

THE EVENING TIMES-STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1924

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BRITISH OR BOER?

Can Smuts save South Africa for the Empire? This is the momentous question to be answered in the elections which are expected in June. Had Botha lived the danger would be less menacing. He and Smuts together, by their courage and influence, were able to keep the loyal element in safe command of the situation. Today the country shows a growing anti-British tendency which makes the coming campaign one of very grave import. Much depends upon the Laborites who in the last election won comparatively few seats. This party is made up mainly of men of British birth or descent, but it has been allied with the Nationalists and it should assist to be beaten the outcome might be civil war or the setting up of a republic in which the British and other loyal elements could not live.

In 1921 political conditions had become dangerous and Sir Thomas Smartt, leader of the British group, allied himself with General Smuts, who had succeeded Botha as head of the loyal Dutch party. The allied groups formed the South African party, and made war upon the Nationalists, led by General Hertzog, who are secessionists, and the Laborites, who were opposed to Smuts, charging him with unduly favoring the big mining interests. General Hertzog's slogan was "South Africa a Republic." The loyal motto was "South Africa a Nation," meaning a nation within the British Commonwealth.

That election gave Smuts a clear majority over all the other parties, the leading being: South African, 74; Nationalist, 46; Labor, 14. One seat went to a Constitutional Democrat. Since then the by-elections have resulted in bringing Smuts' majority down to the vanishing point. It was narrow enough to start with, and immediately after the election Hertzog stopped talking about breaking the British connection and so was able to hold the Laborites in close alliance and gain some additional support outside the towns.

It may be that the Nationalists will not unfurl the secessionist banner in the coming campaign, but they will raise it quickly enough if they and their allies can succeed in defeating the government which has just confessed that its majority is so precarious as to raise a doubt as to whether it commands the confidence of the country. In reality Hertzog is the spearhead of the unreconciled Boers, and if Labor for its own ends plays into his hands the overthrow of Smuts, who put down the Rand revolt in 1922 with iron hand, the resulting conditions would be confusion and racial hatred at fever pitch, with civil war and a demand for British intervention among the possibilities.

The task before General Smuts is one of immense gravity and significance. In spite of the constant effort he has made to make South Africa "worthy of Britain's generous gift of self-government after the Boer war, there apparently has been of late a growth of separatist sentiment. The testing time is at hand again, and before it is over there may be written another troubled chapter in Empire history. One thing is certain—there are powerful forces in South Africa which will never submit to the setting up of a Boer republic, no matter what resistance might involve.

THE MONEY.

This country has a debt of \$2,400,000,000, mostly due to the war. The fashion in which the war's legacy revolutionized federal taxation is remarkable enough. For example who realizes that the Dominion's ordinary expenditures were less in 1922-23 than they were in 1913-14?

The country in 1923 raised in federal revenue no less than \$464,432,340 as compared with \$186,241,046 in 1913-14. It is a striking fact, too, that while the uncontrollable expenditures amounted to only \$27,618,000 in 1914, they were \$308,324,000 in 1923.

Perhaps it means little to the average citizen to be told that the expenditures were reduced by some \$30,000,000 in the last fiscal year, but some light is thrown on these figures if we add that the regular ordinary expenditures in 1913-14, before the war, when all things were small, were \$108,927,000, and that in 1922-23 they were \$120,127,000, although today's dollar will buy only two-thirds as much as that of 1914.

In the actual war years and during demobilization the Government made provision for pensions, for soldiers' re-establishment, and for interest on the war debt, but not for the cost of the war itself. This latter it financed on borrowed money, and today, as a result, we are paying interest on a national debt of \$2,400,000,000. This interest—\$187,892,000—is one of the uncontrollable expenditures. Pensions, civil re-establishment, soldiers' land settlement and other war inheritances brought the total war expenditures up to \$191,532,000 in 1923, or more than \$50,000,000 in excess of our total expenditures for all purposes in 1913-14. But there were other great amounts which were beyond the Government's control in that year, among them \$83,848,000 in advances to the national railways and the Canadian Government marine. If we add to these subsidies to the provinces, unemployment relief, statutory grants for highways, for technical education and for agriculture, and include the \$191,532,000 for interest and other payments due to the war, the total of uncontrollable outlay in 1923 rises to \$308,000,000 out of the total of \$464,432,340 that was spent.

It is remarkable that of the whole expenditure more than seventy per cent. was paid out automatically, in addition to this the present administration—as all governments are—was committed to large expenditures on enterprises begun by its predecessors. As to the wisdom of some of the ordinary expenditure of 1923 there is, of course, room for argument. There are many works of necessity in New Brunswick, not to speak of other provinces, which it is not good economy to postpone. In St. John alone the new station and new C. N. R. piers are crying

examples. Yet there is no denying the fact that in answer to the cry for economy the Government pulled in its horns very extensively, too extensively says every community where justified federal expenditures have long been awaited. That the regular ordinary expenditures of 1922-23 were less by \$32,000,000 than in 1913-14 tells quite a story in itself.

Regardless of political affiliation everybody seems to welcome the cut in the sales tax. If it has any friends they are silent. Tariff reduction is different. It is viewed through political spectacles. It has been said that every man is a protectionist in his own business and a free trader in everybody else's and there is more than a little truth in that.

The late George E. Day was a good citizen, with a host of friends. He was active in civic affairs and for sixteen years served as a valued and vigilant member of the School Board. He stood high in several of the federal orders. His death is a real loss to the community and its deep sympathy will be extended to the bereaved.

Premier Veniot is commended by the Toronto Globe for his announcement that the development of Grand Falls will be a government and not a private enterprise.

Press Comment

EDISON AND THE SOUL.

(Toronto Globe.) It is particularly interesting to observe from time to time the way in which men of science in the various realms of human knowledge face the ultimate facts of life. Sometimes they endeavor to explain them, while others they recognize their inability to do this, and fall back on an attitude of agnosticism. Some recent stances are full of significance for all who desire to come in contact with reality, and are not content with a mere negative position.

Mr. Edison has just expressed the opinion that personality ends with the life of the body, and that there is no evidence of a soul. Here are his words: "My brain is incapable of conceiving such a thing as a soul. I may be in error, and man may have a soul, but I simply do not believe it. What a soul may be is beyond my understanding." It will be noticed that Mr. Edison judges the matter from the standpoint of intellect alone. In this he is singularly like Laplace, who said: "I have swept the heavens with a telescope, and cannot find God." The fact is, he was using the wrong instrument. God is not to be discovered by means of a telescope. So with Edison, a soul is not to be conceived of merely by the brain; it needs

another faculty as well. In the words of Pascal, "the heart has reasons that the reason does not know." Mr. Edison's life-work has been done in a sphere which tends to make a materialist, and with the equally real and scientific realms of psychology and philosophy he has had little to do, and, therefore, knows little. But the fact that these departments are outside his special field does not prove their non-existence, or that he is justified in deciding everything by intellect alone.

THE FIRST ROBIN

Whence has he come? Along what weary route? Cleaving the air with tireless wings and feet. Speeding through miles of space, his only chart. The north wind's breezy guidance, chill and sweet—Planning his course, with subtle reckoning. To bring a waiting world the song of Spring.

With homing instincts, blind, unquestioning. He seeks again the haunts of last year's nest—The cold, stark earth, the bare-boughed, naked trees. Awake no terror in his dauntless breast. He only knows a few more weeks will bring Green grass, and leaves, and apple blossoming.

With wary glance and speculative eye. He searches carefully a place to build. And now and then he trills a note of that Wild ecstasy with which his heart is filled. And, robin, listening to your melody. It seems as if joy smiled again at me. —Made V. Caruthers.

IN LIGHTER VEIN.

Revenge. Mr. "Hub!" "I'm dinner ready yet!" Mrs. (sweetly):—"Why, no, dear, you see I got it ready by the clock—the

SOUR STOMACH

causes bad breath, gassy pains, coated tongue and belching. Always find relief in CHAMBERLAIN'S TABLETS. Sweeten your stomach and breath—only 25c.

one you set when you came in this morning. —Winipeg Tribune.

Too Sensible. "You've broken with Billie?" "Yes, he said he couldn't afford to take me to the annual ball this year." "A very sensible young man. He should be commended for his courage." "That may be, but I'm afraid that a man who is that sensible before marriage will be unbearable after marriage." —Detroit Free Press.

Come Now, It's Impossible. Blinks—"They're wonders, all right." Jinks—"In what way?" Blinks—"They own a car and yet are able to keep exactly within the budget they doped out the first of the year." —Cincinnati Enquirer.

HOLDS SPECIAL SONG SERVICE. The "Prodigious Son in Song" filled the auditorium of St. Andrew's church last night. The story was told completely in song. It was based on the scriptural version. Thomas Guy and Harry Shaw, Mrs. Thomas Guy and Miss Blenda Thompson were soloists and were assisted by a large chorus.

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Vaseline

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The renditions of the male quartette composed of Messrs. Logan, Guy, Young and Shaw, and that of the mixed quartette, Messrs. Guy and Shaw, Miss Blenda Thompson and Mrs. Thomas Guy, were especially appreciated.

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