

Some Canadian Political Topics

Canada's Burden of Debt—Soldiers' Unemployment Fund—Admiral Jellicoe's Mission—Saving the World

Mr Drury Must Not Allow It.

(Toronto Mail.) Of the members of the present Ontario Government only one ever sat in the Legislative Assembly, and he only for two sessions. Their supporters in the House are likewise all new men. This lack of political experience has its drawbacks, but it has also some advantages. One advantage is that it tends to make older Parliamentary hands in the House less aggressive towards the Government than they would otherwise be. Members who are familiar with the public business of the Province and with the procedure of the House ought to be considerate of Ministers who are in the "freshman" stage of their course in politics. Ordinarily therefore we should expect less captious criticism of the present Government than that to which its predecessors were constantly exposed. Of course, if it should turn out that the Government is not so artless as it is assumed to be, its opponents will not be likely to spare it.

Soldiers' Unemployment Fund.

(Toronto Mail.) Announcement by the Dominion Cabinet of plans for the expenditure of the soldiers' unemployment fund of \$40,000,000 will be awaited with much interest. Parliament appropriated this large extra sum at the close of the session, and the Government had the duty of drawing up a policy governing the distribution. It must be confessed that, so far, unemployment in Canada this winter is confined chiefly to illers or to outdoor workers, or those in the building trade. Certain classes of clerical help seem rather over-populated. Taken as a whole, Canada is suffering less from unemployment problems now than in any similar period, except in 1917 and 1918. Many industries are crying for more help, and it is not forthcoming. Of course, in many cities and towns there are crippled veterans who are finding the task of re-fitting themselves into civil life very trying. If any ex-soldier is involuntarily idle through physical handicap, he is entitled to very generous assistance from the fund.

A Rumour.

The Montreal Herald publishes an unofficial despatch from Ottawa predicting the early retirement of Sir Robert Borden to a post in connection with the League of Nations. The wish, we presume, is still father to the thought.

Our Heavy Burden.

(Quebec Chronicle.) According to calculations made by the Wall Street Journal, a well-known American financial publication, Canada's annual interest bill, including payments on the last Victory Loan, will be at least \$100,000,000. This, it can be seen, presumes a national debt of about \$2,400,000,000 compared with the previously reported net total of \$1,750,000,000. It cannot be said, however, that the full amount of the Victory Loan \$650,000,000, is a new debt since about half of it had already been borrowed from the banks in temporary loans. The new borrowing, therefore, should bring our total national debt to \$2,100,000,000, the annual interest burden on which may amount to \$120,000,000.

When we think that this sum represented the total national expenditure only a few years ago, such a tremendous expansion of Canada's budget might almost be described as dizzying. As long as prices remain inflated to three times their normal level it may be easy enough for the Dominion to carry the burden, but it will not shrink when deflation eventually comes.

Supposing prices to recede to one-half their present levels, we shall have to bear just twice as heavy a load of Federal taxation as is now the case. Even if it be granted that production in Canada has been at record heights and that our export trade has created much new per capita wealth, it remains true that this is a country of only eight million people, whose production in most lines is far too large for domestic needs.

In this connection the Toronto Mail and Empire forcibly asserts that those who fear reaction from the inflation apparently may as well talk to the sphinx as to the throngs of extravagant shoppers, living in a fool's paradise. "The Minister of Finance," it concludes, "will shortly have to consider the framing of a new budget. He will have to calculate revenues and expenditures. Certainly the revenues of 1919-20 cannot begin to match revenue requirements for 1920-21. The statesmanlike way is to insist on rigid economy, to refuse to undertake large fresh capital commitments, unless immediate returns are in sight, and to inaugurate an attempt at deflation. The sooner Canada begins to set her house in order after the inflation, the better she will be prepared for the loss of reaction if and when it comes."

Admiral Jellicoe's Mission.

(Quebec Chronicle.) In all his public utterances since coming to Canada, Admiral Jellicoe has been careful to emphasize that he is here purely in an advisory capacity and at the Dominion Government's request. This feature of the distinguished navalist's visit is one that should not escape the attention of students of constitutional progress. For if a very luminous article from the pen of Mr. John W. Diefenbaker in the Manitoba Free Press be correct, the visit of Admiral Jellicoe and his character are very intimately related to a clash of opinion between the heads of the Admiralty and the political representatives of the Dominion in which the assertion of self-governing rights on the part of the latter figured to no small extent.

To Save The World. (Montreal Gazette.) The descent to Hades is easy; and

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modern civilization is showing today with what fatal facility it can retrogress and express the savage of the Prime. It has been said that the roadiness with which men, released from city conventions, shed their white collars, is a proof of innate savagery. The war showed that civilization is only a veneer, otherwise the horrors that accompanied the war would have been impossible. War itself is savagery, and those who glorify it, in school books and history have much to answer for. As an exchange well says, the war let loose the diabolical passions which civilization would fain restrain; and now that it is over effort is made to gather up the ravelled threads of life and re-begin, with new warp and woof the mission of a changed world. There has been infinite talk of reconstruction; but little of a practical nature has been done.

The subject is vast. With every good intention and the most formidable energy, the mirage will not disappear but the sooner we have reconstruction in the countries most immediately affected by the war, the sooner will the masses which threaten the subversion of authority, over wide areas, settle down to orderly life and living.

OBITUARY

S. Bushy Matthews. Special to The Standard. Moncton, Dec. 5.—S. Bushy Matthews, a well known employe of the C. N. R. shops died at his home here this morning after an illness of two months. He was one of the best known C. N. R. mechanics in the service and had been employed in the Moncton shops thirty years or more. Deceased, who was sixty-three years of age, was a son of the late W. G. Matthews of this city, and a brother of the late Geo. C. Matthews. Two sons, one of whom is Ora C. Matthews of the C. N. R. Mail service; Frank of Western Canada, and one daughter besides his second wife, survive. He was brother of J. J. Matthews, South Devon, York county; Aubry Matthews locomotive engineer, Campbellton, and William Matthews, locomotive engineer, Longville, all in employ of the C. N. R. Mrs. (Alderman) S. E. Forbes and Mrs. J. B. Bedford, Moncton, are sisters. Deceased was a prominent member of the Knights of Pythias.

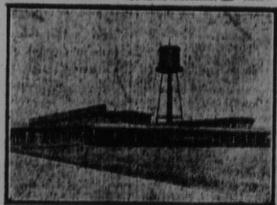
Patrick Kerwin.

Special to The Standard. Moncton, Dec. 5.—The death of Patrick Kerwin at the age of eighty years, occurred last night at the home of his son, Michael, of the C. N. R. here. James Kerwin, of Amherst, N. B., and Timothy, of Irishtown, are also surviving sons. One daughter, Agnes, resides in Sussex.

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The Overture. "Oh, Jack, have you seen father?" "Yes; I have come straight here from his office." "And did he give his consent?" "I couldn't quite make out. He seemed disinclined to commit himself definitely." "Why, what did he say?" "He didn't say anything at all." "Did you ask him?" "I said, 'sir, I wish to marry your daughter. Have I your consent?' He turned, and looked at me a minute. Then he began to grow red in the face, and then he grabbed me and threw me over the banisters, and before I could ask him again he had slammed the door and lock it; but he didn't say anything either way."