

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1918.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H. M. The King.
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

IF THERE IS TO BE A PROBE MAKE IT THOROUGH AND COMPLETE.

To the principle of the bill giving the Province of New Brunswick authority to recover any public money that may have been illegally or improperly withheld or retained by any persons in connection with the construction of the St. John and Quebec Railway, the members of the provincial Opposition heartily and unhesitatingly subscribed, but they also insist that the bill shall be made wide enough in its provisions to cover all other transactions that may have taken place during an earlier period and by which the money of the province was said to have been diverted from its proper channel.

In its present form the bill introduced by Attorney-General Byrne yesterday and representing the alleged desire of the Foster government to purify the public life of New Brunswick is a partisan measure. It seeks authority to allow the government to recover as a civil debt money retained or withheld by the gentlemen who figured in the Stevens report as having dealings with railway contractors, as well as the gentleman who was involved in the disclosures before the Royal Commission investigating the Dugal charges in connection with the construction of the Valley Railway, but it takes good care not to touch the men involved in connection with the Central Railway looting, a transaction which, the commission investigating stated, resulted in diverting or "switching" from its proper course public money to the amount of \$130,000, which money was directly the property of the Province of New Brunswick.

It is with the hope that the Central Railway transactions shall not again be bared to public gaze and made the subject of a Supreme Court enquiry with a possible demand for restitution from the gentlemen named in the report of the original commission of enquiry, that the attorney-general of this province in submitting the bill yesterday explained that the Central Railway matter was not to be included in its provisions because the transactions in connection with that railway were reported to a previous government and if that government did not act it was not incumbent upon the present government to do so. The attorney-general's position is mere camouflage. He voices the opinion of a government which professes a desire to recover somewhere in the vicinity of \$220,000, which was not held to be public money by the commissioners investigating the cases, while at the same time the government is willing that sums in the vicinity of \$130,000, diverted from the funds of the province in connection with the Central Railway should go unrecovered simply because in the process of recovery some of the Foster government's political friends might be injured.

The contention of the attorney-general that because the government of New Brunswick at a former day did not see fit to proceed on the report of the Central Railway investigating commission this government is not bound to proceed, does not hold. Governments do not die. Although the personnel may change the responsibility of an administration in the safeguarding of public money descends upon its successors and if the men in charge of public affairs at the time of the Central Railway investigation did not take action to recover funds of their own improperly diverted from the purpose for which they were granted the men who at present administer the business of New Brunswick find duty bound to act, more particularly since they desire to take action in other cases where the gentlemen involved are not of their own political faith. In its present form the bill has a nasty appearance. In the interests of the Province of New Brunswick and for the sake of the purity of our public life on which members of the present government express such deep regard let there be a complete and thorough cleansing, if there is to be any.

If the Foster government deems it a proper time to make the Legislative Assembly at Fredericton and, possibly, later, the Supreme Court of the province a laundry for the washing of dirty political linen, well and good. But it is not within the province of the Foster government or any other government to say that one pile shall be washed and another permitted to continue in its filth. If we are to have a cleansing it must be complete. If the public life is to be purified it must be thoroughly done. If the recovery of money said to have been improperly retained from this province is the object sought then let us get it all back no matter where it comes from. That is the only sort of cleansing and recovery that will satisfy the people of this province who are not interested in the fortunes of one or the other political parties. That is the only movement that will satisfy the electors of this province that the present plan of Mr. Foster's government is not intended to strike at political opponents and shield political friends. In this matter there must be no politics. If there has been wrongdoing and the guilty ones are to be punished, that punishment must embrace all. There can be no favored class. Any other position is not only unsound and unfair but it is disgraceful, yet it is the position the attorney-general and the Foster government desire to take. It is the position against which the Opposition stands and will continue to stand.

THE PUBLIC ROADS.

During the present session of the Legislature at Fredericton much has been said regarding the condition of the roads in the Province of New Brunswick and from the criticisms passed it seems to be reasonably certain that the only manner in which the term "permanent" can be applied to any of them is to describe the account under which they are charged to the people. Assuredly they are permanent in name only, for in the course of the budget debate, members from all parts of the province arose in the House and described the wonderful manner in which the present Minister of Public Works is building the most ordinary sort of ordinary roads and bonding the credit of the province to pay for them.

The term ordinary roads is supposed to cover all minor repairs to the highways and branch roads the cost of which is to be borne by the ordinary revenues of the province. In no case should the ordinary road work be bonded. Permanent roads on the other hand embrace the more pretentious operations, roads that should at least serve for the term of the bonds issued to pay for them.

Judging from the results of last season's road work Hon. Mr. Veniot recognizes no such distinction as that outlined. That gentleman assumed charge of the public works department just at the commencement of the road-making season. He found to his hand a well organized department, a fairly adequate road-making plant, and a corps of competent supervisors who had already had several seasons' experience and were familiar with their duties. Also, shortly after coming into power he had \$400,000 to spend on

this spring made the roads in a condition far worse than anything known in this province for many years.

That is the history of last year's permanent road work. What of the future? Mr. Veniot has talked with much variety and at great length of the things he intends to accomplish in this direction during 1918. If hours of spread eagle, florid oratory would build roads New Brunswick would have a system unsurpassed in America for as a wind-jamming, arm waving political stump speech artist, the provincial Minister of Public Works is unequalled from Hudson's Bay to Mexico. But wind alone will not build roads. There must be capable direction. Intelligent labor, adequate plant, sufficient money and the desire to do satisfactory work. Mr. Veniot has the money. He has seen to that himself. But we believe the result of this season's operations will show that the other necessary factors are missing.

And in the Department of Public Works as in all other departments the Foster government must stand on its own feet next year. It will be unable to resort to the camouflage of charging any of its shortcomings to the account of its predecessors for it will have had a full twelve months of complete control of the expenditures. The Opposition party can well afford to await that testing period with complete confidence.

THOSE AUTOMOBILE TAGS.

The Honorable Peter is peeved. He doesn't like the Standard a bit. In fact, he says the Standard is the worst liar he knows. But he forgets himself. The whole trouble arose through certain brief remarks which this journal of the home and fireside offered in connection with the purchase and distribution of automobile tags.

The Standard explained, and repeats, that the tags purchased by the Honorable Peter for this year's distribution are not substantial enough to be worth sending out. It may be altogether true, as the Minister of Public Works contends, that he has saved two thousand dollars for the Province under this year's contract. He could have purchased paper tags in St. John and saved a few thousands more. But there is not much satisfaction in having the Honorable Peter save two thousand dollars on the contract price when that two thousand, and a great deal additional, has to be handed out by the people in the form of a direct taxation to replace the worthless tags he has thrust upon them.

Then there is the little point of distribution through dealers. The Standard did not contend that dealers in St. John were unable to secure a supply of tags for their own purposes. What this paper did suggest—and what it repeats—is that in previous years recognized automobile dealers were permitted to keep on hand tags to be attached to cars sold by them, remittances being made to Fredericton as these tags were used. But because once upon a time, through a bungler in the Honorable Peter's department, a ten dollar license fee was overlooked, this privilege was withdrawn from dealers. And now, if a man from Hampton comes down to St. John to buy a car he cannot take it home with him. He has to leave it in St. John until the dealer writes to Fredericton, secures the tags, attaches them and then notifies the purchaser, who has to make a second trip to the city to get his car.

And every word published by the Standard is true in respect to the quality of the tags and their failure to "stay put." It is also true that because of the Honorable Peter's remarkable reduction of two thousand on the purchase price he has succeeded in getting such an inferior quality that five thousand automobile owners in New Brunswick will pay that two thousand dollars several times over before the season ends.

Yesterday's final election proved to be just as devoid of interest as was the primary held two weeks ago. True a somewhat larger vote was polled, but this was undoubtedly due to greater activity on the part of candidates who were interested in seeing that as many as possible of their probable supporters went to the polls. Yet even under this influence the numbers who troubled themselves about voting formed such a small proportion of the electorate that it might almost be said the contest was conducted only by those who have the voting habit and not by the mass of citizens popularly supposed to have the well-being of the city at heart. In the days of aldermanic control a contest so utterly lacking in interest was unknown. As a result of this election one former member of the council and one new man have been elected. They may prove satisfactory. Nobody seems to care.

People of St. John who realize as deeply as can any in Canada the work accomplished by men of the British navy, will have opportunity today of expressing in a practical manner their appreciation of the magnificent services rendered by those men. Under the auspices of St. George's Society a tag day will be held. Everyone will be given the chance to help, and without doubt the response will be as generous as usual. If the record of former efforts of this nature is maintained, those promoting the affair will have every cause for satisfaction. Let men,

Little Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE.

THE PARK AVE. NEWS.

Military News. Last Saturday after supper Complainy B held a meeting to decide whether or not to stop eating dainties so the soldiers at the front could have more food, which it was finally decided not to eat any except pies, cakes and different kinds of pudding.

Intoxicating Fads about Intriguing People. Sid Hunt thinks it is just as bad luck not to run between the carriages of a funeral as what it is to run between them, on account of him being late for school one day because he waited for 2 funerals to go past, and had to stay a hour after school and do extra arithmetic examples.

Pome by Skinny Martin

The Worm Was Rite

Sed a little worm to a codfish.

"Don't eat me, I'm only a bait."

But the codfish paid no attention.

And was rapidly pulled up and ate.

Sisley. Miss Mary Watkins and Miss Maud Jenson are selling home made pla cushions on the street for the benefit of Belgium children, each of them having made 3 pin cushions and not asking anybody to buy them except men, on account of ladies would be too liberal to want to take one for their money, which then there wouldn't be any left to sell.

Levin. Leroy Shooster just had a telephone put in his house and he asks the telephone girl what time it is about 20 times a day.

Women and children remember the sailors. If they do this, the rest will be easy.

MR. BAXTER'S SPEECH.

Le Moniteur Acadien prints a lengthy resume of the speech delivered by Mr. Baxter on the budget. It says: "Mr. Baxter, member for the County of St. John and former Attorney General, is one of the dominant figures in provincial politics. He has a profound knowledge of affairs, sure judgment, great sincerity and much zeal for the public welfare. With a clear and logical mind, a capable lawyer and an indefatigable worker, he has become one of the most powerful parliamentary debaters, not only of the province but of Canada."

"But Mr. Baxter is especially and above everything a man of character. Having strong convictions, the courage to express them and the ability to make them respected. It is this which causes him to enjoy an extraordinary prestige throughout the country and to exercise a salutary influence in the administration of public affairs. Free from all prejudices he gives to his fellow citizens the fine example of a large tolerance, both in his public and private relations."

"Necessarily Mr. Baxter's speech deserves to be heard with attention and read with care and it is for this reason that the Moniteur gives to its numerous and intelligent readers who are desirous of being instructed and of knowing the state of affairs of the province, a brief and faithful resume of his speech on the budget delivered at Fredericton, Tuesday, 9th April."

A BIT OF VERSE

THE BANNER OF ST. GEORGE.

It comes from the misty ages,
The banner of England's might
The blood-red cross of the brave St. George,
That burns on a field of white,
It speaks of the deathless heroes,
On fame's bright page inscribed,
And bids great England ne'er forget
The glorious deeds of old!

O'er many a cloud of battle
The banner has floated wide,
It shone like a star o'er the valiant hearts,
That dashed the Armada's pride!
For ever amid the thunders,
The sailor could cry or die,
While tongues of flame leaped forth below,
And the flag of St. George was high!

O ne'er may the flag beloved,
Unfurled in a strife unblest,
But ever give strength to the righteous arm,
And hope to the hearts oppressed!
For ever through the passing ages,
"Be brave if your cause be right!"
Like the soldier-saint whose cross of red,
Still burns on your banner white!

Great race, whose empire of splendor,
Has dazzled a wondering world,
May the flag that floats o'er thy wide domains
Be long to all winds unfurled!
Three crosses in concord blended,
"Be brave if your cause be right!"
But the central gem of the ensign fair,
Is the cross of the deathless knight!

—Shapcott Wensley.

A BIT OFFUN

Less Hard in Blunderland.
With all our moanings, wheateas and sweetest days, we are yet not so badly off as was Lewis Carroll's charming little heroine.
"I am every other day," said the Queen to Alice.
"Well then," said Alice, "I'll have jam today."
"Jam yesterday and jam tomorrow," said the Queen, "but never jam today."

And No Stain Mandy.
"No, the fear of falling never enters my head," said the sailor to his gapping hearers.
"What scares me is the danger of stalling my engine about two miles up and not being able to get down,"—Harper's Magazine.

Too Much Zigzagging.
"Didn't you know that if you struck

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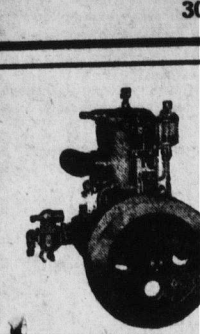
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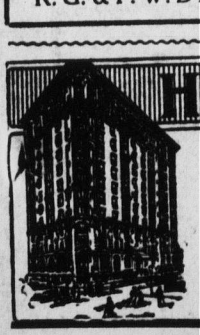
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PERSONA...
The friends of Mrs. V. of Whitehead, will be pleased that she is gradually recovering from the serious operation performed on Tuesday by Dr. and Mrs. Peters in the General Hospital.

