

## The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY MARCH 22, 1922.

## THE HYDRO QUESTION.

The Times says that if the Power Company can produce current for 1.5 cents at the switchboard, "it must have been making a very fat profit," and citizens readily understand why "it wants to go on making that profit."

The company's average price to consumers of current is 3 1/2 cents—3.84 to be exact—which makes the cost of distribution 7 cents.

The only estimate the city has so far as to the cost of distribution is that of Mr. R. A. Ross, who says that the cost of Musquash current delivered will be 7.99—practically 8 cents. Of course we are well aware that the Ross report is pushed by the Power Company, and on the chance of saving 10¢ of a cent, there are people who would rush into this proposition without knowing just where the city is going to stand in the end.

We repeat what we said yesterday, that until some reliable estimate can be put forward as to the cost of installing a distributing system, no one can tell whether the cost of distribution is going to be five, ten or fifteen cents. Mr. Ross's estimate of the cost of the distributing system, including street lighting is \$1,165,422. Messrs. Mitchell's estimate is \$650,000, but if this estimate is worked out on the same principles as their estimate of the Prince Albert installation, it will mean a couple of millions before it is completed. Mr. Herbert Phillips frankly says he doesn't know what the cost will be, there are so many factors to be taken into consideration. What evidence is there that light and power from the Musquash plant will be available to citizens at less cost than is the case at the present time? Not a particle.

## INSURANCE VS. PROTECTION.

The frequency with which bank and company messengers have been assaulted and relieved of their cash bags of late, has resulted in a campaign being started against these pay roll robbers by one of the New York Boards of Trade, which is trying to get business men to provide adequate guards for money in transit. The chief difficulty encountered is that many of them take no interest in the matter because their pay-rolls are insured.

But this is by no means the whole of the matter. To rely upon insurance and expose large sums of money in a way to tempt the cupidity of violent men is to help build up a very dangerous class of criminals, whose activities may not be confined to blackmailing a messenger now and then and making off with an unguarded pay-roll. Even if the losses should be so small, when measured by the immense volume of money carried about in a great city every week, as to make the cost of insurance not prohibitive, the stolen pay-rolls are not to be taken as the measure of the loss to society from a system that promotes crime of violence.

If the choice must be between paying for insurance and paying for protection the decision, while conditions remain as they are should be for protection. But there should be an antagonism between the two systems. It used to be complained that insurance against fire made property owners careless, but insurance companies have found it good business to work for the lessening of fire risks. The field for insurance against theft will not be destroyed by a sharp offensive-defense against the hold-up men. But first of all should be put protection, together with measures for a vigorous counter-offensive against the bandits. To let insurance cover a needless risk is a neglect of duty to society for the defence of law and order.

An American motion picture company seeking scenes of disorder and crime in Egypt found the natives so unskilled for battle scenes that it was not necessary to hire actors from the mob. These pictures are made to serve art, and the exploitation of a people for freedom, who are in ignorance of the scene.

## IN MANITOBA.

The decision arrived at by the various parties in the Manitoba Legislature, that the North Government should retain office for the remainder of the session, which should be brought to a close as soon as the necessary financial business had been disposed of, seems to be about the only one possible to have come to under the circumstances.

No other group in the House boasts unflinching members to carry on any Government, and the views of the various groups are too diversified in character to make any sort of a coalition possible. Another election is to be held in the near future, and the Farmers' party has high hopes that it will carry the day. There is nothing to lead any one to suppose that such a result would be of outstanding benefit to the Province. Farmer Government in Ontario has not been such a conspicuous success as to justify any other Province in wanting to follow his example. Until they can rid themselves of their class prejudices, and realize that, while their own industry may be a large and very important one, there are other interests that for the sake of the community as a whole, must be given due consideration, the Farmers' party can never make any very great success as administrators of public affairs. The measure of success that they achieved in the recent Dominion elections has probably led them to think that as a party they are it, and their ambition may know no bounds. However, time will show.

## CITY OWNERSHIP EXPERIMENTS.

New York Herald: The voters of Detroit will decide at the ballot box on April 15 next whether the city shall buy the privately owned street railways at a cost of \$19,500,000. The indications all point to an affirmative answer. In that event a contest which has engaged the attention of courts and the Legislature for thirty years will come to an end and the way will be clear for Detroit to plunge into full ownership and operation of all her street railroads.

Four years ago Seattle took a similar plunge. At a cost of \$16,000,000 the municipality bought outright all the lines then owned by a private company. The investment has proved a heavy burden. The usual political entanglements ensued. Operating costs increased until it became necessary to adopt a ten-cent fare. Even then receipts failed to meet operating and maintenance expenses together with bond interest and the annual installment payments on the original purchase price.

But Seattle's troubles did not end there. A rider fixing the street railroads at that time, has been attached to the ballot to be used in the next election. With the city running far behind in its street railroad enterprise at a ten-cent fare, the deficit caused by a drop to a three-cent fare would mean a heavy increase in the tax rate, an increase estimated as high as 50 per cent.

Seattle's tax rate of 70 mills is now among the highest in the country. The prospect of an increase in the rate causes some anxiety. It is feared that it might drive away industries already established and be a bar to investment from outside. At the last census Seattle had a population of 115,000. With the expansion of trans-Pacific trade and with the development of Alaska this fine city of the northwest coast has possibilities of growth and prosperity hard to match elsewhere in the country. It would be a pity, indeed, if an outlook so promising were to be darkened by the visitation of a Socialistic blight.

Probably conditions in Seattle do not afford a means of forecasting results in Detroit. The dead weight of indebtedness and interest burden of \$19,500,000 on a population of nearly a million would be much less felt than the burden of \$15,000,000 on a city of only a little more than 300,000. To that extent Detroit has an advantage over Seattle in the experiment in which both are engaging. The standard guarantee of waste, extravagance and mismanagement in the operation of public enterprises as compared with private business enterprises presumably would be about the same in one city as in the other.

Mr. Stewart appears to have given the Foster Government several rather nasty raps in the course of his speech yesterday. As he pointed out, it becomes Government spokesmen to throw charges of corruption across the House at their opponents, when they should remember that one of their own number defrauded the Province out of \$4000 stampage, and the Government not only took no steps to recover the amount, but paid him his full seasonal indemnity in order to keep him away from the House and so avoid any discussion on his conduct.

If the new radio device for "listening in" on wire telephones fulfills the expectations of an inventor, neighborhood gossip will have to be very guarded indeed. As for really important and secret communications, it may be necessary to revert to the old Tennyson rule "Send word."

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

## A Quick Change.

(Windsor Tribune.) Two months ago the sky looked very clear for Lord George. The prospects of an impending British settlement were bright. British opinion in the Black and Tans, had been consolidated behind him by his policy of negotiation and assuagement. The menace to Anglo-American concord residing in the alliance with Japan had been largely exorcised by the Washington Conference. With Britain in power the ground had apparently been laid for a fresh understanding with France. In the projected meeting at Genoa the British prime minister thought he discerned the commencement of the healing of the economic malady of Europe.

Today the Irish settlement, while by no means suffering from a mortal wound, is exposed to the jeopardy of a long popular campaign. Britain has fallen and British representatives must painfully piece together with a new and intransigent premier the elements of a modus vivendi with France. America has refused to go to Genoa. With this refusal European faith in the efficacy of the Economic Conference has largely gone glimmering. Meanwhile an insurgent movement among the British members of the Coalition, a new access of activity among the Independent Liberals, and fresh electoral successes on the part of Labor, threaten the Welshman with the possibility of finding himself a person without a party in presence of a moribund House and a befogged electorate.

At the night of the Sunday on which Waterloo was fought, Napoleon is said to have prayed that either darkness or Grouchy would come quickly. One would think that Joseph George, fearful by incessant activity only to be surprised by new perils, might well long either for the rest of freedom from office or for a new quiver from which to draw fresh arrows for his enemies.

The Debate on the Address. A facility for nebulous utterances, frequently commented upon by critics of Hon. W. L. M. King during the election campaign, continues to serve the liberal leader in his new post to the right of Mr. Speaker. Aside from Conservative criticism on this point, it will be noted that nearly all Progressives taking part in the debate on the reply to the speech from the throne have expressed regret that clauses in that document were so vaguely worded. Hon. Mr. O'Leary, in stating his intention of supporting the Government, said that it did well, breathed a hope that certain paragraphs in the speech meant what he hoped they meant. Score one for the "vague of political mystery," as Hon. J. E. M. B. described it.

There has been a certain amount of caustic comment on the tariff proposals, but no definite "some changes" can be so described. Still, tariff speaks in the election platforms of Liberal candidates were that of a straightforward pronouncement at the opening of the session would have proved rather a sensation. So the Prime Minister of Canada brushes aside all criticism of the tariff proposals, and with the commendable statement: "My right honorable friend (Mr. Meighen) should not take too seriously much of the campaign literature that was issued on any side."

The tariff policy of the Liberal party was specifically set forth more than two years ago. With the early in power, it remains only, one would suppose, to put in force the various plans of the Ottawa convention. But perhaps it, too, should not be taken seriously.

Progressive speakers proved entirely in accord on at least one point. They ask a fair trial for national ownership and operation of the railways. W. F. Maclean, Conservative, protesting for some more definite than the "co-ordination" paragraph in the speech from the throne, drew from the premier a statement that management under one board was contemplated. Later a Progressive member uttered a glowing hope that the personnel of that board might be above suspicion.

St. Hon. Arthur Meighen made the point that the course to be followed in regard to the national railways is already embodied in the laws of the country. It remained only to take over the Grand Trunk. Subsequently, Hon. Mr. Baxter predicted post-ponement and conference "with that minority which stepped into the election campaign toward its close and exercised such a favoring effect." W. F. Maclean declared that every delay furnished opportunity for propaganda by interests opposed to national operation.

With an Opposition pretty well united for consolidation of all roads, and James Logan, of Cumberland, demanding on Wednesday that the Government should run the Maritime Provinces, much interest attaches to a forthcoming speech by the minister of railways, Hon. W. F. Maclean, as for much about the future.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAGE

Yesterday me was introducing introductory in her room, saying to herself, Mersey, such sisters, they're worse than nothing at all, I've bin waiting for that address grinder to come around for a month and I suppose if I didn't want him he'd be sitting his bell past the house every day.

Giving me a leer, and this afternoon me was darning holes out of socks and I waited in her room saying, Hey me, do you need anything sharpened or anything?

O at last, thank goodness, take these scissors down and have an edge put on them, said me. And she handed me her scissors and I took them down in the back yard and started to sharpen them on the carving knife sharper out of the kitchen drawer, thinking, G, it ain't my fault if she thinks I ment the scissors grinder, I didn't even mention the scissors grinder.

With I didest, and I finished sharpening the scissors on the carving knife sharper, taking about 20 minutes and being pretty hard work, and then I took them up to me again and she said, Well, at last my scissors will cut again, I can't believe it. Which she didn't even believe it then if she had of know who who sharpened them and what they was sharpened on, and she handed me 15 cents saying, Heers the money. Which I was quick going out with it and me said, Wait, wait a minute, my these scissors are all scratched up, they're a site, they're ruined, I never saw such looking things, my wait the matter with that scissors grinder?

Mam? Wat scissors grinder? I said, and me said, Didn't you just bring these up from the scissors grinder? and I said, Mam? No mam, I did them myself, and me said, Wait? and I said, I didn't say anything about any scissors grinder, you can't say I mentioned any scissors grinder, I sharpened them on the carving knife thing.

With me gave me 2 more cracks and made me wait all the way to the hard work store to have them sharpened over again and wouldn't even give me a cent for going.

## THE LAUGH LINE

According to a news item, a lady was recently married while in France. It is usually the bridegroom.—Passing Show.

It may be that brass makes the best hearing, but the hearing of some men indicates too much brass.

Lumping it. "Spring is only three tons away," says the Harrisburg Patriot. "A foolish way of measuring," comments a correspondent.—Boston Transcript.

Unkind. "Come on, let's play another game." "Can't do it. I have an engagement to meet my wife."

"What time?" "Three o'clock." "Oh, come on, you still have plenty of time left. It's only 4.30 now."—Detroit Free Press.

Proof That It Was Living. From a story—"The living-room fairly leaped through the door to greet you."—Boston Transcript.

To Be Envious. "I am afraid, doctor," said a woman to the physician she had cornered at a reception, "that my husband has some terrible mental affliction. Sometimes I talk to him for hours and then discover he literally hasn't heard a word I said." "That isn't an affliction, madam," was the weary reply. "That's a divine gift."

Football Like a Fox. "Heaven to Fortune of \$400,000,000 to become simple workman's bride."—Evening Mail headlines.

Grabbing off an helmet like that and call him simple? Never! Nothing simple about him.—New York Mail.

Marching Orders. The guard is full of floating ice. The ground is frozen wet. But go around to Bud & Bulb's Without delay and get Some moonflowers and daisies seeds.

We want some good tomato plants. And onion seeds and say! Beans, peas and spinach too, we'll make Our garden right away. And with such early corn and beans And lettuce and the stars.

Chew out of all the neighbors—but Put on your knee—it's March.

Did He Take It as a Compliment? Reggie Littlewood—"Can you truly tell me that you've never loved before?" "Hello—Trudy, Reggie, I can. I've often admired men for their strength."

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## AMERICANS PROVE THE HEAVIES

Play for Big Stakes at Nice—And the Standard—Flower Battle Warships.

Nice, March 21.—For the first time in history of winter seasons fashionable Nice is dominated by Americans. And the same is true of Cannes and Monte Carlo. English is the language of which one hears the most where the winter crowds assemble, and it is chiefly spoken with an American accent. The best criterion of numerical and monetary supremacy of nationalities here is the gambling table where the heat is the hottest.

The heaviest plunger at Nice is George Moore, of New York, and Egan, M. J., who, with six or seven other Americans, is a regular player at the 10,000-franc table of the Municipal Casino. He was a heavy winner at Chemin de Fer for a time, almost never staking less than 50,000 francs to play, but in the last few days he has been cutting his teeth in half. Even so, I saw him lose a hundred thousand francs yesterday afternoon. In the evening he won back fifty thousand, then lost it and almost another hundred thousand besides, until the last pile of his neatly folded thousand franc notes was leveled.

Moore loses with smugs. He takes in his winnings more seriously. There are other those of Americans around this big table which are tense and drawn. One heavy loser who keeps a big reserve of money in front of him says he lies awake at night seeing sights and scenes of the dock. The long hours at the green table are telling on him.

Casino Bars United States Women. The banks are smaller and the play is less than last season. There are fewer people all along the coast. But the season is by no means a failure. For anyone coming to the Riviera for the first time, it seems almost gay, with an appropriate touch of the hectic. The big hotels which were half empty until the carnival season began, are now full. The smaller hotels, where the idle poor go, are less crowded.

Good evidence of fairly normal conditions is found in the scandals which are being as usual. There is the story of the American woman who appeared for peddling cocaine, and the spread of the use of the drug for which she is given credit. And of the Englishman, a prominent sportsman, who is to have lost 600,000 francs in dishonored checks after losing everything at the Chemin de Fer table of the Municipal Casino. At Monte Carlo somebody "broke the bank" the other day, which means not as much as the popular superstition gives it, because it is only a matter of exhibiting the bank allowed one table for 24 hours play.

The same day an American woman was barred from the Monte Carlo Casino on the ground that she was not properly dressed. Her toes were sticking out of her shoes, runs the gossip, and she was staring herself "play roulette; but it is more probable that the matter arose from a quarrel with the spinster wheel and the little ball, was of unaccounted mind.

Carnival Below Standard. The Nice carnival, some according to people who are amused by such things, were better than usual this year. The maskers were as numerous as ever, but to the critical observer it was a dull affair. The thousands of natives dressed in many colors seemed to be working hard to appear gay as they danced and sang in the spaces between the floats. But there was nothing forced about the party who can sailors from the Utah and the Macfarland, without masks or dominoes, who appeared on the streets at night.

Unless a great change in the economic affairs of Europe comes about, bringing back the pre-war prices and morale, Nice's famous "Battle of Flowers" is a thing of the past. It is attributed to the high cost of flowers and lack of interest shown by the depressed number of foreigners. There was a "battle" in the rare times of estimated flower throwing could not be so called by any stretch of the imagination. Instead of a bombardment of blossoms, a few small bouquets were tossed at the parade. These were mostly stems—not former delicate arrangements of blossoms alone in form of hearts and crosses. Instead of the "battle" at 21 a hundred, as in the past, the bouquets cost \$3.50. Beautiful ladies, dressed in white and light colors, who used to bombard the passing vehicles, were now seen in the carriages or automobiles suitably decorated. Instead of private carriages, there were mostly hired cabs, and few private automobiles. One automobile decorated with blossoms carried two blue-jackets from the battleship Utah. At Villefranche, the natural port near Nice, one British, the Queen Elizabeth, one American, the Utah, and

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