

The Standard



Published by The Standard Limited, 82 Prince William Street, St. John, Canada.

SUBSCRIPTION.
Morning Edition, By Carrier, per year, \$5.00
Morning Edition, By Mail, per year, 3.00
Weekly Edition, By Mail, per year, 1.00
Weekly Edition to United States 1.25
Single Copies Two Cents.

TELEPHONE CALLS:
Business Office Main 1720
Editorial and News Main 1700

Chicago Representative:
Henry DeClerque, 701-702 Schiller Building,
New York Office:
E. Klebahn, Manager, 1 West 34th Street.

SAINT JOHN, SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1911

A MOST DISTRESSING CASE.

The somewhat damaging exposure in these columns of the motives which underlie the abusive attitude of the Times towards the Common Council, and the real object which stimulates its strenuous advocacy of a small Commission to control civic affairs, has not improved the temper of the organ of the dredging ring.

Confronted with the testimony of its own columns, in which members of the Council are variously described as "a clique," "a machine," and "a ring that now rules at City Hall," the Times, in its confusion, says in one breath that The Standard for once "has permitted the truth to creep into its editorial columns," there by confirming its use of these abusive epithets.

In the next paragraph, beside itself with rage, the dredging organ declares that "the statement of The Standard that the Times has abused and misrepresented the City Council is as false as most statements made by that abandoned political hack." The only point now left to be decided is for the Times to define the meaning of "abuse and misrepresentation."

The expression "abandoned political hack" as applied to a newspaper is, in fact, something quite new. We have always entertained the idea that the term "hack" was descriptive of a writer, in fact the latest dictionary available confirms this opinion. "A hack," we read, "is a drudge, especially a literary drudge; a horse kept for hire." It is a never failing source of pleasure to the Times to refer to this journal as being without an editor. That as may be, if it ever became a matter of burning public interest to discuss the question of editors, it might be shown that the term "abandoned political hack" can be truthfully applied, but that the newspapers which hire this type of editor are not published on Prince William street.

IS IT STILL A THREAT?

One line of argument persisted in by Sir Wilfrid Laurier is suggestive. He is fond of drawing an antithesis between Reciprocity and Non-Intercourse, and defending and appealing for the former as an alternative to the latter. "Will you oppose the agreement?" he asks. "If so, you must prepare to face Non-Intercourse," meaning, we suppose, commercial non-intercourse, although he does not so qualify it. This oft repeated declaration makes us stop, and consider, and ask questions.

Is it then really a fact that in the intentions of the United States as known to our Government, or from the necessities of the case there are only those two conditions possible? Let us examine the latter first. For years now as regards dutiable articles we have had a low tariff against us in the United States. They have given us a small free list, we have given them a very large free list. Non-Intercourse has not resulted. On the contrary each year has seen trade increase until now nearly half Canada's exchanges are with the United States. Nor as a result of that condition has there latterly been any tendency on the part of that country to further increase their duties and prohibit us from their markets. As a matter of fact, since 1905 there has been in both parties a marked tendency to lower United States duties, and both are today pledged to do so.

It does not seem necessary, therefore, that we should give free natural products to prevent non-intercourse on the part of the United States. As for Canada, she has that matter in her own hands, and surely no spirit is discernible in either party to make our duties prohibitory against United States exports. Non-Intercourse is therefore not threatened by the necessities or logical tendencies of the situation.

Is non-intercourse to be made the alternative by the will of the United States? Has President Taft intimated to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that unless free natural products are granted he will recommend, or the United States will enact, a commercial non-intercourse bill? There are some facts that warrant such an anticipation. When in 1910 President Taft intimated that Canada should make a concession of duties, the alternative was flatly stated, viz., A PENALTY OF 25 PER CENT. AD VALOREM ADDED TO THE PRESENT DUTIES. That was equivalent to non-intercourse. The threat was made, the "big stick" lifted, and Mr. Fielding himself is authority for the statement that it was no bluff. Well, the bluff, if such it were, was not called, the "big stick" prevailed, and Mr. Fielding, brave cool that he was, came down in the twinkling of an eye.

The concessions were made, the annual fine was ratified, and non-intercourse faded into the dim limbo from which it came. But—and here is where we get material for thought—beside the concessions and the yearly penalty, a promise was exacted from and given by the Government, the promise to enter into negotiations for fuller trade relations. Perhaps this promise was attached to the receding threat of non-intercourse by a string sufficient to recall the latter if the promise were not fulfilled. Anyway, the promise was kept, and what is more important an agreement was signed which, more than implements the promise. This secret agreement is presented herewith to the Canadian Parliament, and is to be jammed through without change and without appeal to the country. The same agreement is presented to Congress, and when the Senate fails to act upon it a special Congress is convened. With it goes to Congress Mr. Taft's message, and that message is significant. Reading between the lines we see in it a threat to Canada that unless she chooses the path to Washington the barriers are to be put up and kept up.

On what else can Sir Wilfrid base his alternative argument except that he infers or knows that unless Canada gives free markets to the United States that country will practically enact non-intercourse as its policy? If that be so the Government should frankly let us know; if it be not so why use the argument? And if it be so what does it demonstrate but the old-time long-continued and persuasive sentiment of the United States to either force or wheedle Canada out of her Nationality, and ultimately replace the Union Jack by "Old Glory"? And if that be the intention, and the argument is forceful else, then there are eight million reasons why this agreement should be indignantly repudiated by the people of Canada, and why the Government which has made it in secret, and now arbitrarily pushes it to a conclusion, should be also repudiated.

ON THE WRONG SCENT.

The Telegraph and Times both quote from a letter written by the Auditor General regarding the expenditures of the Public Works Department for bridges, and attempt to make it appear that the Government was violating the Audit Act. The facts are that while the expenditure for bridges exceeded the estimate there were still funds to the credit of the appropriation for roads, and it was proposed to use a portion of this money to pay the excess expenditure for bridges. As both these public services are so interwoven and have to do with what is really the same thing—the question of transportation—the Auditor General's objection was more technical than real.

It was never intended by the Audit Act to give the Auditor General power to prevent works of great public necessity being carried out. Under the act the Auditor General cannot permit payments to be made when an account has been drawn on up to the limit. If payments are ordered from an account in this condition he is in duty bound to notify the head of the department. The Audit Act gives the Treasury Board authority to provide the necessary funds, and when these are supplied, the Auditor General can then sign the checks. The object of the act is to prevent over-expenditure, and further, when such over-expenditures become necessary from any cause the Treasury Board must take the responsibility for them.

The people of New Brunswick will not object to the Government spending the public money on the roads and bridges, provided there is money in the treasury to spend. The actual income of the Province exceeded the estimated income last year and the Government were in a position to spend more on needed improvements than was expected, and the repair of the bridges of the Province to make them safe for transportation is a service that affects the whole people more than any other.

Had the old Government performed their duty to the people and made the repairs to the bridges, as they should have done, and not allowed many of them to get into such a condition that they were unsafe, the large sum paid out for repairs last year would not have been necessary. The Hazen Government in the past three years have been doing just about twice as much work on the bridges as would have been necessary had they been kept in condition instead of being allowed to almost tumble down. The large number of bridges upon which repairs have been made furnishes conclusive evidence of the lack of attention they received at the hands of the old Government.

In quoting from the letter of the Auditor General the Telegraph and the Times make no reference to the failure of the old Government to do its duty to the people of the Province, first by collecting the revenue that was its due and then by expending it in the public interest. No word of praise has been spoken by these organs of the crafters regarding the enormous increase in the revenue under Mr. Hazen, and the improved condition of the public service which has followed an honest collection of this revenue. Had the \$100,000 or more which the Province lost annually through the failure of the old Government to do their duty, been properly spent, the expenditures of the Public Works Department would have been well within the estimates. This is the fact, and cannot be denied by the Opposition or pushed aside by a quotation from a letter written by the Auditor General who, after all, may not be infallible.

Referring to a paragraph in the Times last evening, the only occasion on which The Standard has omitted anything from Mr. H. V. Mackinnon's letters, was on March 4th, when a paragraph was transferred from the letter published on that day to another letter which will appear later. This was done because the letter of March 4th was a trifle longer than could be conveniently handled on the day of publication, and for the additional reason that the paragraph in question would naturally have been omitted from the letter.

Current Comment

(Montreal Witness.)

To make the children of strangers British we want songs and the flag—the Union Jack. To make them Canadian we want a Canadian flag. We say we want one because it is impossible to evoke patriotism in connection with the complicated and meaningless defacement at present used to represent Canada on the flag. Put a big golden maple leaf upon it as big as the field of the red ensign will hold, and every child will know that it means Canada, and every one of our nationalities—French and English—will love it. The Australians have their Southern Cross for their children's imaginations to soar to. We have nothing that they can make out. A flag is not a thing to be deciphered with a pair of spectacles, but to be known miles away, where it flutters in the sky. Let us have our own maple leaf on our flag, and then let us have it in every school. Let our schools be furnished with the means of teaching our constitution, and our hero history, and let our churches and Sunday schools not forget, as many do, to pray for Canada as a country.

(Greenwood Ledger.)

When Canada was struggling in short and ragged pants, the United States passed along as though we were a torn poster in a wet ditch; but now that this glorious Dominion is arrayed in fine raiment, Uncle Sam casts his eyes over the tariff wall, and wants it torn down so that he can grab some of the plums out of our full dinner pail.

(St. John Globe.)

The Provincial Government has made a good record in regard to the reports of heads of departments. All the reports have been submitted to the Legislative Assembly, and, besides, the reports on schools and Provincial Hospital have been issued.

(London Free Press.)

The chairman of the Canadian Conservation Commission, appointed by the Ottawa reciprocityists, delivered the most telling speech as yet against reciprocity. Do you get the idea?

(Stratford Herald.)

If somebody would only announce that sap's running we might forget for a moment this horrible nightmare of reciprocity and annexation.

RECIPROCITY FROM A FARMER'S STANDPOINT

Agreement no Advantage to New Brunswick Under Changed Conditions -- Will Consider Arguments.

To the Editor of The Standard.
Sir,—During the past ten years how many of our farmers have been heard sighing for this reciprocity agreement which is being thrust upon us at this inopportune time? There may have been a time when reciprocity in some of our farm products would possibly have been beneficial to us, but that day passed long ago and with it the sentiment of annexation. The Americans then disdainfully stood off thinking they had resources for all time within their own borders. Things have changed, the tables have been turned; now they find they can use certain kinds of our farm products and raw material to their own advantage.

Note the changed mode in the farming of today and that of twenty or thirty years ago—practically every farmer then had from 25 to 35 per cent. of his farm heavily timbered with good merchantable lumber of various kinds. They had more lumber than they knew what to do with, consequently it was in many cases cut down for fire wood or burnt up on the land to be gotten rid of. How many farms in New Brunswick do we find today with any surplus amount of good lumber on them?

Another important product at that time was hemlock bark. The hemlock were large and very plentiful and the tannery industry was quite a profitable side line for the farmer, but the hemlock have diminished with the years and we don't find very many of them throughout the country where they used to be so thrifty and plentiful.

Pulpwood Industry.
Then we come to the pulpwood. This was a commodity on which the farmer and lumberman all over the country some years ago banked their hopes, but with the steady depletion of the big maple, birch, beech, etc., for firewood and the making of fallow land, the farmer has found it necessary to use small second growth to meet the wants of his home fuel.

The first thing he knew he was out of the good quality of wood, and today is using the small stuff that used to be treated as underbrush. What was then supposed by us to be an unlimited supply of pulpwood throughout the province has, after being culled year after year, dwindled to at present too small proportions. I am speaking of the general source of supply throughout the province, of course there are some remote sections that still have considerable quantities, as is the case in Northern Quebec.

The Americans have gotten down to a low ebb in this as well as other commodities. Now they want to exploit our lands to their own advantage and foster and preserve what remains of our forests. Conserve their own forests and make a treeless, timberless waste of our country. They, with their conservation commission, composed of able, competent men, who devote their time and talent towards the protection and planting of their trees, while we go over to Washington and invite them to come down to Canada and devastate our now too-much depleted timber lands to the detriment of present and future generations.

Changed Conditions.
Years ago when we had large quantities of these products, and were short of certain manufactured articles and farm utensils one could no doubt have carried on a business of fruit interchange in these commodities. We had not attained to the stage where we were in a position to manufacture agricultural implements and other articles successfully and profitably on account of lack of machinery and skilled experience. Neither did we have our good extensive local markets, composed of able, British market, such as we have today. Things have changed all along the line. We have passed the parting of the ways. More attention must necessarily be given to the conservation of our forest lands and streams in the interests of the country's welfare.

Hay is another commodity which has greatly changed its relation to its interests to the present day farmer. Time was, 20 or 25 years ago, when almost every farmer would sell his hay in a bag. Sometimes he would needs summer it over and in many cases keep it in his barns for two or three years, but rather than buy stock to feed it to, he invariably thought he would sell it and realize money to meet his debts. That is just what put so many farms and farmers in this province on the downhill road. Instead of carrying stock and using up his surplus hay, oats, buckwheat, etc., his only thought was to get rid of these products, but the Americans didn't want them. He got what he could for them and tried to content himself.

Using Surplus Products.
What a different story just five years ago when the conditions by an intensive system of farming. Go out among any of the progressive farmers of our country of New Brunswick today, and notice the agreeable difference. You will observe that he has a stock of horses, cows, young cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry commensurate with the size and general adaptations of his farm and instead of him worrying over how much hay and feed he is going to be able to sell, you will find him calculating on how many more cows, pigs, etc. he can feed with his surplus products.

Why does he do this? Because he wishes to create a surplus of meat, butter, eggs, cream etc., which bring him good prices and the demand is always good and plentiful. He gets the benefit of the nature and fertilizer which his farm renders and which in turn keeps the land fertile and productive.

Contrast the prices he obtains with those of 20, 15 or 10 years ago and ask him if he thinks reciprocity will benefit him any. He will invariably say no. He will tell you that he is satisfied with present conditions and prices and that he finds good markets right at his door for everything that he has to sell and is content with paying the prevailing prices for those things which he has to buy. In other words the average farmer of today who has adapted himself to the present intensive system of farming is progressive and independent and

anyone who travels over our country can readily see.

The British Market.

I think I can safely say that the farmers have reached their present successful stage by ambitious, persevering methods, by natural circumstances, following the growth and development of a fertile country, and their improved farming system and not on account of any particular brand of government. If the local demand for his surplus products should not be equal to the available supply, there is the British market open to receive them. After years of practical experiments and mutual energy spent in acquiring and developing our British trade, bringing it to its present satisfactory state, why should the order of our gold be changed and the farmer be directed to set his face toward Washington?

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