a large sum of money out of their own pockets to complete the road, in addition to both subsidies, which would be lost to them unless they continued to pay the interest on the bonds guaranteed.

The Province is assuming no greater risk under one plan than the other, and this is a fact which Mr. Pugsley cannot put in the back ground. As the matter stands at present the Provincial Government has found a means of securing the construction and operation of the St. John Valley Railway. Mr. Pugsley, by holding up the Dominion subsidy, and by holding to a plan which is not possible of execution, and which has been made so largely by his own exertions, stands in the way.

Referring to the St. John Valley Railway and Mr. Flemming's letter, the Globe in pointing out that the letter deals with the present phase of the subject from the standpoint of the Local Government, remarks that this standpoint does not appear to have been carefully considered by the Minister of Railways "who, no doubt, has not yet had sufficient time to take in the matter from all sides." This is a charitable view to take of the situation. It should not take Mr. Graham long to discover that the people in the Valley counties, after years of waiting, are in no mood to see the practical proposition submitted by Mr. Flemming held up by any factious opposition engineered by Mr. Pugsley for his own purposes.

Current Comment

(Christian Science Monthly.)

A bill has been introduced in the Colorado senate providing that stenographers shall not be compelled to reveal secrets committed to them by employers. Such a measure should be passed in every state. The secrets referred to, whatever they may be, are not the stenographers', but the employers'.

(London Free Press.)

The broad spirit under which the Young Men's Christian Association work is conducted today is well illustrated by the gift of \$25,000 by an American Jew for the work of the association among the colored men of his country.

PUBLIC WORKS.

(St. John Globe.)

There are already reports afloat and in easy circulation to the effect that wharf building, dredging, breakwater construction, and a dry dock are to be entered upon here at a very early date. Somewhat similar rumors, at least as to the construction of works of this nature, have been afloat for a time which might be measured by years. The latest rumors take on some definiteness, as, for example, that the greater portion if not all save possibly, some dredging at the western side of the harbor—of this new work will be in Courtenay Bay, and that a very considerable portion of it, if not all, will be in the same hands; that the persons who are to do the work are already selected, and so on, much of which may be imaginative.

The money for these works, a number of grants asked for by the minister of public works was held up when the last supply bill went through, but whether any for the purposes mentioned above was included, we do not know. The vote for a dry dock is, it will be remembered, a standing offer, based upon a parliamentary act, guaranteeing the bonds of any company undertaking the erection of approved docks.

No doubt the public here would like to see actualities supersede the promises of several years, without much regard as to who gets the contracts provided they are responsible builders. But of course there are exceptions, and persons who want to see the contracts placed "right."

The Census In The Schools.

The work of taking the census in the city schools is to be conducted during the next two or three weeks, and some of the enumerators began their duties yesterday in their respective wards. They will visit the houses in each street, in the ward to which they are assigned and take the names and ages of the children from five to fourteen years. What has been done, the lists will be compared with those in the registers of the schools, and in this way the number of children who should attend school, as well as the number who do, will be determined. Supt. H. S. Bridges has chosen the following for the work: Harold Gardiner, both wards St. John west; Caleb Belyea, Lansdowne; W. J. Short, Lorne; Albert Peters, Queens and Duke; Frank McGuire, Prince; Martin Lanyon, Kings; R. A. C. Brown, Dufferin; Mark Stevens, Wellington; James McKinney, Sydney; Daniel B. Collins, Victoria and James O'Leary, Stanley.

Honeymoon In Europe.

"The marriage of George F. Driscoll, son of D. J. Driscoll, lumber merchant, Ottawa, formerly of St. John, to Miss Winnifred, daughter of the late Edward Hart, of Montreal, will be solemnized at St. Patrick's church, Montreal, on Friday morning, June 2. After the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll will leave for Quebec, where they will take the S. S. Empress of Ireland for Liverpool. Their stay abroad will occupy about 10 weeks, and will include the coronation festivities in England and a visit to the principal European capitals. Mr. Driscoll is the popular manager of the Orpheum theatre, in Montreal.

Juvenile Thief Taken.

Arthur Lockhart, a youth of 12 years, has come within the pale of justice on account of a theft. He is accused of robbing Mrs. Wm. Thompson, of Carleton, of a sum of money and also of obtaining goods under false pretences. Young Lockhart succeeded in eluding the police until late on Monday night when he was rounded up in the vicinity of the Suspension bridge. He was brought before Magistrate Ritchie yesterday morning and remanded until today for a further hearing.

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S. Kerr,
Principal.

PROTESTING THE NEW WEST INDIAN CONTRACT

Vigorous protests against the new West India line contract were voiced at a meeting held in the Board of Trade rooms yesterday morning and a committee was appointed to see what could be done to secure a better service and more favorable arrangements for St. John.

The joint meeting of the Council of the Board of Trade and the West India merchants of the city was called to consider the new contract entered into by the Dominion government with Bickford & Black, Halifax. The arrangement called for a sailing from Halifax every eleven days and from St. John every twenty-two days, that is every alternate steamer would not call at this port.

There was a representative gathering of the West India merchants and they were unanimous in protesting against the terms of the contract and also against the fact that an arrangement had been entered into without giving them an opportunity to express their views on the matter.

After considerable discussion a delegation was appointed to wait on the Minister of Public Works and lay the matter before him in a view to establishing his assistance in securing modification of the contract that would give St. John a more reasonable opportunity to retain some share of the trade with the tropical islands. The delegation appointed consisted of the chairman, T. H. Estabrooks, and G. B. Schofield, James Pender, L. G. Cross, W. H. Thorne and G. E. Barbour.

The Board of Trade committee on civic licenses also reported progress at the meeting of the council.

AMUSEMENTS.

New Pictures at the Nickel.

The Nickel has a new bill for the mid-week and one that contains no less than three distinct features. The companies contributing to this delightful programme are Edison, Biograph and Kalem, three of the leading film concerns in the world. The Biograph picture, "His Mother's Scar," is claimed by the film journals and by the makers to be the grandest scenic story every photographed. This is certainly a film de luxe of the famous Biograph make—a return to the old days of sensation, ally fine pictures. The Edison story is by the noted author Thomas W. Higginson and is entitled "L'Amour," a most charming tale of Paris and New York. The Kalem Co. furnish the excitement and rough-riding in the western plainman story "Slim Jim's Last Chance," in which most realistic Indian raid is made. The Tremont Male Quartette will sing "The Bell in the Lighthouse," and a medley of camp meeting songs today and on Thursday will render "The Alamo Rag" and a medley of old folk songs. Miss Wallace will have new numbers today. The fine orchestra into the bargain.

IN THE COURTS

County Court.

At the adjourned sitting of the May session of the County Court, Tuesday morning the case of the New Brunswick Bank vs. Scovill was resumed. The defendants claim they never signed the note in question nor gave any authority to Merritt Bros. to do so. The plaintiffs claim the note was properly signed and that at the time it was made Scovill & Son were indebted to Merritts for more than \$1,000.

The evidence of J. Whitney Scovill, one of the defendants, was taken this morning, and was similar to the evidence given by his father on Monday afternoon. Argument of counsel was then heard after which Judge Forbes charged the jury strongly in favor of the plaintiffs. The jury retired at 12.40. In the afternoon, the jury gave the following verdict:—The defendants in this jury the firm of Merritt Bros. Ltd. executed a signed blank draft into a promissory note and that the alterations were so apparent that the plaintiff should have insisted on said alterations being initialed or approved of by J. B. Scovill & Son. Therefore we bring in a verdict for the defendant, J. B. Scovill & Son.

The case of McDonald vs. Rankine was settled. The court was adjourned until Friday morning at 10 o'clock.

Chambers.

Hearing was had before the Chief Justice in Chambers Tuesday morning in the case of Lewis R. Murray, trustee of the Ira A. McLean estate, vs. Albert B. Pugsley and Bridget A. McLean. Summons were returned yesterday on the application of Albert Bonnell, one of the next of kin of Ira A. McLean, to be added as defendant, and the plaintiff was ordered to call the next of kin. The court considers; decision on Friday. Ralph St. J. Freeze supported the application, which was opposed by E. F. Kaynard, appearing for the present defendants.

PROBATE.

Estate of Martha Stinson. Estate of Martha Stinson, late of Lorneville, Lancaster, widow. The accounts and vouchers of Anne Jane Cochran, widow, the administratrix, are presented, with petition to pass the same. Citation issued, returnable on Monday, 17th July next, at 11 a. m. J. King Kelley, proctor.

Estate of Charles Ward.

Estate of Charles J. Ward, tavern-keeper. Last will proved, whereby the deceased gave all his estate to his wife, Margaret, absolutely. The testator died on 17th March last; his widow on the 28th day of the same month, without having proved her husband's will. The wife made her will, appointing Andrew McIntosh, of the parish of Simonds, florist, executor and trustee, and directed him to divide her property—one-half to be given to her adopted daughter, Katie White Ward; the other half to be equally divided among her five children, namely: Charles J. Ward, left no relatives, so far as known, except a niece, whose residence is unknown here. Accordingly, administration, with the will annexed, is granted on the husband's estate to the said Andrew McIntosh, the executor and trustee of the wife's estate. Real estate valued at \$1,200. Personal estate, consisting of the leasehold in which the deceased did business, namely, the One Mile House, and other personal property, valued at \$4,800. J. B. M. Baxter, K. C., proctor.

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A general meeting of the shareholders of Lancaster Loan, Limited, was held Monday evening in the office of Stephen Bustin. Officers were elected as follows: President, W. E. O'Regan Building will close Friday night at 11 o'clock. Get there before the closing hour.

treasurer, B. W. Steeves; secretary, S. B. Bustin.

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