

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH
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This paper has the largest circulation in the Maritime Provinces.

Semi-Weekly Telegraph.

ST. JOHN, N. B., OCTOBER 18, 1898.

THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

There will be plenty of reports and rumors of all kinds from South Africa for the next few weeks and it is likely that a good many of the stories that are sent over the wires will prove to be exaggerated or untrue. The readers of the despatches sent to the newspapers have already had some experience with respect to the announcement of movements that have never been made and of invasions that did not come off. No doubt the Boers will do their best to occupy important positions in British territory and to ravage and destroy, but their time of triumph will be short. As soon as the British arrangements for a forward campaign are completed there will be an advance on Pretoria in such force that no resistance will be possible and when Pretoria falls the war will come to an end.

The news which we publish today from the east of war in South Africa is quite interesting, and shows that active operations have already commenced, and Boers of both of the Transvaal and Orange Free State having invaded British territory. In reading the despatches it is well for our readers who do not happen to have a map in front of them to remember that the scene of active operations is not merely Natal but the northern portion of Cape Colony. As the names of the places mentioned are nearly all new to the reader, it is well to have a map of the region. For instance, to begin with the Cape Colony part of the field he will be looking at a map that Kimberley, Vryburg and Mafeking are all on the eastern borders of the Bechuanaland portion of Cape Colony and close to the borders of the Dutch republic. All these places are menaced by Boer forces, and it is on this line that the armored train was detailed and destroyed by the Boers the other day. We may add that owing to the comparatively small number of British troops in the northern part of Cape Colony there is more danger in this quarter than elsewhere. On the other hand, the Boers are less numerous on that line than on the border made on two sides, from the west by the forces of the Orange Free State, and from the north and east by the Transvaal troops. Ladysmith, in Natal, is the headquarters of General White's force, and it is open to attack from Orange Free State. The Boers have approached it in force but apparently have retreated, at all events General White was unable to bring them to an engagement on Saturday. It is, however, between Ladysmith and the Orange border that the first battle of the war will probably be fought.

A FRIEND OF ST. JOHN.

The minister of railways has always been a special object of attack by the Sun and its friends, whether he was the leader of the government of this province or in his present position at the head of one of the most important departments of the dominion administration. Ever since that fateful day in February, 1893, when the wires brought the news from F. de la Rive that the Hazy-

ton administration had gone down like a house of cards the Sun has railed at Mr. Blair, in season and out of season, without rhyme or reason. According to that organ of the Conservative party Mr. Blair never did anything that was right. All his acts were bad, even when to unprejudiced persons he seemed to be doing good. So far was this ridiculous form of attack carried that his splendid achievement in obtaining for St. John terminal facilities in connection with the Intercolonial Railway, deep-water wharves and a grain elevator, was made a ground of attack, while Mr. George E. Foster, who absolutely refused to do anything for St. John, was spoken of as the man whom our people should love and honor. The people of St. John have become very tired of this sort of thing, because by persisting in its present policy the Sun seems to assume that they are without discretion or even common sense. They know a friend and they know an enemy, and they recognize in Mr. Blair the best supporter in the government that this city ever had.

THE GOVERNMENT'S COURSE VINDICATED.

It is amusing to observe the action of the rabid Conservative newspapers over the question of sending a Canadian contingent to the Transvaal. The government long ago decided that if there was a war in South Africa, Canada should be represented in it, but they made their preparations quietly, sound of the British government on the subject and awaited the result of the correspondence that was then going on between the latter and the government of the Transvaal. In the meantime the opposition were industriously looking about them for some question out of which they could make political capital and they seem to have concluded that as the Canadian contingent was still in Canada something might be made out of the fact. They were suddenly seized with a fit of ultra loyalty and began demanding why a Canadian force had not been sent to South Africa. They pretended to believe that Canada should have been more forward in her warlike preparations than even the British government was, and that at a time when the latter was hoping that peace would be preserved a Canadian army should have been sent to the front. The public can better judge of the sincerity of these demonstrations when they remember that Sir Charles Tupper and the other Conservative leaders have been denouncing the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for granting preferential trade to the mother country without an equivalent. There is no doubt that if the government had done what the Conservative press now say they should have done they would have been violently attacked and their course would have been declared unconstitutional and unwarranted. The men who now declare that the government should have sent a Canadian regiment to South Africa and maintained it there at the expense of Canada, without consulting parliament, are the same men who three years ago advised the government for paying the salaries of the civil servants for two months without parliamentary authority. They would have had all the employees of the government deprived of their pay for two months because the money had not been actually voted by parliament, yet they now maintain that the government of Canada should have undertaken a military enterprise that would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars without a parliamentary vote to authorize the expenditure.

THE COURSE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOLLOWED IN THIS MATTER IS ONE THAT WILL COME TO THE FAIR MINDS AND LOYAL PEOPLE OF CANADA. THE DOMINION WILL BE WORTHILY REPRESENTED BY ONE THOUSAND OF HER BRAVEST SONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, YET THE COST AND DELAY OF CALLING PARLIAMENT TOGETHER WILL BE AVOIDED. THE OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE NATURALLY INCENSED AT A SOLUTION OF THE QUESTION SO HONORABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND SO SATISFACTORY, BUT THERE IS NOTHING NOW FOR THEM TO DO BUT TO FALL INTO THE PROCESSION AND ADMIT THAT THE COURSE OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN EVERY WAY CORRECT.

MR. FOSTER'S ATTACK ON MR. BLAIR.

The Sun Monday thought it necessary to republish Mr. George E. Foster's speech which he made at the political dinner given here on Thursday evening in his honor. This oration occupies more than six columns of the Sun and it took Mr. Foster about two hours to deliver it. Although this report professes to be a verbatim report it has evidently been pruned of a good deal of verbiage and perhaps improved. Yet we cannot congratulate the speaker on the success of his efforts. Any man who after partaking of a good dinner could get on his feet and deliver such a tirade of abuse against his political opponents as Mr. Foster did, must have a very bad stomach or a bad heart, or both. It is well that such a speech should be published, however, if for no other purpose than to show how poor a cause the Conservatives have and how little they can say against the government. The speech is an illustration of the angry, hatred and malice that lurks in the bosom of Mr. Foster because he is no longer in office, but we fail to discern in it any indication that Mr. Foster is a

statesman or even a politician with whom it would be safe to entrust our dearest interests.

The greater part of Mr. Foster's speech was devoted to the minister of railways, whom Mr. Foster does not like. It is, perhaps, quite natural that the ex-minister of finance should feel badly over his position as contrasted with that of his political opponent, but there is no excuse for the coarse and abusive language which he applied to Mr. Blair. When he stated that Mr. Blair did not wage honorable warfare, but displayed coarse and brutal tactics of the lowest kind, he used language which proved nothing against Mr. Blair but much against himself. He showed in a few words that his own method of attacking Mr. Blair was "low," "coarse and brutal," and not in any sense honorable or decent. As for the specific charges he made against Mr. Blair, they were either altogether false or were mere verbal quibbles. He did not and could not lay his hand upon a single act of the minister of railways that in any way justified the attack which he made upon him.

Among the false accusations in which Mr. Foster indulged was the statement that Mr. Blair had said on a public platform last year that government is impossible except by deals and combines. Mr. Blair has already denied in his place in parliament that he ever made such a statement, yet here we have it trotted out again by Mr. Foster and used as a political club to smite the minister of railways. The original statement on which this story was founded was concocted by the Sun in describing Mr. Blair's incoherent speech during the local campaign, in which Mr. Blair was so badly defeated. Yet the report of the meeting which the Sun published daily gave the lie to the statement of the editor because it showed that Mr. Blair made no such statement as the one he is now charged with by Mr. Foster. Mr. Blair said, and the statement was true, that there was a practical side to politics and that if the people of St. John gave the dominion government and himself a slap in the face by electing men who were opposed to him it would weaken his hands in his efforts to benefit the port of St. John. Will any man pretend to say that there was anything in that statement to give the faintest color to Mr. Foster's charge? Yet it is out of such material as this, gross misrepresentations and false and slanderous statements, that the Foster campaign is being constructed. The people, however, are not so easily fooled as Mr. Foster seems to think, and they will turn down Mr. Foster at the next dominion election just as they turned him down at the last provincial election.

When Mr. Foster was last making speeches in St. John he predicted a great victory for the Conservative party. He heard whippers in the air then as he does now; he read the signs of the times, but he did not read them aright. He saw the handwriting on the wall, but it signified his own political downfall, and not that of Mr. Blair. Is there any man who can give a good reason why St. John should prefer Mr. Foster to Mr. Blair? Such a question is almost too absurd to be asked, for Mr. Foster never did anything for St. John while Mr. Blair has done everything. The stately pile of the Intercolonial elevator stands the representative of Mr. Blair's good work for St. John, while the deserted buildings of the Harris foundry exemplify Mr. Foster's work. The one has done his best to build up St. John; the other did his worst to pull it down.

A CANADIAN REGIMENT.

Our readers will be pleased to learn by the Ottawa despatches that owing to the strong and urgent representations of the government of Canada the British secretary of war has agreed that the Canadian contingent for the Transvaal shall go as a Canadian regiment and under the command of a Canadian officer. This is a much more satisfactory arrangement than the one originally proposed by the British government, by which the Canadian contingent would have been scattered by companies throughout the army, so that it was quite possible no two companies would be together. Under such circumstances the Canadian force would have lost its identity to a large extent, and it would have been difficult to award it the due meed of honor. Some parts of the contingent might never have reached the front at all, and even with the companies that were engaged with the enemy it would not have been easy to distinguish the deeds of the Canadians from those of the British born.

Canada will now be permitted to send a regiment numbering 1,000 men, or more than all the Australian colonies combined. This is no more than proper, for Canada has a larger population than all the Australian colonies. It is the pioneer colony of the British empire, the one with the greatest resources and the greatest future. It is, therefore, fitting it should take the lead in aiding the mother country in the present crisis, and would be glad to seize the opportunity of dealing her a death blow. It is not merely the war in the Transvaal that is now in question, but the unity of

the Empire, and the sight of young nations like Canada and the Australian colonies rallying to the support of Great Britain will do more to increase the prestige of the Empire and to awe its enemies than any demonstration of power by Great Britain alone, no matter how imposing, could accomplish. Lt.-Col. Otter, who will command the Canadian regiment, is a native of Canada and has seen as much service as it was possible for a Canadian to see in his own country. He has been a member of the militia force of Canada since 1861. He served on the Niagara frontier in 1865, and against the Fenians in 1866. He served throughout the Northwest rebellion with distinction, and he has been present at the autumn manoeuvres of the British and German armies. Col. Otter has thus, it will be seen, been under fire many times and has a most distinguished record. We have no doubt that the Canadian regiment under his command will win its laurels in the Transvaal war.

The Brooklyn Eagle closes an excellent article on the Kruger ultimatum to Great Britain and its consequences, as follows: "There is freedom in the Transvaal, but it is freedom for the few and oppression for the many. Rights are respected in the Transvaal, but they are rights of the wrongs which are buried deep in wrongs which men care rather than endure. If sympathy must be expressed, let it go to the mark. Oppression, barbarity, tyranny are no target for it. We are only a little older than the war with Spain and we waged that war. It was a fight against oppression, barbarity and tyranny. The fight on the hands of England now is of the same brand. It is the cause of the culture and progress against mediocrity, crudity, prejudice and fanaticism. It is a fight against the entrenchment of the few at the expense of the many. It is a fight not against but for the people of the Transvaal, if it be fair to call three out of four the people. 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