

# The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, APRIL 12, 1920.

## FRANCE'S ACTION.

Commenting upon the action of France in taking upon herself to occupy certain German cities as a preliminary to compelling that nation to observe and act up to the Treaty of Versailles, Mr. Frank H. Symonds, the well-known newspaper correspondent, says that it indicates an intention on the part of France to cut loose from her Allies and look after her own interests, and from the tone of his article it would seem as though he agreed with the course she is taking.

France, of course, is in a somewhat different position from Britain and Italy. We leave the United States out of the question, because their Senate has refused to ratify the treaty and therefore they have no ground for any further interference in European affairs. France is suffering from the failure of the Germans to deliver coal and other things necessary to build up the areas devastated by the latter during their occupation, which under the treaty Germany undertook to supply, and in other respects the Germans are not living up to their agreement to French security. Britain and Italy do not feel those things in the same way or to the same extent that France does, and they are not as emphatic in their insistence that the peace terms shall be carried out; in fact there is a feeling in Britain that the economic recovery of Germany demands that there shall be some modification of these terms. To this, of course, France cannot consent. She has too much at stake. The British view is that no movement such as France has made should be taken without strong provocation, and the occupation by the French of the neutral zone just because the German Government sent some troops there to suppress the "Red" disturbance does not constitute sufficient provocation. The British Government does not agree with the view taken in Paris that the German movement was dictated solely by a desire to find out just how far they might safely violate the treaty and get away with it.

To what lengths France may safely go in the policy she has embarked upon it is not wise to predict. At present she may be strong enough, with Belgium's help, to maintain the position she has taken up, but in course of time Germany will recover herself, and France may not find it so easy to keep her in check. Will British and American aid be forthcoming a second time if France finds herself attacked by her old enemy? Not if she insists on "going it alone" contrary to the advice of her late allies.

## THE EXTENSION OF THE VALLEY RAILWAY.

A Victoria County subscriber writes in reference to the article which appeared in these columns a few days ago on the subject of the proposed extension of the Valley Railway, that he is of the opinion that the road should not be built at all. If our correspondent will look at the article again, he will see that we said the road should not be built "under present conditions," and not that it should not be built at all. Some time or other the road must of course be carried to Grand Falls, or a considerable portion of its usefulness will be lost. But our friend, on consideration, will surely agree that the present is no time to embark in any further expensive railway undertakings, unless they are absolutely necessary, and the proposed extension of the Valley Line, while it would undoubtedly be a considerable convenience, cannot strictly be classed as absolutely necessary, in view of the fact that the C. P. R. already serves most of the district through which the new line would pass, and the Transcontinental is taking care of the through traffic. The cost of railway construction will no doubt come down in the not distant future, and when that happens, one of the first things to be done should be to complete this road through to Grand Falls, and not leave it nothing more than a cul-de-sac, as it is at present. But until that time comes, we think the completion of the road should wait its competition has stood over for its completion. A large section of the population, in fact, seems to have adopted a practice of meeting any advance in the cost of living by a demand for higher wages instead of a reduction of consumption. It is added that "it is this new spirit in the community which is doing as much as anything else to make things more and more expensive." While the apparently greater cost of things is due to the great issues of paper money, which cannot be changed into gold, so that, compared with the gold currencies of 20 shillings, the £1 currency note has a purchasing power of around 16 shillings, the increase goes far beyond the amount of the depreciation in the worth of current money; and strong influences will be exerted to prevent action to be worked otherwise than

## THE PROBLEM OF MARRIAGE.

That the problem of "How to be happy though married" is not always satisfactorily solved by those who essay it is only too apparent from the records of the divorce and other courts, not only in this but other countries as well. Those who have succeeded in finding the right solution will probably say that there is no particular difficulty about it; that it is chiefly a matter of mutual consideration with a large amount of "give and take" thrown in; while others who do not succeed, will declare that the problem is well-nigh insoluble. And

it is not a matter in which advice from outside is either very often asked for, or very readily proffered. Each party must make its own solution. With the view of helping young people who may contemplate entering the Holy Estate, an English clergyman, the Vicar of Mansfield, suggests that classes should be formed, under the direction of the clergy, at which instruction would be given to courting couples as to how to comport themselves towards one another, both before and after marriage. He suggests a course of lessons in comradeship, the exercise of tact, self-sacrifice, hygiene, the need for common interests, respect for each other and vocation for marriage. This appears to be quite a broad curriculum, and it is encouraging to find a man who is willing to undertake the task of helping candidates to secure, at least, a pass degree in conjugal bliss.

As to how far lectures upon the subjects named would solve the problem of unhappy unions it is not easy to say. The great trouble is that couples who do not live happily together are the last to believe that they have any faults or failings, and even the bravest man or woman friend shrinks from making any suggestion to either of the unfortunate ones that might remedy matters. The Vicar of Mansfield's scheme is novel, but whether it will meet with any measure of success one would hardly venture to predict.

## THE FAILURE TO CONTROL PRICES.

That though an anti-profiteering law has been on the statute book of the United Kingdom for six months, it has failed to reduce prices, is the declaration of a recent article in the London Times, which proceeds to say that at no time during the war or since the armistice has the cost of living been higher than it is today; and, moreover, the end of the upward movement does not seem to be in sight. This remark does not apply to foodstuffs alone. Some of these are still under war control. A vote of £45,000,000 is to be for the purpose of providing the bakers with flour at a price low enough to enable the customer to get actually dear but relatively cheap bread. But wages and other expenses increase and the standard price of the standard loaf has been advanced. Advances just announced in the price of tobacco, cigarettes and sewing cotton it is declared, find the public angry but helpless. In the case of tobacco goods, the big companies control retail but the price, apparently, is kept at a figure low enough to prevent smaller manufacturers from obtaining a better foothold in the market. Apparently the public would not be better off if the combines were put out of the trade. The pool cotton industry has been investigated. It is declared to be a virtual monopoly of J. & P. Coats, Limited. This concern has against it a charge that it refuses to accept or cut down orders for its products when it appears the purchaser desires them for speculative purposes or for export, and also requires dealers which it supplies to take the same margin of profit on any competing manufacturer's goods sold as they are contracted to get on the Coats article. The report which sets this out, however, adds that had not the Coats company taken serious commercial risks in a business way the price of a reel of cotton to the consumer would be higher than it is today. One rival manufacturer is quoted as saying that he could not, at current prices of raw material, sell his product at the Coats' price. So, though the rate of profit in the manufacturing process was high, without the Coats factor the price to the buyer of the thread would be higher than it is now. The virtual monopoly may not be a cause of loss to the general public. The case is not without parallel outside of the United Kingdom. When the facts concerning industry are disclosed the investigator may find himself where, practically, he feels he can do nothing. As evidence of the changed way of looking at the situation, the Times writer says that before the war a small increase in tobacco prices led to a fall in consumption; but the public now has become so familiar with advances that an addition to the cost of an article does not materially affect the demand. A large section of the population, in fact, seems to have adopted a practice of meeting any advance in the cost of living by a demand for higher wages instead of a reduction of consumption. It is added that "it is this new spirit in the community which is doing as much as anything else to make things more and more expensive." While the apparently greater cost of things is due to the great issues of paper money, which cannot be changed into gold, so that, compared with the gold currencies of 20 shillings, the £1 currency note has a purchasing power of around 16 shillings, the increase goes far beyond the amount of the depreciation in the worth of current money; and strong influences will be exerted to prevent action to be worked otherwise than

cost of production. The next harvest in the northern hemisphere may give a start to the lowering process in prices; but it is likely to be a long time before the change to a more profitable order will be markedly advanced. Commissions and boards and laws made in a hurry are not likely to be a factor.

## EXCHANGE IN FICTION.

Fiction readers with a certain desire for knowledge of monetary values of foreign coins as expressed in terms of United States currency used to have a comparatively easy time of it in translating the pounds and guineas and shillings of English fiction, and the francs and sous of French novels and short stories into what they considered to be their approximate equivalents in American dollars and cents. Exchange rates never entered into these calculations, for the reason that the average novel reader paid little or no attention. His mental processes in these monetary translations were, as the New York Sun says, of the simplest and most direct.

When he read that the Duchess of Tooting had paid £10,000 for a pearl necklace he would work it out: "Well, a pound is five dollars, and that makes \$50,000. Seems neckless." He would let it go at that, satisfied that the Duchess was by way of being very generous to herself. When he read of one of those delectable dinners in Thackeray in which the host paid a guinea for a pineapple from Mason & Fortnum's (Thackeray was a great press agent for that firm of caterers), he would approximate the twenty-one shillings into five dollars, wondering what kind of a "pine" was so much more costly than one he bought in Washington Market for a quarter.

There was one problem of this kind this type of novel reader never worked out, however. This was to find the American equivalent of the shillings left to the unworthy son in his father's will. The reader instantly knew that a man who in the familiar phrase was "cut out of a shilling" was no more worth bothering about than was his meagre inheritance.

In French fiction sum of money expressed in francs were always easy to put into American money on the basis of twenty cents to the franc. But French sums, particularly in Balzac, might take on something of the legendary character the distances given in astronomy always were to the layman. Out of this aspect of French fiction only one thing remained to the novel reader, and that was wondering how anybody, even a Frenchman, would have the courage to offer a waiter or concierge a tip of a "few sous".

Nowadays the reader of fiction has his troubles. He picks up odd bits of information in his daily newspaper reading. And, with foreign exchange rates getting on the front page and the numerous anecdotes presented concerning the depreciated purchasing value of the dollar, he naturally becomes involved in the maze of mental arithmetic. How can anybody figure out offhand and in his head the income of the Duke of Broadstairs, given as £20,000, when he remembers reading that the rate of foreign exchange fixed by the Government from March 1 to 15 was "sterling at \$3.40 to the pound" and recalls that he has read of a dollar being worth 43 cents? As far as the novel reader is concerned, the Duke of Broadstairs' income must remain a profound mystery except as a literary term. Offhand translations "from the French" are equally impossible. The phrase "francs at 14.25 to the dollar" leads the novice into a world of mystery. He hopes it means well; but its profundity is quite beyond his easy old time mental arithmetic.

The Globe asks if the Lieutenant-Governor is the adviser of the Government because he recommended a bill relating to the use of ground limestone "to the favorable consideration of the House." The Globe is evidently not familiar with parliamentary procedure, or it would know that no bill which involves the expenditure of public money can be entertained by the House at all unless it has first been recommended by the Lieutenant-Governor. The announcement to which the Globe refers is a familiar one at every session, but is not usually noticed by the Official Reporter.

## IN THE EDITOR'S MAIL

Perry's Point, April 9th, 1920.  
Editor Standard:  
Dear Sir:—I read in your issue of today an interview with a resident of Oak Point of a dangerous piece of road near that place.  
I consider the people of Oak Point as lucky if that is the only dangerous piece of road they have to contend with. We of Kingston parish, and Perry's Point, especially at this time of year, have to drive over a road from Perry's Point to Kingston, the condition of which Mr. H. V. Dickson speaks of the other day in the Legislature, and then the road from Perry's Point to Norton Parish line (leading to the road, from the de Hampton). This road, from the de Hampton, is far worse than anything they have to contend with. There is about three miles of it. There are not more than half a dozen places in that distance that two cars can pass, and stretches half a mile in length that they cannot pass at all and even teams have a hard time to get by.

It was on this road, a quarter of a mile above Perry's Point that the Government bridge inspector, Mr. Maggs, was killed when his car went over the bank last summer. And it is

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

I had a fierce dream last night, dreaming all I had on was a red blanket, and I dreamed I was out in the street taking a walk in it and I looked around and who was waking rite in back of me but Mary Watkins and Lorester Mincer, me thinking, G, I hope nothing happens to this blanket.

And suddenly all of a sudden a fierce wind started to blow in every direction at once, and the more I tried to hold the blanket on the more it kept blowing off, me thinking, Holy smoke, this is fierce! And I sed, We dont you 2 girls work sunwarve elts, this is no place for 2 girls.

Why dont it sed Mary Watkins, and Lorester Mincer sed, You tend to your own blintas and we'll tend to ours. And I keep on wawking, thinking, G wix, they awt to have sent enuff to realise I got a blanket on.

Wich jest then 2 men came up with big badges on their chests, one saying, Heers one now, and the other one saying, Lets have a look at that blanket, young fello.

Who sed so? I sed, and the first man sed, We sed so, we're blanket inspectors, dont you see our badges. And they looked at the blanket and the first man sed, Jest as I thawt, it belongs to the government, and the 2nd man sed, Take it off, young fello.

And Mary Watkins and Lorester Mincer was still standing back there looking, and the 2 men grabed a hold of the blanket and started to pull, and I yelled like everything and wook up just then pop looked in my room in his pidjammers, saying, Wats all the hollering about?

Was I hollering? I sed, and pop sed, Ill say you were.

And I went to sleep agen and dreamed I was a angel.

wonderful that there have not been more killed than him. Several cars have gone over but their occupants have miraculously escaped.

After Mr. Maggs' accident Mr. Carter said the road would be fixed (a case of looking the barn after the horse was stolen). What was done? A crew of about ten or a dozen men went along and cut the trees on each side of the road, but nothing was done whatever to the road itself. And now it is far more dangerous driving after night than ever, as one cannot see where the road is and the tree stumps on the lower side were left about three feet high, like pickets, and would mean almost sure death for horse and man.

If the bridge were rebuilt and the road put in proper shape, it would not only be a great convenience to the surrounding country, but would, I feel sure, be used by most tourists as the main highway from St. John to Sussex and points beyond, as it would be no longer than the road now used via Naurigawak but would be a far prettier drive along the river where in summer the marshes and trees must look beautiful to strangers.

A road on the Iron Isle, on which about two teams a week travel, was put in good shape, in fact a large sum of money was spent on it, because it was a pretty drive for tourists, and

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