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Backs Up "Convict's" Letter
 Blames Superintendent Parsons for Present
 Deplorable Conditions in the Penitentiary
 ---Men are Poorly Fed and Badly Clothed.
 Time for Someone to do Something to Improve Conditions Now Existing.

(Editor Mail and Advocate)
 DEAR SIR:—Kindly allow me space in your obliging paper to confirm the statement that a convict has just published in your paper. I may state that I have served a short term in that prison for a small trifle that I committed but remember "I did not forget the law." I was only "following the custom" of the country, and I believe a dose of A. A. Parsons's "punky" would not hurt some of those fellows who are squandering the public moneys to gain a seat in the House of Assembly.

Sir, what that prisoner states in your paper is correct. I as a British subject am taking this opportunity to help to make it clear to the whole public the way that humanity is served in our Penitentiary. I blame no Board of Works for the way prisoners are served in that prison; I blame A. A. Parsons for all of the trouble; he is put there to look after that Institution. Mr. Parsons is a lovely man outside of the prison, he would almost pass for a clergyman on the street; but, sir, in that prison he is a different man, and some of the officers down there are just as bad as he is. They will come and jeer you when they get a chance and show you tobacco and money and a pipe, mocking you in your cell. They will say that a lovely dinner they had, picking their teeth just like if they were after having turkey for dinner.

But, sir, it is not a long while ago when they had to drink black tea and not the Government pap that they get now. These men are taking the life's blood out of a poor hungry convict, dirty, and ragged, and starved out and frowned on, jeered at and almost spat upon. On one occasion, I bear it in mind, we were changing our inside garments and one prisoner made a remark to an officer "if I had a needle I would sew up my clothes and make them look tidy" and he turned around with scorn and said "when Coaker gets the Government he will send you down needle and thread." I was just going to make him an answer when he said "cut it out, Johnnie." But take care he don't be cut out of his Government pap in 1917. When 1917 comes perhaps he will have "to bundle and go."

The fish that is cooked there you can smell it in Carbonar and the potatoes would take the smell of the pipe off if you were up in Ferryland; and for the oatmeal, there is enough "elastic" in it to reach to Fortune Bay. They have a rule down there which compels every prisoner on the first of each month go down on the ground flat and toe the line. The officers are there and are trying to keep up some of the prisoners from falling down with cold and hunger. After you get straightened up to the line A. A. Parsons comes in and sizes up each man; you would actually

swear we were going to the front to fight for molasses for our "punky."

Now, sir, after he inspects every man he will say, "have any of you fellows got any complaints to make?" On one occasion I made a complaint and said that the potatoes were bad and that they were never dug on dry land, but were got down by a landwash, and I said that we did not get our allowance of molasses for our "punky" and also this Institution calls for a No. 1 article just the same as any other institution.

Now, dear readers, I was punished for making those remarks. There is a place down there they call the "Broom Factory," there are from 15 to 30 men working there on times; you work all day in that factory making and sewing brooms, you get no mug of tea or so called tea till 5.30 p.m. Just imagine on a long cold winter day to work without a hot drink in your stomach. The broom factory is a paying concern, why not a man get a mug of tea in the morning? Now the prisoners that go to the Hospital and Government House get a mug of tea in the mornings. Now those institutions turn in no money to the Government but the broom factory does.

The public see those prisoners going to the Hospital and Government House and they see that they look well clothed; but, sir, what about the human beings who are in behind the bars? If the public only could see them on times you would never want to go to moving picture shows; the prisoners down there are dressed up just like a scare-crow man a farmer would have in his garden to frighten birds away. A. A. Parsons is to blame, as he knows all of this, but he don't want to see.

Now the House of Assembly is closed and some of our members are at leisure, they would only be "following the custom of the country" to take a stroll down by the lake side and see that "Grand Old Man"—A. A. Parsons; he may invite some of them to a 20 cent cigar or something similar to that. He is kind enough to those men who "forget the law," who make the law and break the law; but remember, Mr. Parsons, there is a day coming when you will have to give account of wrong doing to a convict.

I would like for this Committee that is going down to the Penitentiary to drop in there on Saturday between 10 and 12 o'clock and then they will see for themselves and just ask the Chief Warden to show them the clothing that the prisoners have just taken off.

Mr. Editor, I don't want to trespass too much on your valuable paper, you will hear from me in the near future on this matter.

Yours truly,
 SHORT TERM CONVICT.
 St. John's, May 8, 1916.

The Fall of Kut-el-Amara

LONDON, May 5.—There has been little further details from either British or Turkish official sources respecting the surrender of Gen. Townshend and his forces at Kut-el-Amara.

A despatch from Constantinople to Berlin as given out by the Overseas News Agency, says:

"The booty captured at Kut-el-Amara has not yet been reckoned. Among the prisoners are four generals, 240 British officers and 270 Indian officers.

"The Turkish commander-in-chief, Halil Pasha, permitted Gen. Townshend (the British commander) to retain his sword.

"When the news of the capture of Kut-el-Amara was received in Constantinople flags were flown. It was observed that several British commercial houses flew Turkish flags.

"General Townshend offered to surrender the town of Kut-el-Amara with all his artillery and more than £1,000,000 in cash, on condition that he be received with military honors. The Turks declined, whereupon the British surrendered unconditionally.

"The Turks took enormous quantities of various materials at Kut-el-Amara. The British surrendered because they lacked food and sanitary equipment to combat contagious diseases.

"The first news of the surrender was given to Constantinople by officers of the general staff who arrived

from headquarters in an automobile. All the city was decorated with flags. Enver Pasha (Turkish War Minister) rode in an automobile to the Sultans palace and took the news to the monarch. The automobile was surrounded and stopped by a cheering crowd. In the afternoon the pupils of the schools paraded.

Russian Railway to Enter India

WASHINGTON, May 4.—The Russian railway just extended to Tabriz, Persia, probably will be pushed into Baluchistan to link Petrograd with British Indian cities, according to a communication to the Department of Commerce from H. D. Baker, commercial attaché at Petrograd, describing the opening of the line into Persia.

The railway was pushed to hurried completion for military purposes and no commercial freight will be handled for some time. Eventually the line is expected to divert to Russian cities the trade of Tabriz, most of which formerly went to Black Sea port and through Turkey.

Tabriz is the leading carpet market of the world and has a population of 200,000.

"They tell me Professor Knowitall is a very high-minded man."

"Oh he is. In fact he is so high-minded that the milk of human kindness in his thoughts is frozen by the cold."

30,000 Canadians Went Overseas in March and April

OTTAWA, May 1.—Sir Robert Borden announced at the opening of the sitting that Private Wallace, the boy of 15 or 16 years of age, who was spoken of by Mr. Carvell recently as having enlisted for active service, had been given his discharge.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier said he had received a complaint that the superintendent and staff of the Soulages Canal had attended and taken part in a convention for the selection of a Conservative candidate in Soulages for election to the Legislature. He recommended that Government employees be not allowed to take part in political campaigns.

Sir Robert Borden was asked by Hon. Chas. Marcell if it was a fact that one of the Canadian hospitals in France had been transferred to the French Government. Sir Robert said the hospital at St. Cloud had been placed entirely at the disposal of the French Government for the care of the French soldiers. It was manned by French Canadians.

Sir Robert said Canada now had approximately 70,000 men in Great Britain. An earnest effort had been made during the past four or five months to procure the assent of the War Office to the sending of Canadian troops forward more rapidly than in the past. As a result Canada had despatched in March and April to England 30,000 men.

The government had been authorized to increase the number of battalions in Great Britain to 52, which would involve the sending of more units across the ocean in the near future. At the present time there were about 130,000 men under arms in the Dominion.

Sir Robert announced that troops in Great Britain were now being inspected by Major General Lessard. That officer had been on leave of absence at the front and it had been thought desirable that he should inspect the units in Britain before returning to Canada. The Prime Minister hoped that it would shortly be possible to provide for the sending of drafts of reinforcements to units at the front without complaints from various parts of the country about units being broken up.

The Premier said that representations had been made to the government as to the need of a new system of recruiting. A deputation had asked for the registration of manhood of Canada and ultimately for conscription. The government had not yet had an opportunity to consider any such thing. The Minister of Militia has been endeavouring to have recruiting so conducted that necessary industries and agricultural districts shall not be unduly affected. In some cases the order was given that enlisted men be allowed to assist in ploughing and seeding, but this was not carried out. Instruction had therefore been sent to commanding officers to encourage their men to assist in that important work.

Sir Robert presented a statement showing that payments of appropriations of last session had been made to various departments totalling \$152,628,104. Concluding, Sir Robert Borden said that the difficulty which the Militia Department had to face was not in obtaining men but in providing uniforms and other necessities for war. "We in Canada," he said, "in common with all citizens of the Empire, can congratulate ourselves upon the courage and endurance the men have shown at the front."

736 Ships Lost to Europe Since the War Began

WASHINGTON, May 3.—British estimates of the European war's toll of merchant ships, given in figures today by the department of commerce, put the number at 736, with a tonnage of more than two millions. Allied vessels lost number 538 and neutral 198.

The estimates made by a British admiral, give British losses as 410; ships: French 53; Russian 35; Italian 27; Belgian 10; Japanese 3. This does not include the loss of 237 trawlers by the British, seven by the French and two by the Belgians.

Norway, with 81 vessels destroyed, leads the neutral nations in losses. Sweden, with 40, is second, and Denmark with 28, third. Holland has lost 24, and the United States 7.

British losses amount to four per cent of the total number in service and six per cent of the tonnage. French losses are four per cent in number and seven per cent in tonnage. Despite these losses it is declared, the aggregate of ships owned by the allies is being steadily increased through building.

NOTICE OF REMOVAL AND PARTNERSHIP!

Hon. R. A. Squires, K.C., LL.B.
 ANNOUNCES the removal of his LAW OFFICES to the New BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA Building at the corner of Beek's Cove and Water Street, and the formation of a PARTNERSHIP for general practice as Barristers, Solicitors and Notaries, with MR. J. A. WINTER, eldest son of the late Sir James S. Winter, K.C., under the firm name of Squires & Winter.
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