POOR DOCUMENT

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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., MARCH 25 1899.

THE KHALIFA'S ADVANCE.

Some of the papers are publishing despatches alleged to have been cabled from London to the effect that the people of that great capital are much disquieted at the advance of the Khalifa down the Nile. London, with its six millions of people, is not likely to be greatly troubled over a skirmish in Africa, and the idea of the Khalifa, who could not defend his own capital, being able to recapture it now with less than one-third the force he had before, is too absurd for serious consideration. The Khalifa had more than 40,000 men before the capture of Omdurman, now the most favorable reports do not credit him with having more than from 10,000 to 15,000. Fortunately, we have better information in regard to what the Khalifa is likely to be able to accomplish than the despatches of sensation mongers in London or elsewhere. General Sir Archibald Hunter, the new governor of Omdurman, who left London the other day to take charge of his post, said, before his departure, that the reported activity of the Khalifa was not a matter to cause the least apprehension. He said: "His present following has probably been got together more through tribal discipline—for they are likely to be mostly Baggaras, people of his own tribe—than through any remaining feelings of religious fanaticism. Judging from the news to hand, the dervishes are marching to the Nile, probably by the road leading to Duem, a place on the river bank with, perhaps, a couple of hundred inhabitants. He cannot, of course, cross the Nile, and there is no place on the west bank of any size for him to attack except Omdurman. The river between Omdurman and Sabot is well patrolled. There is no place for him to effect a lodgement, and in the direction in which he is reported to be coming there is no food." General Hunter went on to say that he doubted whether the Khalifa would venture to attack Omdurman; but that if he did; he would be playing right into the hands of Lord Kitchener.

PROHIBITION.

The executive of the Dominion Alliance have passed a resolution expressing their strong dissatisfaction at the refusal of the government to introduce a prohibition bill and calling upon all members of parliament to vote for such legislation. The text of the resolution is as follows:—

That this meeting desires to express its strong dissatisfaction at the refusal of the government to carry out the promise to take such steps as would give effect to the expressed will of the people, and earnestly calls upon the representatives of the people in parliament to accept the limited mandate of the electorate and carry it out by enacting such prohibitory legislation as will fairly embody the will of the people as expressed at the polls.

It will be observed that the wording of this resolution is not very honest because it assumes that a vote cast by twenty-three per cent. of the electors in favor of prohibition expresses the desire of the people for the enactment of such a law. So far as we can see the government have no mandate from the people to enact prohibition, and the representatives will probably take the same view of the matter. It looks very much as if this prohibition business was being worked in the interests of the Conservative party, which fooled and hun bugged the temperance people for the whole eighteen years it was in power. Th s Liberals gave the temperance people a chance to prove to the world that a maj rity of the electors of Canada were in fav or of prohibition; and now they would like to overthrow the government becau se it declines to accept the vote of twen ty-three per cent. of the electors as decis ive of the question.

OUR HALIFAX FRIENDS.

The recent conventi n of the Nova Scotia Boards of Trad s was worked in the interests of Halifa x, as far as that could be accomplished, but it is quite possible that the gentlemen who represented that city may d iscover at least one of the resolutions pa ssed may come up to trouble them at so me future date. One of these is the follow ing, which we published on Wednesday, and which was unanimously passed:—

Resolved, That in th e opinion of this meeting, until the initi ation of the fast Atlantic service the winter mail service between the United Kingdom and Canada should have its w estern terminus at a port on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, and that in the con tract for the performance of such service to be entered into by the government a nd a steamship company, while it should be stipulated that the western terminal port should be in Canada, there should be no provision obliging the comp any's steamships to proceed to any oth er port than that at which the mails are to be landed.

This resolution was a dir ect blow at St. John and it was so inte nded. The place where the mails are to be landed in winter, must be a port on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, and there must be no stipulation requiring the steamships to proceed to any other port. The people of St. John will observe from this that Halifax is determined to destroy our winter trade if it can. Next we shall have a Halifax delegation demanding loudly that goods be carried over the Intercolonial from Montreal to Halifax for nothing, and great pressure will be brought on the government to induce them to yield to this demand. There is nothing small about the Halifax people; they want the earth, and they are not ashamed to ask for it.

From the time when the Intercolonial was built until last spring, when the mail steamships called at Halifax and went on to Portland for their cargoes, there never was any complaint on the part of the Halifax people that a foreign port was getting the benefit of Canadian trade. They were willing that Portland should be the winter port of Canada for freight, but the moment that St. John seemed to have a prospect of obtaining a part of this business our Halifax friends began t create difficulties, and they are now determined to stop the winter trade of St. John, if they can. As Halifax has not been injured in the least by the substitution of St. John for Portland as the terminus of the mail steamships, the action of the Halifax people in this respect can only be put down to malignity and spite.

Mr. George J. Troop's resolution asking the government to abolish all subsidies to freight steamships and to devote the money thus saved to facilitate the sending of freight over the Intercolonial to Halifax was another direct attack on St. John; but it was not passed, because some of the Halifax members thought it might operate as a two-edged sword and injure Halifax more than it did St. John. Still, the offering of such a resolution should show us what we have to expect from Halifax and put our people on their guard. The resolution which we have quoted above may prove something of a boomerang, for as soon as it was passed a Truro man and a Cape Breton man introduced a resolution favoring the landing of the mails for the maritime provinces at Sydney rather than at Rimouski in summer. It was suggested that this looked like antagonizing Quebec and the mover and seconder allowed themselves to be persuaded not to press it, but it will be heard from again. If North Sydney is a good place to land the mails in summer it is still better in winter, and the time will come when the people of eastern Nova Scotia will claim that some port in Cape Breton is the proper place for the mails and passengers to be landed from the Canadian mail steamship.

THE BIRTH PLACE OF ST. PATRICK.

At the dinner of the Irish Literary and Benevolent Society the question of the birth place of St. Patrick was raised, and some of those present were rather surprised when it was stated that he was born in Scotland. As St. Patrick was born before a single Saxon, Angle or Jute had landed in the British Islands, all the inhabitants of Scotland were at that time Celts, and there was practically no difference between the Celts in Scotland and those in Ireland. Dr. Whitley Stokes, the author of "The Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick," puts him down as a native of Scotland. He states that St. Patrick was born about the year A. D. 373, at Nemptor, which must have been in the valley of the Clyde. His father, who belonged to a Roman colony, was named Calpurnius; his mother was Concessa, a sister of St. Martin, and his tutor or foster father was Patricius, and his own baptismal name was Sucab, meaning warlike. It was the name of a Cymric war-god, some of whose exploits may have helped to form the legend of our saint. The name Patricius was given him by the pope. In his sixteenth year St. Patrick, while herding sheep and swine on his father's farm, was taken captive by pirates and carried to Ireland, where he was sold; and here for six years he pursued the same occupation and devoted himself to prayer. Finally he escaped, and after sailing for three days he landed, and, journeying for twenty-eight days through a desert, he reached his home.

Dr. William K. Sullivan, the late president of Queen's College, Cork, who wrote the article on St. Patrick for the Encyclopedia Britannica, gives substantially the same account of St. Patrick's birthplace. He says he was born at Newtheer, on the Clyde, and identifies this place as Dumbarton. He says that the saint was of noble birth, his father being a decurio or magistrate. According to Dr. Sullivan the capture of St. Patrick did not take place at Newtheer, but near the Solway, in the extreme south of Scotland. The Romans had withdrawn their legions from Dumbarton and all central Scotland and had retired behind the wall of Severus, which extended from the Solway to Tynemouth. St. Patrick was captured by the Scotch Picts of Galloway and sold to the Irish Picts or Dal Avaide, who occupied a part of the territory now embraced in the province of Ulster. The place where he spent his six years of slavery, tending cattle, is conjectured to have been Slemish Mountain, in the County of Antrim. When he escaped it was to Scotland he returned and not, as has been sometimes stated, to Tours, and he was prepared for the priesthood at Candida Case, the Monastic institution founded by St. Ninian in the fourth century. This place is on the south side of Wiglouse Bay and its modern name is Whithaven. The stone church which St. Ninian built there was dedicated to St. Martin of Taess. If Dr. Sullivan is right, St. Patrick was not only born in Scotland, but was educated there and prepared for the great work in which he was to engage in Ireland.

THE QUEEN IN FRANCE.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria goes to France every winter to enjoy for a short time the mild air of the Mediterranean. The health of the Queen is benefitted by this change and the place she visits is also benefitted, because she spends a good deal of money where ever she happens to be. A short time ago rumors were current that owing to the humiliation of France in consequence of the Fashoda affair it would not be prudent for her majesty to go to France this winter because she was liable to be insulted and might possibly suffer personal violence. These stories were repeated by two or three French newspapers of low character, but they were too absurd for belief. The Queen is in her eightieth year of her age and the sixty-second of her reign; she is the most venerable as well as the most respected sovereign in Europe, and the idea of her being insulted in France, that land of chivalry and good manners, could not be entertained for a moment. The French no doubt felt deeply the insult of such a suggestion, and they have been at particular pains to make her majesty feel at home. At no previous visit has she been more cordially received than she was last week and the fact is highly creditable to all concerned.

THE CASTILIAN INQUIRY.

The evidence of the first officer of the steamship Castilian before the court of inquiry now sitting at Yarmouth is interesting as an illustration of the manner in which that vessel was navigated from the time she left Portland, Me., at 1 p.m. on Saturday until she struck at 3 40 a. m. on Sunday. The vessel was running at the rate of 13 knots an hour from the time she left Portland until she went on the rocks. At 1 a. m., when she was 135 miles from Portland, the first cast of the lead was taken and the depth of water was found to be 62 fathoms. The first officer admitted that this was not the depth of water they should have had, according to the chart of the steamship had been on her correct course. If the Castilian had been where her captain thought she was 135 miles distant from Portland on a course that would pass 16 miles south of Cape Sable she ought to have had 100 fathoms of water under her keel. But the fact that he had 40 fathoms less water than he ought to have had appears to have made no impression on the mind of Capt. Barrett for he kept right on, and did not take another sounding for a full hour. When this second cast of the lead was taken he was in 65 fathoms, whereas he should have had at least 90 fathoms. Still the Castilian kept on doing her 13 knots an hour and at 2 30, half an hour after the second cast of the lead, a third sounding was taken and the depth was found to be 36 fathoms. As there is no such depth as 36 fathoms between Portland and a point 16 miles south of Cape Sable, it might have been supposed that this sudden shoaling of the water would have put the captain of the Castilian on the alert, for he ought then to have had at least 70 fathoms if he had been in his proper course. But he kept right on and no other sounding was taken for an hour, when the lead showed only 17 fathoms. A prudent captain would have stopped his ship when the lead showed only 36 fathoms and tried, if possible, to ascertain his position. Considering that he had the best ship of the Allan line in his care, with a most valuable freight and many passengers, no one could have accused him of over caution if he had stopped his ship altogether and waited for daylight. The least he could do was to turn his ship's head towards the south. But Capt. Barrett kept right on even after the lead showed only 17 fathoms and finally only 10 fathoms. She was, the first officer says, going ahead at full speed until she struck in spite of the warning of the lead. And yet we are told that the Castilian was carried to her doom by an unknown current.

Now with regard to this unknown current theory a few words may here properly be said. The course of the Castilian from Portland to Cape Sable was across the mouth of the Bay of Fundy. But no one pretends that the Bay of Fundy extends further south than Machias so that when the Castilian began her voyage she was 120 nautical miles south of the entrance of the Bay of Fundy. At high water, which was at 10 p. m., on the Nova Scotia shore from Cape Sable to Yarmouth the Castilian would be 100 miles distant from Portland, and if on her proper course, would be 60 miles south of the entrance of the Bay of Fundy, that is to say 60 miles south of a straight line drawn from Cape Sable to Machias. From 10 p. m. until 3 40 a. m., when the Castilian struck Gannet Rock the tide was ebbing and the current would be running south at that time at the rate of from one-half to three-quarters of a knot per hour. Where then was the current that was capable of carrying the Castilian 30 miles out of her course in less than fifteen hours? No current can run into the Bay of Fundy against the ebb tide; and no current can run constantly into the Bay of Fundy because it is a cul de sac, and even if it had no tides at all there would be no place for the waters of the current to go, there being no outlet for them. Assuming, which we have a right to do, that the Castilian was carried south by the ebb tide between 10 p. m. and the time she struck, three nautical miles, it would require a four-knot an hour current running north for the nine hours between 1 p. m. and 10 p. m. to account for the Castilian being so far out of her course. Is there any sane man who believes in the existence of such a current as that, a veritable mill race rushing into the Bay of Fundy and never coming out of it?

Capt. Barrett, in his evidence, differs from his first officer, saying that the soundings he got were just what he expected until the lead showed 17 fathoms, when he became uneasy and thought he had overrun his course. This is a very extraordinary statement, for a reference to the chart will show that there are no such soundings in the course he laid out on leaving Portland as those which he got at 1 a. m., and afterwards, until the ship struck.

REDRESSING A WRONG.

Every one will be glad to know that the great wrong done in 1882 by the government of Sir John A. Macdonald in gerrymandering the constituencies of Ontario is about to be redressed by the present government and the constituencies restored to what they were prior to that infamous transaction. THE TELEGRAPH at the time entered its protest against the cutting and carving of the counties for partizan purposes, so as to "hive the Liberals," as it was expressed by some of the more candid of the Conservative members, and make it almost impossible for them to obtain a majority in that province. The pretence was indeed made that county lines were disregarded because it was desired to equalize the constituencies so as to give representation by population, but this was a mere fiction intended to deceive the unwary. As a matter of fact the gerrymander of 1882 did not equalize the Ontario constituencies. Toronto West with 38,565 inhabitants, had no more representation in the house of commons than North Leeds and Grenville with 12,423 inhabitants. The gerrymander gave Ottawa, a city with 27,412 inhabitants, two members and East Simcoe with 27,185 inhabitants one. West Peterborough with 13,310 people had one member, and Centre Wellington with 26,816 persons had also one member. These figures, which relate to the census of 1881, will show the absurdity of the pretence that the constituencies were cut and carved so as to give representation by population.

If there had been any intention to make the constituencies equal in population, the effort would not have been confined to Ontario, but would have extended to the other provinces. We may take the representation of New Brunswick as an illustration of the inequalities left by the late government while pretending to equalize the Ontario ridings. Albert, with 10,971 inhabitants, and Restigouche, with 8,308 inhabitants, have the same representation in the house of commons as York with its 30,979 people or Westmorland with its 41,477 inhabitants. Thus the famous gerrymander act of 1882 was simply a scheme to increase the number of Conservative representatives in Ontario and was based on no honest principle.

To accomplish this it became necessary to cut and carve the counties in the most extraordinary fashion and some of the new constituencies looked like hideous survivals of the tertiary period. We published diagrams illustrating the shape of some of the new ridings while the bill was going through parliament and they excited much astonishment and indignation. The very fact that it was necessary to carve up the counties in such a fashion was prima facie evidence of a dishonest intent. That great wrong is now to be redressed and all honest men will rejoice at the fact.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME.

The provincial government appears before the legislature with a very extensive and important programme of business for the session. Most of the work to be done, however, is not of a contentious nature, so that no great amount of time need be expended upon it. The present leader of the opposition, we presume, will not be so unwise as to imitate the policy of his predecessor and oppose every government measure simply for the sake of opposition. That was one of the principal reasons of his overthrow, for the people of New Brunswick can readily gauge the character of a public man who will not admit that his political opponents can ever be right even by accident.

The programme of the government is all in the direction of advancing the interests of the province, especially in mining, in agriculture and the settlement of our public lands. The government is on the alert to place New Brunswick in a leading position in dairying, in pork packing and in other pursuits connected with the farm, and to provide facilities by means of which the products of this province can reach a market. The truth of the matter is that one of the greatest drawbacks to our agricultural progress has been the lack of terminal facilities at St. John. For a long time the people of Prince Edward Island have been exporting oats and other products to Great Britain, but the farmers of this province could not do this until quite recently because there were no means of shipping these commodities. The subsidizing of the wharves and elevator at St. John by the government of Mr. Blair was the first practical step that was ever taken by any provincial government to assist the farmers of the province to get their products to the British markets. Now that facilities exist it will be the policy of the government to give its aid in extending them, and in this way place our farmers in still more advantageous position with respect to the markets of Great Britain.

The policy of the government with respect to dairying, has been in the highest degree successful, and it will be continued along its present lines. The time is not far distant when New Brunswick will be producing as much cheese in proportion to its population as any part of the dominion, and it is no unreasonable expectation that our exports of cheese to Great Britain will exceed a million dollars a year in value. When we consider how favorable our climate is to dairying because of the excellence of our pastures we can easily see that it is in this direction we may expect the most easily won success. Dairying and pork raising naturally go together and we are glad to have the assurance that the government fully realizes the importance of aiding in the establishment of a pork packing industry by means of which our exports will be largely increased and our farmers will always be sure of a good market. If agriculture has not advanced in this province as it ought to have done it is largely because our farmers have been without proper facilities for reaching a large market. The demand for their products has been limited and that has naturally set a limit on production for demand and supply must go hand in hand.

The policy of the government with regard to the settlement of the crown lands of the province by our own young men is in line with their general policy for advancing the interests of the province. During recent years there has been a decline in the process of bringing forest land into cultivation because of the supposed advantages of the prairie lands of the Northwest. The bringing in of forest land is a slow process as compared with the breaking up of the prairie, but while this is true there are advantages which the forest settler possesses which cannot be claimed by the dweller in the prairie. It takes much less capital to make a beginning in the forest than in the prairie, indeed many men have gone into the woods with little more in the way of equipment than an axe and ended by owning splendid farms. While a forest farm is being cleared much of the wood cut off is marketable, and will much more than repay the settlers for the cost of chopping. Then the forest settler has plenty of cheap fuel; he has abundance of good water and he is 2,000 miles nearer a place of export than the prairie farmer. These reasons are beginning to have their effect the advantages possessed by the forest settler are beginning to be better understood, and with a Liberal policy on the part of the government the number of bona fide settlers may be largely increased. The government's bill will probably be in the nature of a consolidation of the existing acts with additional provisions which will have the effect of more clearly defining the areas open for settlement and making provision for the locating of settlers in colonies rather than singly: There cannot be a doubt that excellent results will follow from these enactments, and that our own young men, sons of farmers, will be encouraged to take up land in their native province.

LEGISLATIVE OPENINGS.

There has been a considerable modification of the forms at the opening of the legislature since confederation. Before confederation most of the lieutenant-governors and administrators of the province were military men, and the opening ceremonies partook of a military character. The governor wore a military uniform; he was attended by officers in similar garb; a guard of honor was drawn up in front of the parliament building and cannon boomed forth a welcome to her majesty's representative as he approached the parliament building. Our first governors after confederation continued to wear a military uniform, or the Windsor uniform, and this custom continued long after its absurdity had become apparent. As our lieutenant governor is a civil officer, the representative of the dominion, there is no reason why he should open the legislature in the guise of a military man. Lieutenant Governor McClelan opens the legislature in the ordinary attire of a gentleman, and he dispenses with a good many of those ancient forms which have ceased to be appropriate to the occasion. The opening ceremonies would not lose anything in effect if they were further curtailed and amended. The abolition of the legislative council has made some of the ancient forms seem quite out of place and no public interest would suffer if they were changed.

The fourth number of the Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society embracing 134 pages, has just been published. It contains a second paper by Prof. W. F. Ganong on the journal of Capt. William Owen, R. N., during his residence at Campobello, illustrated by portraits of Capt. Owen and David Owen. Mr. Isaiah W. Wilson, of Digby, contributes a copy of the Classes of the St. John settlement and of Conway on the 1st August, 1775. Conway was the name then given to the territory on the west side of the river as far up as the mouth of the Nerepis. Conway had then 72 inhabitants, and St. John 70. There are two papers by the Rev. W. O. Raymond, whose excellent historical work cannot be too highly praised. The first is a continuation of the John White papers, while the second is a brief history of the North Shore. Both of these papers are of great value, because they are largely made up of original documents which have not before been published. Mr. J. Vroom, of St. Stephen, contributes an account of the Quaker colony from New York which in June, 1783, agreed to settle on the St. John river. They settled not on the river, but at Beaver Harbor, and the colony was broken up after a few years. This is a very interesting contribution to our local history.

The Sun is very much concerned about the Dominion government, and Monday gave it a whole column of advice with regard to its expenditures. The Sun is afraid that if Mr. Fielding expends too much money the government will become unpopular and will be defeated at the next election. We cannot too much admire the generosity of the Sun in publishing such articles as that of yesterday, which was entitled "Mr. Fielding's Danger." Any other paper but the Sun would have allowed Mr. Fielding to rush recklessly to destruction but the Sun is possessed of a nobler spirit, and desires its political enemies to remain in power. It therefore warns them of their danger and implores them to be careful. We think, however, that the Sun exaggerates the government's danger. The government is likely to have a very large revenue and a large surplus, and we can remember the time when the Sun professed to believe that a large revenue and a big surplus were excellent things for a government to have. It was only about the year 1894 that the Sun began to look with admiring eyes upon deficits, and since then it thinks that a surplus is a bad thing.

The selection of Mr. Hill for speaker is one that will be highly satisfactory to the house and the country. Mr. Hill has had more legislative experience than any other man now in public life in New Brunswick, it being more than thirty-four years since he first became a member for the county of Charlotte. His knowledge of parliamentary forms as a member of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council will be of great value to him in his new position, and there is no doubt that he will worthily support the reputation for impartiality and ability which have distinguished so many occupants of the speaker's chair.

The Halifax Chronicle states that the Castilian was not bound to Halifax when she struck, but was going direct to Liverpool. We cheerfully make the correction, although we fail to see that it improves the position of Halifax or of the captain of the lost steamship. Let the Chronicle now withdraw the many misrepresentations and misstatements it has made with regard to the port of St. John and the Bay of Fundy and we will freely forgive it.