

The St. John Standard

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H. V. MACKINNON, Managing Editor. ALFRED E. MCGINLEY, Editor.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1918.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H. M. The King.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

THE POTATO ENQUIRY FARCE.

"We have been getting along very nicely until Mr. Powell came in," Commissioner McQueen.

The foregoing statement from the lips of the gentleman appointed by the Foster Government to investigate transactions in connection with the purchase and shipment of potatoes from this province as a gift to the British Government, as well as to the suffering Belgians, and the disposal of what has been termed "surplus potatoes," in Cuba, illustrates more plainly than anything else that could be said what a perfectly lovely time Mr. Peter Hughes, and his associated Fosterite, have had in connection with these proceedings.

When the first session of the enquiry was opened, Mr. Fred R. Taylor, K.C., appeared for Hon. J. A. Murray. Mr. Taylor speedily recognized that it was impossible for him to receive, fair treatment in the court, and properly withdrew from the case. From that day until the enquiry resumed on Wednesday, Mr. Murray and the present-day provincial Opposition had no representation before the commission, and there was no person to see that Mr. Hughes was governed by even the rudimentary rules of evidence. Mr. Hughes and the Commissioner had "been getting along very nicely," as there was no one to question the admissibility of any of the so-called "evidence," and the Fosterite counsel was able to make as much political capital as he could without any interference. There was no one to check him and the Commissioner at no time interfered.

On Wednesday, Mr. H. A. Powell appeared and since then Mr. Hughes has not enjoyed himself as well.

Yesterday's proceedings furnished striking evidence of this. Under Mr. Powell's cross examination, Mr. Daggett was able to tell his story in much better fashion than formerly, and there was at least a decent effort made to bring out both sides of the case. The net result is that the foundation was gently removed from many of Mr. Hughes' structures, and more than one point upon which he doubtless expected to rear a rare edifice of condemnation of the Murray government was found in verity to be very flimsy and capable of satisfactory explanation.

Throughout the whole enquiry there has been an apparent effort to "get" someone, and more than one indication has been dropped that Hon. B. Frank Smith was the gentleman the Fosterites chiefly hoped to incriminate. Yesterday, Mr. Smith appeared in person, after demanding that he be given an opportunity of making a statement. His evidence, published in full elsewhere in this issue, tells its own story. Not only did he show that he had not made an exorbitant commission on the work he did in purchasing potatoes for the government, but he also destroyed the Fosterite canvass that he had wrongfully retained money that should have been returned to the province and disposed of the claim that he had intimidated that such money had been repaid. "I did not say I paid it and I will not pay it," was the frank, matter-of-fact statement in which Mr. Smith picked that bubble.

Moreover, Mr. Smith directed attention to a potato purchase made by the Foster government upon which much more light should be thrown. He stated that government had paid \$7.50 per barrel to Andrew D. McCain, a defeated Fosterite candidate in Carleton County, for potatoes which Mr. McCain had purchased from growers for \$6.50 per barrel. According to Mr. Smith, McCain's profit was \$1.00 per barrel, and the Fosterites made no complaint. Mr. Smith, in the case under review received ten cents per barrel, and this was regarded by his political opponents as exorbitant.

In connection with the proceedings of the enquiry more than a word of credit is due to Mr. Daggett. He was kept on the witness stand for many hours, was grilled and badgered by Mr. Hughes when there was no opposing counsel, and every effort made to impugn his honesty. Mr. Daggett came through with flying colors. Speaking from memory, and dealing with the manifold details of a transaction which took place four years ago, he told a story more coherent than the average man could tell under a similar test, and this despite the fact that he received almost cruel treatment from the Fosterite counsel. When Mr. Powell appeared on the scene there was a change, and Mr. Daggett yesterday appeared to much better advantage than at any previous session of the enquiry.

As for the attacks upon him by the Fosterite press, Mr. Daggett has no

cause to worry. His reputation in this province is too firmly established and he is too well and favorably known as a man of honor and integrity to be affected by anything the unscrupulous Telegraph or Times may say. The tactics of those newspapers and of the Fosterite counsel are, after all, very much on a par. They are willing to bully and badger so long as they can do so unchallenged, but once let their bluff be called, and they become as harmless as skunk milk.

The potato enquiry can do no harm to Hon. Mr. Murray, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones or the other gentlemen whose names have been dragged into it. It is, as Mr. Hughes admits, a "fishing expedition," and so far the catch has been small. Mr. McQueen's report will be awaited with interest. If it is fair it must exonerate—if it does not, well, the public have had an opportunity of reading the evidence and, as the Telegraph remarked in a previous enquiry, will have made up their own minds irrespective of what the Commissioner may or may not say. The farce has almost ended.

PEACE OR WAR.

A whole continent yesterday celebrated the end of the most murderous war this world has ever known. Shortly after noon the United Press, a reputable news gathering organization, sent to America from Paris a cable signed by their president and the chief of their Paris news bureau to the effect that the armistice between the Allies and Germany had been signed, and that hostilities would cease at 2 p.m. The whole continent believed it, for it seemed incredible that the president of such a large and well organized enterprise would personally stand sponsor for so important a story without first assuring himself that he was on absolutely safe ground. Yet, at midnight, there was no official verification of the earlier report, and early this morning the Associated Press (the larger rival of the United Press in the business of news-gathering), gave to the story an unqualified denial.

If last night's reports were premature, and The Standard is not yet wholly convinced they were, a whole continent was deceived by them. But if Germany has not yet agreed to the Allies' proposals, it is apparent that she must do so very soon. Perhaps, after all, the United Press was but a few hours ahead of time.

In St. John the news was received with great enthusiasm. The people paraded the streets in crowds, and showed disposition to celebrate in truly loyal fashion. It was good practice for them. When the official report of the end of the war is received there is now no doubt that St. John will rise to the occasion with befitting wholeheartedness.

THE CASE OF MR. CURRIE.

Premier Foster returned to the city yesterday, after attending a two-days' session of the local "convention" at Fredericton. It is known that the case of Hon. William Currie, speaker of the legislature, was dealt with at considerable length at that gathering of the Clan Lennox. Naturally it was to be expected that the premier might have something to say as to the disposition of his erring speaker. But Mr. Foster merely smiled. Evidently he has not yet screwed his courage to the point of asking Mr. Currie to do what he should have done when the Friel report was first submitted to the government—to get out. The people are waiting—and gradually losing patience.

THE BRITISH FRONT FROM WEEK TO WEEK

(By Lieutenant A. A. Milne.)
A week in which we take 60,000 prisoners and 1,000 guns on the Western Front, in which we capture Damascus, in which Bulgaria surrenders unconditionally and the German Government comes unstuck and has to "democratize" itself, is a week which goes a long way towards winning the war. Taking the Western Front alone, and only the British operations on that front, we still have a panorama of battle which is something more than a seven days' wonder and certainly provides a superfluity of material for one weekly article. Nor is there any reason to suppose that next week will be less embarrassing. However, one must not complain of this orgy of victory.

Undoubtedly the heroes of the week are the 46th Division, Leicesters, Sherwood Foresters and Staffordshires, who swam the Scheldt Canal, stormed the German defences and captured 4,000 prisoners, which must be the record number of prisoners taken by a single division since the beginning of the war. The full story of this division will perhaps be told later on—after the death of Dorset but if it is not told soon, it is doubtful if it will ever be

told truly, for it is the sort of epic story to which legends attach themselves like barnacles, so that the truth is indistinguishable from the romance, being no whit less romantic. As far as the story goes now, it is something as follows.

There was once a leave-boat. Now a leave-boat, as everybody knows who has travelled in one, carries on board a number of life-belts into which all passengers are required to make their way. Chapter one of the story shows us a certain Brigadier "borrowing" all the life-belts of the leave-boat. Of course, he might have "indentured" them, but that takes much longer; so he "borrowed," or (as would be said of one lower in rank) he pinched them. Further details would be interesting, but are at present unavailable. Anyhow his brigade got these life-belts. Chapter II is equally picturesque, and would illustrate well. It shows us the Brigadier, with a sample life-belt on, leading the way into the Scheldt and conducting the necessary training-maneuvres for amphibious warfare—a dress-rehearsal for the Scheldt. Cold work these days, but a morning or two later his men were to be in the water.

It was on Sunday when the 46th Division attacked, and foggy. They got down to the canal so quickly that the German engineers were still waiting to blow up their mines at the bridge-heads. To find a bridge still intact was as much a surprise to the invaders as their approach was to the defence. The mine wires cut, signalled the British to come on.

They came on. Some by the bridge, some trusting themselves to their feet, others pulling themselves across the water by ropes. First went an advance party of good swimmers who took a life-line with them. A rope was attached to the line and drawn across, and those without belts came along hand over hand. Dripping wet, they climbed out and went off in the fog after the German infantry.

Nothing could stop them, neither German bayonets, nor machine-guns nor even anti-tank guns. Many of the Germans, realizing this, did not wait for them but fled in a panic. A tunnel, hoping to hide there until the enemy had gone by. But the 46th Division was not standing any nonsense. Its that sort of thing is reported as to be free passage of the Dardanelles for Allied ships. Sofia, the Bulgarian way station, was erased from the time table last month. And now the Bohemians have thrown up the arms across the track near the Saxon frontier.

The great Central Empire which blackened the map from the North Sea out to the Bosphorus, from the Bosphorus to Baghdad, and cast its shadow over European Russia, across the Black and Caspian Seas to the gates of India, is broken and scattered like a storm cloud flying before a northwest wind. Travellers in the War West notice how in that clear atmosphere tall mountains look as if they were an hour's stroll distant. Yet they are many a day's journey remote. Our first glimpses of these great events are similarly deceptive. It is only after a long journey that we grasp their complete magnitude.

Turkey's submission is a momentous event. It will grow more momentous as the days pass. The end of Germany's Oriental dream; access to Russia's Black Sea coast for Allied shipping and for Allied influence; passage from Europe to Asia henceforth to be virtually unimpeded by a stupid and rapacious Turkish gatekeeper; and a Palestine under the tutelage of Nations which have derived their religious inspiration from its past—these are a few of the promises flashed before the dazzled eyes of the Allied Nations by the brief dispatches of Turkey's bid for an armistice.

Once it was from Berlin to Baghdad. Now it is from Baghdad to Berlin.

NEW YORK GETS THE NEWS OF HUNS ACCEPTING ARMISTICE

New York, Nov. 7.—New York papers publish Washington despatch that the navy cable censor today reported that an unofficial message had come through from abroad announcing that the Germans had signed the armistice terms delivered by Marshal Foch.

No authority was given for the statement. Washington officials said nothing but an official despatch could be believed. However, New York accepted the despatch as authentic. Business is practically suspended, bells are ringing, whistles blowing and millions walking streets, cheering, singing, shouting. Crowds gather at the churches, singing hymns of praise and joy.

lial visit to Turkey in 1888, he was the first monarch of a supposedly Christian Nation who had hobbled with the Sultan for five centuries. The last German Emperor who went to Turkey had been a Crusader. The German Emperor who rode into Jerusalem on a white horse through a breach in the walls 20 years ago was a commercial traveller.

The Berlin-to-Bagdad railway was the modern German crusade—a through line to the Mesopotamian wheatlands and the mineral deposits of Asia Minor, a strategic railway pointing like a spear at British India and like a dagger at Egypt.

Well did the British understand the challenge and valiantly did they meet it. They undertook to cut the line at Constantinople in that disastrous Dardanelles expedition. The Turks, offered by Germans, undertook to cut the throat of the British route to India in their unsuccessful campaign against the Suez Canal. The British undertook to capture the terminus by their operations up the Tigris and, in characteristic British fashion, failed at first, learned the lesson of their failure, and by dogged persistence, did finally conquer the Baghdad terminus. Then, slowly plodding northward out of Egypt, like the children of the Exodus, they achieved a new conquest of Canaan.

Shores of Berlin-to-Bagdad Preferred must be selling below par on the Berlin Stock Exchange. The Baghdad terminus flies the British flag. One of the terms of that sort of thing is reported as to be free passage of the Dardanelles for Allied ships. Sofia, the Bulgarian way station, was erased from the time table last month. And now the Bohemians have thrown up the arms across the track near the Saxon frontier.

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THE WICKEDEST CITY.

Which is the wickedest city in the world? This question to test different people and they will probably all answer it differently. But if we are to take the verdict of statistics, we must agree that the wickedest city in the world is Irkutsk, in Siberia, which has been figuring so prominently in the news of late.

Before the war, Irkutsk had a population of 120,000 and 500 murders were committed every year there on an average—the highest known average in

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