

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1919

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WILSON AND ITALY.

Popular feeling in Italy runs high, and Premier Orlando will be the central figure of a great public demonstration. This is not at all surprising, but after the outburst there must come grave consideration of the whole situation. Italy cannot stand alone. To attempt to make any sort of compact with her late enemies would be folly. No one knows this better than the premier, who is extremely cautious in his allusions to the United States and offers no criticism as yet of Britain or France. There is too much at stake at the peace conference for any one power to go the length of severing relations with the others. Wilson counsels will presently prevail. It is worthy of note that British labor leaders have heartily endorsed the action of President Wilson, and that no criticism of his action has been offered by either the British or the French premier. Whatever any critic may say of him, none will deny that he has the courage of his convictions. The incident may delay the signing of the peace treaty, but it may be worth while. Italy demands "the fruits of victory." President Wilson asks for an agreement that will not carry the seeds of future trouble. No doubt there will be a compromise, to which Italy will eventually agree.

THE ORGANIZED FARMERS.

Of the strength of the farmers' movement in Canada and its political significance Canadian Finance recently said: "There is much significance in the rapid growth of the farmers' organizations not only in western Canada, but also in the east. The members of the United Farmers of Ontario now number 25,000; the Saskatchewan Grain Growers have 60,000 members; Alberta has 80,000 organized farmers; and Manitoba foots the list with 12,000. Practically 180,000 electors represented by a central body—the Canadian Council of Agriculture. Nothing succeeds like success, and the influence which the farmer M. P. have at Ottawa indicates the possibilities of the farmer movement. Perhaps the secret of the remarkable success of the movement is the fact that its leaders have always been chosen from the ranks of the practical farmers. No outside help has been asked for or accepted. As a result of this policy, such men as Crenar, Dunning, Maharg and Henders came to the front. Practical farmers with administrative ability, they were among the men who so steadfastly and courageously piloted the movement through the many trials which inevitably attend the formation of an organization of this kind. The movement has attained vast proportions and the future is pregnant with possibilities. Its strength will depend upon the ability of its leaders to restrain the extremists within its ranks from abusing that power to which they aspire."

Canadian Finance does not refer to the maritime provinces, but here, too, there has been a notable organization of farmers in the last two or three years, although as yet they have not exerted their strength in the political field. That they will do so may be taken for granted, and that they will sympathize largely with the aims and aspirations of the western farmers also goes without saying. The farmer is becoming a political force.

THE BOY AND GIRL PROBLEM

A correspondent of the Toronto Globe submits a series of striking statements to show the effects of the war in the increase of juvenile delinquency. We quote:—

1.—The whole world has seen a most alarming increase in the prevalence of juvenile delinquency during the war, due in no small measure to the unrest, discontent, disorganization and high nervous and adventurous tension at which so many have been living.

2.—In England the increase in three months alone was from 2,686 to 8,596 cases, in only seventeen of the largest towns.

3.—In France the increase was so clear that in 1916 "everyone was thinking of it with great disquiet," especially in the problem of prostitution.

4.—In Germany, Judge Hellwig of Berlin, in Die Grausboten of March 15, 1916, states that "the figures for the juveniles brought before the courts in the last months reached a height never known before."

5.—In Italy, though the reports of the Procurators-General do not give actual statistics, they indicate a general increase. In fact, so conscious has the nation become of this tendency that in July, 1917, it passed the War Orphan Law, adopting those whose legal guardians had been killed in the war, "that they might be removed from the danger of juvenile delinquency."

6.—In Russia, the report of the Washington Bureau in 1918 stated: "Asylums for delinquents are flooded with children; judges and officers of children's courts are overworked, and a startling increase in delinquency is uniformly admitted by judges and social workers, whose statements have come over to us."

7.—In Alberta during the close of 1916 the tide of juvenile delinquency for the province reached its maximum (an increase of 85 per cent.), from which up to 1918 it "had not receded to any appreciable extent."

8.—In Saskatchewan an increase is indicated, especially among the girls.

9.—In Manitoba there has been an abnormal increase in some centres, but only where the sale of liquor was allowed.

10.—In Nova Scotia the number of juvenile delinquents has steadily increased—109 cases in 1914; 194 in 1915; 203 in 1916; 286 in 1917.

11.—In the city of Montreal the cases dealt with in 1918 showed an increase of 17 per cent. over those in 1917, which latter exceeded the 1916 cases by 45 per cent.; that is, 1918 showed some 62 per cent. of an increase over 1916.

12.—In the Dominion of Canada the criminal statistics of 1918 showed an increase of 18.5 per cent. in juvenile offenders, and the report just issued reports 14 per cent. of an increase over the preceding year.

Of special interest in a discussion of this subject is a recent remark by Judge Charles Langelle of Quebec, where there has lately been something like an epidemic of crime. In sentencing a youth in his teens to three years in the penitentiary for robbery, the judge said:—"If only the parents would send their children to school and watch them better when they start going out into the world, we should not have this wave of criminality that is causing anxiety to society and degradation to a class of youngsters."

There are two ways in which parents can protect their children. One is to give them good home influences, keep them at school and Sunday school, and link them up with some healthy boys or girls' organization, and watch what they read. The other is to see that the community provides them with playgrounds properly conducted. Until parents get together for community work for the good of the boys and girls delinquency will continue. From one school in St. John quite recently three boys of twelve to fourteen years set out to see the world. They were tired of school and of home. They soon came back, as did two other boys from the same school not very long before. These five boys had no special interest in their home and school life. No doubt they were readers of the cheap literature so widely distributed. Was it their fault?

There is another consideration. In the province of Ontario they have found that they must change the course of study in the public schools, to make it more practical, and more interesting for the boys and girls of whom not more than ten per cent go on to the high school. In St. John we are wedded to a classical course which does not meet the real needs of the majority of the pupils. The school as well as the home and the playground must be made more interesting for the young people. Then the wave of juvenile crime will subside.

Speakers at the Y. M. C. I. banquet to visiting bowlers last evening emphasized two points in particular—the fine sportsmanship shown by winners and losers and the crying need for an athletic field in St. John. That the bowling journey was fought out on so high a sporting plane was a matter for congratulatory words to the players and on the subject of grounds there was expression of opinion that there should be united action to secure better conditions in this city of 50,000 people or more in the interests of our youths. It would be a good course to pursue.

Germany now wants to have a league of nations, a general disarmament, and no more wars to settle international disputes. This is excellent. It was not necessary, however, for Germany to draft a scheme. It is in safer hands, and Germany will be given an opportunity to accede to the proposals.

Moving day is almost upon us. The trouble with a good many people is that they cannot get a desirable flat at a rental within their means. St. John needs more houses. So does Moncton, and the difference appears to be that Moncton proposes to build them.

The policy of requiring abutters to pay a portion of the cost of street paving is the correct one and the city council should decline to consider any other. That policy should never have been abandoned.

Last night's banquet of surviving members of the First Contingent was a notable affair, and the tribute paid by the women of the city both gracious and deserved.

With two such visitors within a week as Coun. Peter Wright and Sir Robert Baden-Powell, St. John cannot regard itself as an isolated community.

People who spend part of the summer along the river above the Nerepis are asking if there is to be a Valley Railway train service this year—say a suburban service to Brown's Flat.

The present year should see the establishment in St. John of a juvenile court, with probation officer.

The boys want to play baseball and athletic games—but where?

The Bolsheviks continue to lose ground, both in Russia and Hungary.

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Ruth Roland at the Star tonight.

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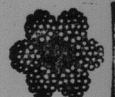
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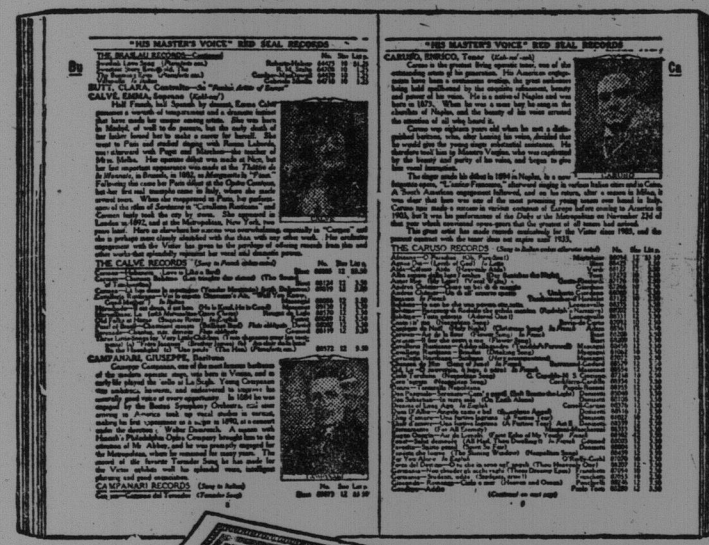
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