

## The St. John Standard.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1920.

## SENSELESS OPPOSITION.

The nomination of Captain Dickson to oppose the Hon. F. B. McCurdy in Colchester is just as ill-timed and ill-advised as opposition to Mr. Wigmore would be in St. John. Flushed, we presume, with its recent victory in the Provincial arena, the Farmers' party in the constituency is apparently under the impression that it can carry all before it. This party is to be assisted by the Labor Union, and between them they expect to win out.

Just what the farmers and labor have in common is not easy to understand, and such an alliance can hardly be described as a natural one. Still, a combination of farmer and labor members has enabled Mr. Drury to carry on the government in Ontario, without it he could not have lasted. But the aims of the Farmers' party are certainly not those of organized labor. One of the chief purposes of the labor leaders is to restrict the hours of work to less than the ordinary time. The farmer, on the other hand, finds all the available hours too short a time in which to accomplish all he has to do. If class interests have to be considered, the interests of the farmers and those of the laborer are likely to be found in conflict.

What, we may ask, is steadily drawing the young men from the farms? The lure of high wages? What is the one end and aim of labor at this juncture? Increased production? There is no evidence of it. The one object sought is still higher wages. Why is it that with wages in the country as high as they now are, it is impossible to obtain trained help? Because even these high wages are looked upon as inadequate by unskilled labor. If, then, it is possible for the farmer and the trade-unionist to work together, since their interests are so diametrically opposed?

Sensible farmers will at once insist upon the immediate dissolution of the unnatural alliance between their party and the labor union. The farmers' true interest is with that class that holds to the sacred right of private property. When the alliance was formed, the farmer was led into a trap, which will, if he does not take care, sooner or later destroy him. Labor unions cannot help him. Shorter hours will ruin him; a minimum wage dictated by a walking delegate would lead him into bankruptcy. A strike of transportation workers at a critical season would kill his season's work; every strike by increasing wages without corresponding production hits the farmer. Which ever way he looks, he stands to lose.

Moreover, a further indication of the rift that lies between the interests of these parties is to be found in a recent article in the Toronto Farmers' Star, the official organ of the United Farmers of Ontario, which characterizes the demand of the railway workers for increased wages as "simply outrageous." "A farmer," says the writer, "on 100 acres of good average land does well if his income, representing the wages of himself and family, and allowing nothing for interest on a \$12,000 investment, equals that demanded by a railway switchman. That farmer would be considered in the plutocratic class whose yearly income, on the same basis, equalled that of a freight conductor."

In view of Mr. Mackenzie King's request to his followers that they should oppose the re-election of members of the Government, it may be asked why does the Liberal party stand aside in Colchester, and leave the fight to the farmers? And what do the latter expect to gain if they should elect a member to replace Mr. McCurdy? The Farmers' party in Parliament, such as it is, is an entirely negligible quantity, utterly unable to do anything except blindly oppose the Government. Mr. McCurdy is in a position to help his constituency; his former opponent will be as helpless in this direction as a baby in arms.

## RAILWAY RATE INCREASES.

According to Mr. D. B. Hanna, of the C. N. R., the costs of operation of all Canadian railways in 1916 was 68.9 per cent; for the year ended June 30th, 1919, 89.26 per cent; and at the present time it must be close to 95 per cent. Mr. Hanna, of the C. P. R., says that as far as that road is concerned the operating expenses in 1916 were 63.87 per cent; in 1919, \$1.89, and for the year ending June last, \$2.27 per cent. Mr. Hanna further says that with the increase in wages sanctioned by the McAdoo award, the revenue of the C. P. R. will not be sufficient to pay the cost of operation, and also fixed charges and dividend, even with a 20 per cent. increase in freight traffic and a 10 per cent. increase in passenger traffic.

The C. N. R. is, of course, in much the same plight, but with this much it is a matter of choice whether the de-

fect should be made up by increased rates or by increased taxation, but the main point is that the deficit must be made up in one way or other if the service is to be continued with even reasonable efficiency and safety. To some it may seem most equitable and most businesslike that the actual users of the railroads should pay the actual cost of the movement of their freight instead of distributing a portion of that cost among the taxpayers who are neither shippers nor consumers. In either case, the ultimate consumer will have to pay, and will have the same chance of knowing how much.

The matter of rate increase is now being threshed out before the Railway Commission, and on behalf of those opposed to any increase in rates Mr. Hugh Blain, President of the Wholesale Grocers' Association, insists that one reason why no increase should be allowed is that it would mean a much greater advance in the cost of commodities to the ultimate consumer. He contends that the profits of jobbers, wholesalers, and retailers are figured as a percentage of the cost of commodities plus the freight rate. If a manufacturer sells an article for one hundred dollars, and the freight on this article amounts to eight dollars, the wholesaler figures his profit on a percentage on one hundred and eight dollars. If a commodity passes through several hands before reaching the consumer the rate would consequently be greatly enhanced.

Few people will take issue with Mr. Blain when he argues, on the above grounds, that no increase should be granted unless it can be shown that the railroads cannot make a reasonable revenue without it, but Mr. Hanna's figures suggest strongly that it is no difficult task to convince any fair-minded person of the inability of the roads under existing conditions to make a reasonable revenue hereafter.

It is argued that, as far as the C. P. R. is concerned, this Company should use up a proportion of its reserves before demanding increased rates, but, as the Quebec Chronicle points out, this would only postpone the issue by doing injury to the Corporation out of all proportion to the possible public benefit. The C. P. R. has always been regarded as the strongest industrial enterprise in the world today and it will come as something of a shock to many to receive Mr. Hanna's candid presentation of the real position. It is to be remembered, of course, that the Corporation has many activities, including steamships, hotels, land, express, and telegraph, so that the fact of the prosperity of the enterprise as a whole does not necessarily mean that one department, as for instance the railroad, is on a paying basis.

Doubtless the C. P. R. can, and would in the absence of any alternative, shoulder the railroad deficit up to a certain point from its own resources, but here again it is neither wise nor just to ask an industry to operate at a loss because of its accidental ability to do so without immediate bankruptcy.

There can be little doubt but that some increases in rates are necessary and even urgent. Moreover, while the position of the Canadian National Railway can be relieved by added taxation, that will afford no assistance to the Canadian Pacific Railway. Increased freight rates will inevitably mean an added cost of commodities to the ultimate consumer, but this is a condition that must be faced if railroad service is to be continued.

## PAPER CLOTHING.

The Department of Commerce at Washington in its suggestion that the people of the United States can reduce the cost of living by clothing themselves in paper suits, is, declares the Bengor Commercial, doubtless instigated by worthy motives, but the plan is likely to prove about as effective as that to persuade our people that dogfish offer a cheap and nourishing food. The paper suits were worn by Germans and Austrians during the war and perhaps today, but they were doctored because of the lack of cloth or absolute lack of means to purchase more durable clothing. Samples of the paper clothing have been ordered by the Department of Commerce and it is proposed to exhibit these samples to show the American people that coverings for the body can be purchased for about 60 cents a suit.

This will be an offering that will not attract so long as the public can obtain the money to purchase real clothing that will not melt in a rain-storm. Americans could wear wooden shoes, but they will not do so. They would consider that such would be detracting from their self-respect, and the same holds for paper clothing.

Some men have good qualities, but lack the one necessary to make use of them.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

**Railway Wages.**  
 (Hamilton Herald.)  
 General Manager Hanna of the C. N. R. tells us that out of every dollar earned by the National railways 50 cents go for wages. When some labor leaders learn this they may demand to be informed why the railway workers are being robbed of that remaining 20 cents.

**He Should Have.**  
 (Hamilton Times.)  
 Premier Deane, granted a large slice of New Ontario, including Kapuskasing, to an American syndicate, which will build a mill and manufacture pulp and paper. We hope he has seen to it that no abuses can creep into the bargain.

**Sour Grapes.**  
 (Hamilton Herald.)  
 The truth is, no doubt, that Mr. Dewar's bitter hostility to the U. P. O. is a case of sour grapes. If the farmer-member had accepted him as their leader, all would have been well and they would have been splendid specimens of Canadian manhood in his eyes.

**The Quebec Language.**  
 (Toronto Globe.)  
 As a mark of courtesy to the Imperial Press Conference, the Montreal printed in the English language its article welcoming the delegates to the city. The article, incidentally, corrects a common error: "Those among our visitors who know French—and they must be the majority—will find that the language which our people speak contains no patois whatever, but the French spoken in France, with an accent to be found more especially in Normandy and Picardy."

**Are We Brutal?**  
 (Saskatoon Phoenix.)

Four million men are still at war in the world. We are in no wise, however, inclined to despair. The transition from world war to world peace cannot be made in a day. The trouble with war is that it lets loose all the brutal predatory instincts inherent in our blood which usually lie dormant in times of peace. Hence the inevitable outcropping at present of ancient grudges the world over, and even communities hitherto peaceful are divided into numerous feuds and factions. The fact is that there is not, perhaps, a man amongst us, however cultured he may be, who is not at the present time more uncivilized and brutal as the result of the late war than he would otherwise have been. The only cure is the "toolfulness of preaching," and the will to patiently work for peace.

## A BIT OF VERSE

THE MADONNA OFF THE CURB.

I.  
 On the curb of a city pavement,  
 By the ash and garbage cans,  
 In the stench and rolling thunder  
 Of motor trucks and vans,  
 There sits my little lady,  
 With brave but troubled eyes,  
 And in her arms a baby  
 That cries, and cries, and cries.

II.  
 She cannot be more than seven,  
 But years go fast in the slums,  
 And hard on the pains of winter  
 The pitiless summer comes.  
 The wall of sickly children,  
 She knows, she understands,  
 A heaven with puny bodies,  
 The clutch of small, hot hands.

III.  
 In the deadly haze of summer,  
 That turns men faint and mad,  
 She quiets the peevish urchins  
 By telling a dream she had—  
 A heaven with marble columns,  
 And ice, and a singing fan,  
 And a God in white, so friendly—  
 Just like the dragstore man.

IV.  
 Her rugged dress is doctored  
 Than the perfect robe of a queen.  
 Poor little lass, who knows not  
 The blessing of being clean,  
 And when you are giving millions  
 To Armenian, Pole and Serb,  
 Remember my pitiful lady—  
 Madonna of the Curb!

—Christopher Morley.

## THE LAUGH LINE

**Hopless.**  
 Will reading about those Paris silk stockings at \$200 a pair discourage any young man from getting married?  
 —Boston Globe.

Not so long as they see hostility on display in the five and ten cent store windows.—Portland Evening Express.  
 The newly-married husband will find it pretty hard work to convince wifely that love is behind his suggestion that she wear the ten-cent kind.—Lewiston Journal.

Most Likely.

The young woman who is heard to remark that for a week she must lunch on a roll and a glass of water is probably accumulating a vacation fund, or has just returned from visiting a summer resort.

Making Himself Useful.

"Golly, but I'm tired!" exclaimed a tall and thin negro, meeting a short and stout friend.

"Well, you've been doin' to get tired?" demanded the other.

"Well," exclaimed the thin one, drawing a deep breath, "over to Brother Smith's we are measuring a house for some new carpets. Dey haven't got no yardstick and I've just exactly six feet tall. So to oblige Brother Smith, I've been a layin' down and gettin' up all over deir house."  
 —Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph.

Chance for Women.

"One-man cars are to be introduced here," remarked the girl who clutched a stray. This will be welcome news to women who find all the seats occupied by men at present."

Resigned To It.

They had just become engaged, when the fair young thing said shyly: "I have a surprise for you, dear. I can cook just as well as I can play the piano."

"It doesn't matter, dearest," said the man, who had heard her play. "We can live in a boarding house, you know."—Stray Stories.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

This afternoon I had something I wanted to tell ma before she found it out by herself and I was sitting on the front steps and ma came up and started to go in, me saying, Don't go in yet, ma, wait do you think?

If you have anything to say, say it, and for hevvin sake don't start that wat do you think bitness, sed ma, and I sed, Well wat do you think, ma, I mean do you know those little strawberry tarts you made and put out on top of the ice box?

Wat about them, tell me immediately, they're your fathers favorite dainties and he would be furious if anything happened to them, sed ma, and I sed, Well wat do you think, ma, I mean I was setting out heer thinking of those strawberry tarts all alone back there, and I thart maybe a robber mite come in the back way and steal them.

Nonsense, how could he, the gate is locked, sed ma, and I sed, He could climb over the fence, and ma sed, Benny Potts do you mean to tell me somebody stole those tarts?

Well, I thart I better go out and look, I sed, so I went out to look and the tarts was still there, and I came back and sat on the steps agone, and I thart, G, while Im setting heer some robber mite be stealing all those tarts at this very minute, so I went back agone, and the tarts was still there, and I came out agone, and after a while I got worried about them agone and I went back jest to make sure, and then I came back on the steps agone and—

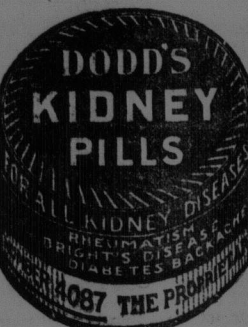
For mercy sake is there any end to this story? sed ma, was there a robber or wassent there? and I sed, No mam, but I went back to see G times altogether, and each time I went back I see one on account of being so relieved to see them still there.

Wat, why for gawd's sake I only made 8, sed ma, and I sed, Yes mam, and ma sed, Wat did your father come home, he'll attend to you.

Wch he did.

Not Impressed.

"The Tonerville Trolley has nothing on Skipper Harris and the one-man cars," remarked a Dunforth avenue resident as he observed the new departures in transportation getting their try-out on Coxwell avenue.



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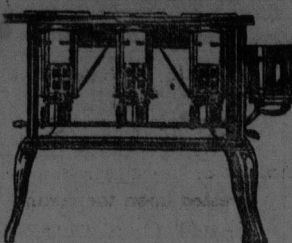
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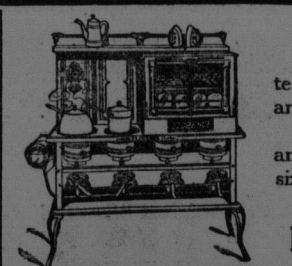
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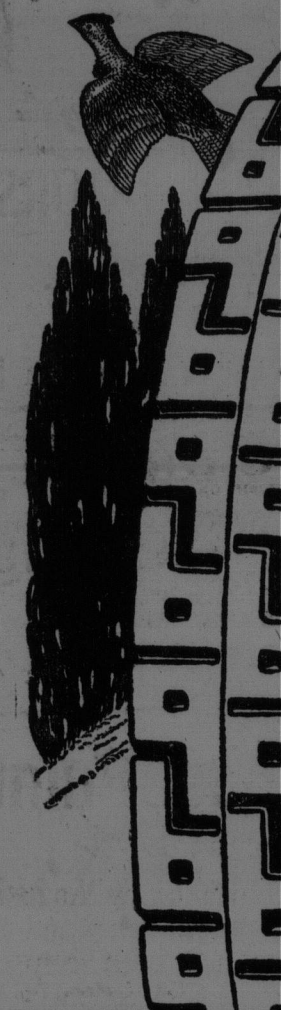
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