The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1922.

THE GOVERNMENT AND TARIFF REDUCTIONS.

Discussing the budget amendments, the Ottawa Citizen says: "The Progressives are quite capable of voting to defeat the government, but they want to give Premier King more time to make good on the Liberal party's tariff resolution."

If this is really the wish of the Progressive party, it will need a vast store of patience. There is no more prospect or likelihood of the Government "making good" on the tariff resolution passed at the Convention in 1919, than there is of there being two Sundays in a week. The Government is controlled body, soul and spirit, by a solid Quebec, which has about as much use for the principles on which that resolution was based as his Satanic Majesty is said to have for holy water. Quebec believes in protection; and as long as Quebec sits in the saddle, no free trade precepts will be permitted to be put into practice.

Besides, the Government never had the slightest intention of implementing the tariff proposals contained in the Liberal resolution. Every one of the party leaders during the election campaign sheered away from it on all occasions, and whenever it was thrown at them, they dodged it. Mr. King regarded it as "a chart" only. Sir Lomer Gouin boldly repudiated it; Mr. Fielding was very guarded in all his references to it; and was particularly careful not to make any promises regarding it. Other candidates followed the same practice.

So that if the Progressives are going to vote the Government out of office for failure to "make good" on the tariff resolution, next year should see the Government down and out. Because the excuse that it has this session that the time has been too short as yet to put through the substantial reductions that were promised at the National Convention, will no longer hold good.

FREIGHT RATES.

Judging by the reports given in the press of the proceedings before the Freight Rates Committee of the House of Commons on Monday, the presentation of the Maritime Provinces' position in regard to freight rates by the Hon. H. H. Finn of Nova Scotia, was a masterly effort. People in these provinces are, unfortunately for themselves, only too well aware of the severe handicap which the present freight rates schedule places upon the industrial activity of these provinces; and it is only fitting that "the powers that be" should be equally well informed.

Considerable stress seems to have been laid upon the Crow's Nest Pass agreement and the bearing that it has upon freight rates generally. Undoubtedly this agreement and its effects constitute a very troublesome problem at the present time. Possibly many of our readers are not fully aware what this agreement is. Briefly it is this: In 1897 the C. P. R. received a subsidy of $3,981,000 for the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass branch. In return the railway agreed to reduce freight rates on certain commodities westbound only from Fort William and points east thereof to points west of that place. The commodities included green and fresh fruits, coal oil, timber, lumber, agricultural implements, cut-and iron products, window glass, building paper, paints and household furniture. In addition, a reduction of three cents per one hundred pounds on existing rates was attached on grain and flour from the Prairie Provinces to Fort William and Port Arthur and points east. This arrangement was observed until 1918, when, owing to the greatly increased cost of railway operation, the law was suspended for three years. This suspension was due to terminate yesterday, June 7th; when, failing action by Parliament, the agreement should automatically revive.

Western Canada is aggressively demanding the restoration of the agreement with the old rates. Against this course it is urged that to restore the old rates would mean a reduction in the earnings of the railways of $30,000,000; half of which loss would fall on the C. N. R., thus increasing its deficit by $15,000,000, most of which Eastern Canada would have to pay, while receiving no corresponding benefits in the way of reduced freight rates. Mr. Finn's argument was based on the assumption that if the specific reductions called for by the Crow's Nest agreement are made effective, the resulting revenue to the railways will be so reduced as to render it impossible to extend any relief by way of reduction of rates to any other sections of the country, or to any commodities not covered by the agreement.

It seems to be a case of East vs. West again; and a reasonable compromise would seem to be the only solution.

UNIONISM LOSING ITS GRIP.

Statistics prepared by the Department of Labor show that organized labor in Canada is losing its grip. Perhaps such a condition of affairs was hardly unexpected; certain to some reaction from conditions prevailing in 1919-21 was due. According to the Department's figures, in 1919 the membership in all classes of trade union in Canada stood at 378,000, which was the peak in the history of unionism in this country. In 1920 the figures stood 373,000, while in 1921 union membership had dropped to 313,000, a decline of 65,000 from the high water mark.

The year 1921 also saw a large increase in disbursements of the unions, the aggregate being $24,000,000 an increase of $4,000,000 over the amount expended in 1920. The largest item of the $24,000,000 was strike benefits amounting to $10,241,000, while death benefits stood at $9,471,000 and sick and accident benefits at $3,081,000.

Probably as persons realize more fully than the union labor leaders themselves the loss in public favor sustained within the past year or two by those organizations of which they are the heads, the time was when the demands of a labor union were almost invariably supported by public sentiment. People generally admitted the right of workers to organize for the purpose of securing wages and working conditions which they could not obtain as individuals; and when they asked for anything, the public was quite prone to take it for granted that they were going after what was as more than their right.

Now the public has got to be shown and it is sceptical; if not hostile until it has been convinced. Several causes have contributed to this hostility; but the chief has been the disposition of so many union leaders to promote the idea of getting the highest possible pay for the least possible work.

This is the direct antithesis of the doctrine of a square deal. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay is the only right; and therefore the only safe principle for any worker or any organization of workers to follow. The great body of Canadian laborers are fair and honest, and they are ready and willing to give value received for what they get. They would not be good Canadians without such willingness.

But if they are to accomplish what they would wish, and of right should accomplish, through their organizations, they can afford to lose no time in ridding themselves of leaders and officers who endeavor to promote the doctrine that cheating the public is the end they should seek.

It is as a result of such leadership that the present public hostility was created; and if these leaders are to continue dominant or even influential, this hostility will grow. It is only by every man's doing his best, whether he is digging a ditch or designing a $1,000,000 hotel, that this country will recover from the present industrial inactivity; and the slacker, whoever he is, is certain to be looked upon as a public enemy.

Devotion to the principle of the square deal is what is going to carry this country through the present industrial depression; and it is what will save organized labor if that is to be saved.

THE RIVER WHARVES.

Despite all Mr. Venior's bombastic utterances with regard to the efficiency of his department, and the great improvements he has made in the roads, bridges and other public works in the province, it is a striking commentary on actual conditions to find the wharves on the St. John River are in so shocking a condition that people only use them at the risk of life and limb. There are not a great many of these wharves, yet Mr. Venior has in the last year or so managed to spend nearly $35,000 ostensibly in keeping them in repair. The sad drowning of the little girl on Monday as a result of the dangerous condition of the wharf at Palmer's Landing, and the painful injuries received by two males a short time before, from a similar cause, indicated either that Mr. Venior's method of repairing wharves is a very slipshod one, or else that they are not being repaired at all. For the last two or three years negotiations have been going on between the Provincial and the Dominion Governments for the taking over by the latter of the various wharves in the province, but it seems that the condition of some of these wharves is so bad that the Dominion authorities refuse to take them. Perhaps now that an innocent life has been needlessly sacrificed, something may be done to make future accidents less likely.

We are quite sure that the spirits are not taking Canada boys nearly as many interesting things as it used to the various years in the past.

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WHAT OTHERS SAY

Canada and the German Mark.

(Ottawa Journal.)

Possibly doubt exists among some people as to the meaning of the decision by the Dominion Government of the regulation which required that British goods entering Canada should be valued at an equivalent of not less than 11.5 cents for the German mark, or in other words at not less than half the exchange value of the mark prior to the war. The purport of the regulation was to prevent German manufactures being sold in Canada at a price lower than our manufacturers could sell for or lower than any British competitor could give. The abolition of the regulation, an abolition which accepts the German mark in our customs at its market value, removes the protection.

The best way to illustrate the difference is to take a concrete example.

Let us suppose that a German firm ships to Canada a consignment of toys valued in German paper currency at 10,000 marks. Under the former Canadian tariff, the goods would be valued for customs purposes at not less than 11.5 cents to the mark, giving a Canadian valuation of $1,150. Assuming the customs duty to be 30 per cent, the value of the goods in Canada would then be 10,000 German marks plus 30 per cent or $1,150, namely $357. As the market value of the German mark at present is about one-third of a cent, the value of the 10,000 marks in Canada would be about $33.30, and the total value in Canada of the consignment of toys would be $33.30 plus the duty of $357, or a total sum of $390.30.

But under the new legislation, the Fielding change, the German consignment of goods valued at 10,000 marks would be entered here in the customs at the actual value of the mark. The duty upon the 10,000 marks would therefore be 30 per cent of 3,000 German marks, or in Canadian money at present exchange, about $10, and the total value of the consignment in Canada would be 13,000 German marks, or about $43.30 in our money.

Thus Mr. Fielding's removal of the rule that the German mark must for Canadian customs purposes be valued at not less than 11.5 cents means 1. That upon a German consignment valued in Germany at 10,000 marks, the Canadian customs can get only $10 duty instead of $357 as under the old rule, and 2. That the German goods could be sold in Canada at $43.30 instead of at $390.30.

It looks to us as though in view of the present low wages in Germany, and consequent cheapness of manufacture there, that the new regulation means a great advantage for German goods in Canada, to the disadvantage, of course, of both our own manufacturers and British manufacturers. Mr. Fielding explains that his reason for the change is that the old regulation did not mean anything, inasmuch as German goods simply came in by a roundabout route through England. But undoubtedly the roundabout route would mean some profit for British trade; also would necessarily increase the cost of the German goods in Canada; and to that extent protect our own manufactures of similar lines or where we do not have similar lines would assist British manufacturers against German ones. If Canada is to be a free trade country, or a country desirous of extending trade preferences to Germany, Mr. Fielding's course is logical enough. If Canada wishes to stick to the protective principle, it is one that Britain is at no trade disadvantage here with Germany; his move looks like a mistake.

A Commendable Resolution.

(London Free Press.)

The London Local Council of Women is to be commended for taking steps to protest against the proposed legislation by the King Government which would give alien women, married to aliens, a Canadian-born or a naturalized Canadian, the franchise without qualifying in the ordinary way. A resolution promoting such an amendment to the Election Act was introduced by Mr. W. D. Euler, M. P., for North Waterloo, in the House this session. Hon. Mackenzie King, in supporting the resolution, promised that an amendment to the Election Act would be passed before Parliament adjourned giving effect to Mr. Euler's proposal.

As the law now stands, a foreign-born male immigrant cannot become a Canadian citizen, with a right to the franchise, without residing in Canada for five years after he has made application for citizenship and must show his ability to read and write in either of the two official languages, English or French. The same law quite properly, as far as the franchise is concerned, holds good in regard to the alien woman. Although a foreign-born woman assumes the citizenship of her husband upon marriage, yet she is not permitted to exercise the franchise, and she has the same qualification required of any alien male immigrant. An exception is made as to women coming from the United States.

Mr. Euler, supported by Mr. King, now proposes that an alien woman immediately she marries a Canadian citizen or a naturalized Canadian, is to have the right to vote. For instance, a Galician woman, not understanding a solitary word of English, or not being able to read or to write even her own tongue, might marry on the day of her arrival in Canada a Canadian subject, naturalized or British-born. According to the proposed law she would at once have the right to exercise the franchise. Such a law would automatically enfranchise thousands of foreign women in Western Canada, many of them from the countries with which we were at war.

The Free Press believes in giving women equal rights with men as far as the franchise is concerned, but if such an amendment is passed it would mean extending special privileges to the women of Central Europe. The present act should not be altered. If there is any change it should be to strengthen it by making out the exception in regard to women coming to Canada from the United States. The move of Mr. Euler looks like a piece of political strategy on the part of the new Government to cater to the foreign-born vote of Canada.

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Mary Watkins was setting on her front steps on a cushion and I went up and started to set down and she sed, Wait and I'll get you a cushion, and I sed, O never mind, this is all fire, and she sed, Now dont you dare sit down till I get you a cushion.

And she went in and got one and I sat down on it, making me feel popular, and we started to tawk about different subjecks and aftr a wile I sed, I wawked thru your room in skool today, did you see me?

Wich she sed she did, and aftr a wile she sed, One of the gerls drew a pikture of a country scene on the blackbord in chawk, did you see it?

Wich I sed I did, and she sed, How did you like it? and I sed, Fearse, if you hadent of told me it was a country scene I wouldent know even now, thats how fearse it was.

O is that so, well I was the gerl that drew it, Mary Watkins sed. Me thinking, Good nite, Gwizz, holey smoaks, heck. And I sed, O, you mean the one on the first blackbord, O thats diffrent, that was fine, that was a country scene, sure, anybody could tell that was a country scene on account of the trees and all, sure, O, I thawt you went the one on the other blackbord.

There wasent any on any other blackbord, Mary Watkins sed, and I sed, Well then I must of been thinking of some other room or some other time or something, and she sed, I guess you must, well if youre thru with that cushion ill take it in now. Meaning she wanted to take it in weather I was thru with it or not, and I got off of it saying, Thats all rite, I was just going anyway.

Wich I wasent but I did, thinking, Darn it all, jimminy crickets, wat the heck.

THE LAUGH LINE

New Danger

Crawford—"What did your wife think about your income tax return?"

Crabshaw—"I thought we could afford to put on a little more style."

In Smithy Parlance

Villainy (hoarsely): Ha ha! You are helpless; the old homestead belongs to me!

Hero: And where are the papers?

At the blacksmith's.

You are having them forged?

Nay, nay! I am having them filed.

Changed With The Season

"I cannot understand it at all," said Johnny's mother. "All the summer our boy was doing so well, and was nearly at the top of his class. Now he is at the bottom, and there he seems to stay."

"Come here, John," cried his father, who saw him playing cards. "How is it you are such a dunce? Your mother tells me you are always at the bottom of your class."

Johnny looked up slyly into his father's face.

"Oh, that's all right, father," he said. "You see, the bottom boy sits next to the stove. I shall go higher again when fires are over, you'll see."

Real Bad Luck

Brown visited a friend in Glasgow, and while our sightseeing was struck by the utter dejection of a man passing by.

He turned to his friend and remarked about it.

"Ha!" exclaimed the friend. "He's terribly upset. He lost his wife last week."

"He must have been fond of her," said Brown.

"Well, not exactly," replied his friend; "it's like this; his wife was crossing the road, and was almost run over by a motor-bus. She managed to reach the pavement, but the excitement caused heart failure, and she died—and unfortunately she was covered by an insurance policy for accidents only!"

CALCUTTA STRIKE AT LAST ENDED

Calcutta, June 6—The general strike on the East Indian railway, after dragging on for more than two months, has finally come to an end. The strikers have accepted the offer made recently by the Agent of the railway, and are resuming work at practically all points along the line. The conciliation between the railway officials and the workers has been facilitated by the efforts of C. F. Andrews, who acted as a mediator. He now wears Indian clothing and has made himself prominent in upholding the Indians in their efforts to obtain complete home rule.

News of the ending of the strike has come as a great relief, for its continuance was proving distressing in many ways.

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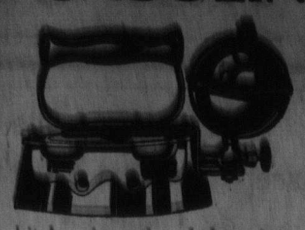

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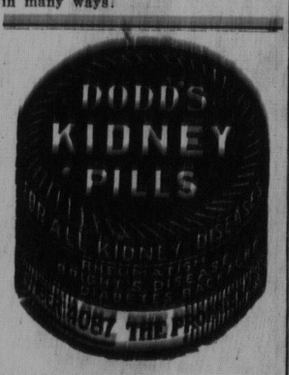

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