

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, THURSDAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1910.

MYSTERIES OF INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY FINANCE.

It is given out that the Intercolonial earned last year a surplus of \$623,164. This is reached by earnings of \$9,264,234 with working expenses of \$8,641,070. Compared with other railways it is a poor showing enough. It means that operating expenses are more than 93 per cent. of the earnings. The Canadian Pacific working expenses are always under 70 per cent.; the Grand Trunk the same. Even the Dominion Atlantic, which has been sold, managed to make a margin of 35 per cent. Last year was a great season for American railways. Large surpluses were made by successful lines, and shareholders were gratified with large dividends. Had the total surplus claimed for the Intercolonial been available for dividends it would have amounted to less than three quarters of one per cent. on the capital. Had the road been operated on the 40 per cent. rental basis, proposed for the Valley Line, the rent charge would have been \$3,707,293, against which the poor \$623,164 would have made a poor showing. It should also be noticed that in addition to the \$8,641,070 charged as working expenses, the government expended on the railway \$1,278,409, so that the total expenditure exceeded the total revenue by \$655,345.

But while the return for the year ending last March is pitiful compared with that of other railways, it is magnificent compared with that of 1908-09. In that year there was no surplus claimed, but a deficit of \$800,952 admitted. How do we get this extraordinary change in one year from a deficit of eight hundred thousand to a surplus of three quarters of that sum? How does it happen that the railway's working expenses drop from 110 per cent. of the earnings to 93 per cent?

Mr. Graham and his board of management will perhaps say that there have been reforms and economies. But when we go back still another year we again find a surplus, and so for the year before that and the one before that again. And then behold in 1904-05 the awful and unprecedented deficit of \$1,725,302! These are great mysteries. We do not see such phenomenal fluctuations in other railways.

Mr. Graham and his officers can claim that they have brought the railway out \$1,400,000 better in 1909-10 than in 1908-09. But Mr. Emmerson and his officials could claim in 1906 that they had made an improvement of \$1,800,000 over the year before. Mr. Blair was once able to claim a sudden transfer of a deficit of \$488,186 into a surplus of \$96,822 the next year. This was his proud day.

Looking over these three significant changes of deficits into surpluses, we find one constant quantity. The years of profits do not all correspond with the best years of other railways. The years of largest losses are not those when railway business was generally bad. The one coincidence which presents itself in all the cases is the fact that the big changes for the better were in the years following an election. Also the big deficits were in election years. This is an interesting and suggestive circumstance.

Mr. Blair's great deficit was in the election year 1900, and is shown in the returns for the fiscal year 1900-01. The deficit was nearly half a million more than double that of any other full year of Mr. Blair's administration. This was followed by a handsome surplus next year.

Mr. Emmerson's record deficit was in 1904-05, covering the election campaign of 1904. It was nearly a million and three quarters, towering far above any other losses known to Intercolonial history. The next year Mr. Emmerson came forward triumphantly with a surplus, and the claim that he was a great railway reformer, having made a miraculous change in one brief year.

Reasoning from analogy we may now expect surpluses until the next election year, when a deficit perhaps greater than has ever been known will be revealed, thus preparing the way for the minister who shall follow to present a cheerful contrast.

What shall we then conclude? That the election year deficits are not real, but are made up of election expenses properly chargeable to the government party, but levied on the whole country in this deceptive way? That nothing worse happens than excessive purchases and payments in election year for services that are not normal, but relieve the year following? That intercolonial accounting is a mere political device on which no reliance can be placed? We leave the problem to the ingenious reader to solve for himself.

MR. HAZEN AND THE TAFT-FIELDING TREATY.

When Mr. Hazen told the Boston company that the recent treaty between President Taft and Mr. Fielding was not calculated to make Canadians eager for further negotiations between the parties, he said an obviously true thing. The Telegraph's justification of the treaty does not make it any more attractive. The Telegraph says:—"As they (Sir Wilfrid and Mr. Fielding) succeeded in preventing the application of the 'American maximum duties to Canadian products, and did so without the slightest loss of fiscal independence and without return concessions except upon a baker's dozen of minor articles, Mr. Hazen's statement of the 'case will find no substantial support, here or in the 'United States.'"

This is another way of saying that Canadian statesmen would at all times be justified in making tariff surrender to the United States when threatened with higher tariffs as the punishment of refusal. A traveller held up by a man with a club may thus justify

the contribution of a few dollars to escape a clubbing. But it would still be true that the man would not be eager for a repetition of the performance.

As a matter of fact Canada gave the United States the intermediate tariff on a great many baker's dozens of articles, which we purchase from the United States to the amount of some five million dollars. This exceeds the value of our total exports to France and Germany, any may thus be worthy of respectful notice. The intermediate tariff was introduced as a schedule for negotiation of reciprocal treaties, and it has been conceded to the United States with no reciprocal return, except escape from a retaliatory tariff. The United States provided a retaliatory tariff, and we bought immunity from it by this offering. Suppose the Telegraph were right in saying that the escape is worth the money, would not Mr. Hazen be equally right in saying that Canadians are not anxious for any repetitions of the performance? If he is not how many more such ransoms would the Telegraph suppose that the Canadian people desire to pay?

The truth that the people of Canada do not like this treaty at all. They do not like to be threatened with retaliation for their negotiations with France. They do not like the surrender in the face of these threats. They do not wish the thing to happen again. It cannot be pleasant to Canadians to frame reciprocity schedules for an exchange of concessions, and to give them to any country for nothing, thus making the whole scheme useless. The fact that this concession buys exemption from punishment may give us as a people relief from anxiety, but it does not make us proud. Mr. Hazen is absolutely right.

CULPABLE NEGLIGENCE.

The verdict of the coroner's jury at Nauwigewauk charges the Intercolonial management with "culpable neglect" and places on the authorities of that railway the responsibility for the disaster. A warning against hasty conclusions is found in the sworn testimony. It was positively stated by several Intercolonial men that the suburban train had a right to be on the track, and that the west bound through train should have stopped and gone on the siding. It now appears that the Maritime Express had the right of way, that the suburban should have been on the siding, and that the train on which the brakeman was killed was going according to orders. Yet while it had for months been the rule that the suburban trains should leave the track to the opposite express, the conductor and driver of the suburban believed that their train should keep the track. The station officer seems to have thought the same. Even after the accident this was the prevailing view among train people at this end of the line. But the officers of the opposite train understood the rule and carried it out. Thus the two trains came together on the same track and a man was killed, and this happened while all the officers on the trains were carrying out orders as they understood them. The jury finds that the officers of the offending train "were conscientiously performing their duty, but through the neglect of the management of the Intercolonial Railway to provide the said crew of No. 136 with a copy of said bulletin, the accident ensued." This is the basis of the finding of "culpable negligence."

The rule as to crossings was set forth in a bulletin posted in stations. This bulletin seems to have disappeared from the St. John station. The suburban train officers supposed it to be not in force. They were not careless on the matter for they consulted about it. Their conclusion was not justified by the facts, but it seems to have been entertained by others besides them. The jury is evidently of the opinion that in matters involving life and death, these matters should not be left for train officers to study out and conjecture for themselves, with a fair prospect of reaching a fatal conclusion. They should be plainly stated and distinctly brought to the notice of the men responsible for running the trains, and this would seem to be more especially true when new trains are sent out, or train officers are placed in new positions.

There is the further finding that a grave responsibility attaches to the authority responsible for the removal of the semaphore. No one seems to know who is to blame for the absence of this simple but effective device for the protection of trains at stations. The whole matter demands a prompt explanation from persons in high authority on the government railway. The verdict of the jury in a recent Intercolonial disaster in Gloucester county did not please the member of the board of management, who seems to have charge of these matters. This verdict is much stronger, and the facts supporting it show that the train crews cannot this time be blamed for everything.

No one demands impossible perfection in the management of the government railway. But ordinary prudence and care may be expected and the public will await with interest some explanation of the extraordinary condition of affairs revealed in this inquiry. The attitude of one member of the board of management after the Naash Creek accident last year, makes it all the more necessary that there should now be fuller explanation.

GENERAL BOTHA—PREMIER OF SOUTH AFRICA.

So far the conquered Boers have had little reason to regret the success of British arms ten years ago. Paul Kruger was the ruler of one state in South Africa. Next week General Botha will dominate this state and three others, to say nothing of an immense added territory. The away of this Boer commander will not only include the two original Dutch republics, but the Cape Colony, and even Natal, in which the Dutch had no foothold at all. If the prediction should be verified that he will call to his first cabinet Messrs. Merriman, Sauer, Smuts and colleagues of their type, the immediate triumph of Britain's late foes would be equal to that of Britain in the late war.

It is not likely that all this will happen. General Botha must appeal to the electorate almost immediately. He must offer to the people a cabinet which will commend itself to some of the English speaking voters. He has shown some capacity for government and a disposition to conciliate people other than Dutch. The record of the Botha administration is on the whole considered creditable. He never was in sympathy with the Kruger element, and only the war made him a comrade of the late president. If now General Botha, as Premier, should organize a ministry in which men of the type of Sauer and Smuts appear, the first election would see a division on race lines. In such a conflict the Dutch might win the first victory, but it would be the road to disaster.

General Botha is enough of a statesman to know that he must hold the support of a considerable British element if he is to make a figure in the South African Union. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was his closest associate at the Imperial conference, would probably advise him to seek the support of one English speaking party on party lines while quietly claiming the support of all his compatriots on race grounds.

A school boy remarked to The Standard yesterday that it was the 25th anniversary of the landing of Charles the Second, when he came back to England to become king. The youth was right if we disregard the change of calendar. There are few more interesting passages in Popsy than those in which he describes day by day what happened on this expedition in search of a king.



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Welcome twilight after play,
Welcome rest for weary feet!
Here's your cuddling and your rhyme
All the charm of story time!"

"Little son, so eager-eyed,
Little chubby girl o' mine,
On my knee and at my side—
Cheeks ablaze and eyes ashine.
Hearing tales of elf and fay,
At their tricky wanton play!"

"Stories, too, of heroes bold,
Splendid, savage sailor men,
Legends of the Age of Gold,
(Truer than we moderns ken!)
God and goddess lend their stories
To our magic bedtime tales!"

"Tiny sprites of every day,
Some would steal your ancient right
Fringing of 'The Modern Way'—
Not for babes Arabian Nights—
No more cuddling, not one rhyme,
There should be no story time!"

"Tiny sprites of every day,
We will risk it, you and I,
All the danger of such play—
Modern Science we defy!
Dear old Grimm, lend all your glories
To our blessed bedtime stories!"
—Elizabeth Newport Hepburn.

GOOD STORIES

"One of the meanest ways of getting a seat in a crowded car came to my attention a while ago," said a man who uses the subway every day. "I was sitting near the door. At 14th street two girls entered. I heard one whisper to the other, 'Say, Grace, I'm going to get a seat.' I heard the other say, 'I'll try.' I saw them both get up and give you a seat."

"The girl spoken to did affect a limp but it didn't go at all. They stood in front of me and they stood all the way to 15th street, too. Since that day I've watched for such tricks, and now every time I give up my seat to a woman I fear that I'm being taken by some such game."

JOSH WISE SAYS.
"It is generally the hatched faced woman who says the cutting things."
How could Maude descend to marriage with a fellow-contortionalist? She wanted a man she could twist round her finger.
Elsie (aged seven)—Ma, I want a tickle.
Mother—What for, dear?
Elsie—I asked Willie Jones to play we're getting married, and he says he won't do it unless I have a dowry.

She—So Jack is married. Why, I don't think he could raise enough to pay the minister.
He—Oh, he found one who would take a dollar down and fifty cents a month.

Mrs. Gnagg—I don't feel at all like myself tonight.
Gnagg—Then we ought to have a pleasant evening.

Characteristic Expressions
Blood will tell, said the man who shaved himself and didn't want people to know it.
The older I grow the stronger I get, remarked the well-used pipe.

The game is up, said the hungry girl noting the advance in price on the menu.
Anything for a change, observed the chorus girl, as she applied the peroxide to her locks.

It's time to get dressed for dinner, said the lobster as the cook took it from the refrigerator.
It doesn't bother me if food is high, said the giraffe as he nibbled away at a tree top.

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SEALED TENDERS will be received at the office of the Common Clerk, addressed to him, until 11 o'clock noon of MONDAY, the 30th day of May inst., for Coal required by the undetermined departments of the City of Saint John, viz:

FIRE DEPARTMENT.
50 tons soft coal.
70 tons Anth. Egg American.
30 tons Anth. Stove American.
4 tons Anth. Chestnut American.
4 tons Soft Coal.

CITY HALL.
50 tons Anth. Egg American.
4 tons Soft Coal.

CITY MARKET.
10 tons Anth. Stove American.
POLICE DEPARTMENT.
50 tons Anth. Egg American.
5 tons Anth. Stove American.
35 tons soft coal.

FERRY DEPARTMENT.
45 tons American Anth. Egg.
15 tons American Anth. Nut.

WATER AND SEWERAGE DEPT.
15 tons Anthracite Furnace (Leinster Street Office).
5 tons Anthracite Nut (City Hall West).
5 tons Grand Lake Blacksmith.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
5 tons Grand Lake Blacksmith (West Side Shop).
40 tons Scotch Jumbo (6 and 6 Bertha West).

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Tenders must state the name of the mine of the coal proposed to be furnished; also state the number of pounds per ton.

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Saint John, N. B. May 25th, 1910.
ADAM P. MAGNIFRE,
Comptroller.

M.26-27-28-30.

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