

THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, JULY 13, 1908.

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THE BRUSH FIRES Man's helplessness in presence of the great elemental forces of nature is illustrated very forcibly just now by the sweep of the forest fires. Once they are permitted to assume large proportions, in a time of drought like the present, the destruction wrought is only limited by their opportunity. The state of Maine has forest protection laws which last year were described as very effective. From heights of observation wardens look out across the wilderness, detect smoke when it appears, and hasten to endeavor to put out the fire. In an ordinary season this system is fairly effective; but in a time of extreme drought, when the forest is as dry as tinder, the flames spread too rapidly and precautions too often fail to prevent a conflagration. The air of St. John today is very oppressive from the smoke of forest fires, which hangs like a pall around and over the city. It is said that the fire sweeping toward South Bay was discovered days ago, but no steps taken to meet the danger. The provincial government is confronted with conditions which will test the efficiency of its machinery to cope with a grave danger. Unless its officials are of service at such a time as this they are altogether useless. The largest share of blame for these destructive fires falls upon careless sportsmen or farmers, who start fires without regard to possible consequences. The Times has more than once urged the importance of making forest value and protection a part of the education of the people. In no other way can the conditions be completely changed, and a generation or two will pass before the desired end is accomplished. In the meantime the annual scourge should be an annual warning to the people and a constant spur to the officials whose duty it is as far as possible to prevent forest fires.

THE COST OF THE G. T. P. Sir Wilfrid Laurier estimated, in 1903 that the Grand Trunk Pacific Ry. would cost Canada about \$22,000,000, but that the total actual expense would only be the interest on this amount at 3 1/2 per cent. for seven years, or about \$13,000,000. Hon. Mr. Fielding in the debate (Aug. 12, 1903), endorsed this estimate absolutely. Sir Richard Cartwright in the same debate said: "It will be found that the statement made by the Premier is literally correct, and that we shall not require to spend on this road more than an interest payment of about \$2,000,000 a year for a period of seven years. The Premier was undoubtedly correct in saying that we have a road of \$22,000,000 for a total expenditure of about \$14,000,000." It was assumed in this calculation that the Grand Trunk Pacific after seven years would take over the whole line and pay interest to the government thereafter on the whole cost. But that was in 1903. The most recent government estimate of the cost of construction is \$114,000,000 instead of \$22,000,000, or more than double what Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. Mr. Fielding and Sir Richard Cartwright predicted. But, as the Ottawa Journal points out, there is a further liability. The Journal's statement is as follows: "The Grand Trunk is to pay no interest for seven years in any case, upon the cost; but unless the portion of the line from Moncton to Winnipeg is paying at the end of seven years, the Grand Trunk is not to pay interest for three years further. Everybody knows that that portion of the road will not pay until a later period. Thus, Canada will have to pay interest upon the cost not for seven years, but for ten. At simple interest, the total for ten years will be \$40,000,000. "But," continues the Journal, "there remains the further probability that even the latest government construction estimate of \$114,000,000 is, too low. In fact there is no doubt at all that it is too low. Mr. Borden in his calculation gives a construction estimate of \$144,000,000. Hon. Mr. Graham, minister of railways, promises a statement in reply, and though he may scale down Mr. Borden's figure some, he will assuredly not scale it down to \$114,000,000. Assuming Mr. Borden's estimate of \$144,000,000 capital outlay on construction to be approximately correct, the cost to Canada at 3 1/2 per cent. simple interest for ten years will be over \$50,000,000. This may not be more than Canada could stand. But it would be a curious commentary on Sir Wilfrid Laurier's original assurance of not more than \$13,000,000." In parliament on Saturday, Hon. Mr. Graham admitted that the interest cost would be \$40,000,000. If he admits that much—what will the real cost be? What will be thought now of the original estimate by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Fielding and Sir Richard Cartwright? If they were so far wrong in 1903 who can trust Mr. Graham's present estimate?

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THE MARSH CREEK The Times has already referred to the plan set forth in the letter of W. Frank Hatheway, M.P.P., in this issue of the Times, by which the now unsightly and unwholesome Marsh Creek could be made a lovely little stream, for swimming, canoeing and fishing. The plan is perfectly feasible, and could be carried out at small cost. The proposed dam could be built for less than a thousand dollars. It might also be necessary to divert a sewer that runs along the Marsh road so that it would empty into the creek below the dam, but that would not be a difficult matter. Mr. Hatheway conveys the interesting information that trout from Lily Lake have come over the dam into the Marsh creek, and have been caught there. Many persons have been wondering where the trout came from that have been caught in this season. Some good sized fish have been taken there. The fact suggests large possibilities. If the proposed dam were built the upper reaches of the creek, extending more than three miles from the city, could be made good fishing water. A canoe can traverse the marshes for three miles or more at flood tide. If it were always flood tide, in other words if the proposed dam were built to retain the water in the basin of the creek at all times, the benefit to be derived would be very great. In the old country, where there are no large rivers, a stream as large as the Marsh Creek, when running bank-full, is prized as a great boon to the people, and is made of great service for bathing and boating purposes. Anyone who has seen the river Dee at Chester, or traversed the Thames on a summer Sunday afternoon from Hampton Court to Leamington, knows how even a small stream can be made to minister to the health and pleasure of the people. Mr. Hatheway gives good sanitary reasons for the construction of the proposed dam at the bend of the creek above the Marsh Bridge. He also states on the authority of an engineer that the expense would be small—a mere trifle compared with the benefit conferred. There would be no danger of flooding the marshes, since the dam could be left low enough to give an abundant overflow. In winter the frozen stream would afford good skating. The members of the city council should give this matter their attention. If there are any serious objections to the proposed scheme they would very quickly be discovered when it became known that the council had the matter under consideration. If there are no such objections the Marsh Creek should be made available for bathing and canoeing next year.

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THE SPOONERS (Bohemian Magazine). Together we sat in a tea-a-tot, The prettiest girl and I. The light was out and the shadows were late, For times you know, will fly by Jove, How rapidly time will fly!

IN LIGHTER VEIN THE EXPLANATION OF IT. Knecker-The school of experience holds no vendue. Bocker-Because it has no graduates. LETS THE OTHER MAN WORRY. "Seems to me you look younger than ever." "Why not? As I grow older I become more and more expert in avoiding trouble."

ONE RAY OF HOPE. "Do you think Bliggins would make a good husband?" asked the conversationist. "Why do you ask?" inquired the girl in surprise. "Because if you think such a fool as Bliggins could manage it I have a good mind to take a chance myself."

LATE FOR A TRACE. (Argosy). A Mormon's wife, coming downstairs one morning, met the physician who was attending her husband. He expected to get some useful information from the lady, who was a person of a lawyer. "This was the man's reply: 'I'll tell you, sir, 'ow I makes up my mind. I'm a plain man, and a reasonable man, and I ain't influenced by anything the lawyers say. I'm by what the witness says, no, nor by what the judge says. I just looks at the man, the doctor and I say, 'if he ain't doing nothing, why's he there?' And I brings 'em all in guilty."

WEDDINGS Tonge-Milne View's End Gardens, Red Head, the summer residence of John Tonge, was the scene of a pretty wedding on the afternoon of the 11th inst. when his eldest son, Thomas Henry, was united in marriage to Miss Margaret Milne of 27 Peters street. The bride, who looked charming in a pale blue gown of organza, with white veil and orange blossoms, and carried a bouquet of white roses, was given away by Mr. Grady. She was attended by her sister Agnes as bridesmaid, who also looked very pretty in a dress of the same material and a white picture hat. Frank Tonge supported his brother as best man. The house was tastefully decorated with evergreens from the ocean. Rev. L. A. Maclean performed the ceremony.

Spencer-Hall A very pretty wedding took place at the home of Mrs. S. Hall, Truro, on Thursday afternoon at 6 o'clock, when her daughter, Miss Winifred S. Hall, was united in marriage to Clarence D. Spencer. The house was prettily decorated for the occasion. In the dining-room four streamers of amilax and carnations were suspended from the ceiling and caught at each corner of the table which made a very pretty effect. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. G. B. McNeil, the First Presbyterian Church, and the wedding march was rendered by E. R. Stuart.

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