

## The St. John Standard.

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ST. JOHN, N. B. MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1920.

## THE LUXURY TAX.

The announcement from Ottawa that the Government has decided to discontinue, except in a few specified instances, the imposition of the tax on so-called luxuries, will be welcome news to most people, to the "lions suffering" merchants doubly welcome. To the latter class the tax has undoubtedly been a considerable nuisance, for the simple reason that one-half the time the assistants have not known where they were at in regard to it. The classification of many commodities, particularly in the case of dry goods, was very subtle to say the least, and just what duty should be charged was frequently difficult to ascertain. However, all trouble in this respect will now cease, and the tax will depart unwept, unhonored and unnamed.

But from the standpoint of commodities, it does not follow that the buying public is altogether out of the wood. The Government needs the money that the tax has brought in; and though the tax in its late form may cease to exist, there is no saying that it will not reappear in some other form. It may be that the Government will adopt the plan suggested by the merchants, and make the manufacturer or the wholesaler pay it, leaving them to add the amount they have thus been taxed upon to pay, on the cost to the retail merchants, who in turn will calculate their percentage of profit on the cost of the goods, plus the tax. In any event, the purchasing public may rest assured that however it is done, they are the class who will have to pay.

Probably the only people who will not regard the decision with complacency will be those who have just lately purchased expensive furs or jewelry or what not, upon which they have had to pay an additional heavy impost for tax duty. The thought that had they waited a week or two longer they could have avoided payment, will be anything but consoling. They will at any rate have the satisfactory feeling that they helped to swell the revenue, which badly needed the funds.

**A REDUCTION IN RAILWAY RATES.**

In a few days, one-half of the twenty per cent. increase which took place in passenger railway fares three months ago, will be taken off; the remaining ten per cent. continuing until the end of March. Unfortunately, the same ratio of reduction does not apply to freight rates, which will be lessened to the extent of five per cent. only. The additional freight rates are pressing heavily upon business, and regret will be felt that no greater reduction than five per cent. is to be expected. The railway executives will not welcome the change, but the thing for them to do is to find some method of reducing their operating costs.

The statistics as to increased operating ratios are enormous, in fact a contemporary describes them as "apocalyptic." The operating ratio of the National Railways in the first six months of 1920 was about 116 per cent. This is accounted for mainly by an average railway wage of \$2,000 a year, compared with \$795 in pre-war days. There is a limit to tonnage expansion under exorbitant rates. The railway management had no other recourse in war time circumstances, than to make the best of a bad condition, and seek to pass on increased expenses. But if the high rates impede business, and hamper development, then what is to be done? The National Railways will have another deficit, for which the Dominion Treasury will have to pay, but must it be taken for granted that expenses cannot be reduced, because the people as a whole have to pay whatever deficit there is? Are wage schedules to be immutable, except in an upward direction? Canada has a vitally important national question in this, which far-sighted executives know cannot be postponed indefinitely.

## SWEATING THE CANADIAN DOLLAR.

Though tens of millions of bushels of Canadian wheat have been shipped into the United States within the last month or so, exchange continues to go against Canada. The Canadian dollar has gone down two cents more in the United States, and the discount is now 17 1/2 per cent. Our neighbors are getting rid of their own surplus of merchandise by dumping goods on the market at slaughter prices. By buying their cheapened goods we cheapen our money. The way to get 17 cents more on our depreciated dollar is to resist the temptation to buy American goods and to stand by our own producers, the men of enterprise and the wage-earners of Canada. But to the people who are agitating for free trade a premium on the American dollar is a boon, and a duty on the American product is a bane. This country has more need of protection than most other

countries. It lives next door to a nation whose vast industrial system sometimes outruns the capacity of its markets. At such times recourse is had to dumping, and there is no place so convenient for dumping as this Dominion with its three thousand miles of frontage on United States border line.

As the Mail and Empire points out, whenever the slaughter-price it comes on in the United States this country has to bear the brunt of it. We ought to have a tariff devised to meet this danger to our industries. We have anti-dumping duties, but against such a tide as the selling agencies of the United States turn on this market when their other markets are clogged no ordinary tariff will avail, unless our own people show that they think more of their country than they do of bargains that are flung on the market for the relief of another country. When Germany gets her after-the-war stride, the importing of goods from that quarter will swell the import side of our account and increase the adverse balance against us. There never was a time when it was more important that Canada's tariff should be efficient for the protection of Canadian workers. We have enough to do as it is to prevent the smashing of our industries and the smashing of our dollar without descending any farther towards free trade.

## CONGRESS VS. PARLIAMENT.

The anomaly under which a defeated political party in the United States is permitted to remain in power for four months after an election, is beginning to chafe even the citizens of that country. What is bringing the matter to a head is the effort of Secretary of the Navy Daniels, backed by the Wilson Cabinet, and a Democratic Congress, to forest an enormous naval appropriation upon the republic at a time when the countries of the world, through the League of Nations, are aiming for disarmament. Why, the question is asked, should a defeated administration composed of Cabinet ministers who are not even elected, who have no seat in Congress and who are responsible to no one but President Wilson, force upon the nation such a vital and far-reaching program?

The New York Nation is strongly advocating that the present Congressional plan be abolished and be replaced by a Parliamentary system fashioned after the British model. This despite the fact that the Nation is almost anti-British in its tone at the present time. The New York World has also come out squarely for the Parliamentary system as against the Congressional. It says "every intelligent American citizen knows that the machinery of the Government is breaking down. He knows that public confidence in the Government is at the lowest ebb." The World concludes as follows:

"The cold, inexorable fact is that the Congressional system is no longer adapted to the political necessities of a nation of 105,000,000 people. The failure of Government is largely the failure of that system, and until the legislative machinery is modified, the affairs of Government are bound to go from bad to worse, no matter what party is in power or what its policies or promises may be."

Warren G. Harding was elected president by an overwhelming majority; a Republican Congress was returned to power to support him. Yet four months must elapse before he can take his place in the White House and the new party take control of the reins of government. Meanwhile a defeated party and a Congress evidently out of touch with public sentiment is legislating for the republic.

**MR. LINDSAY CRAWFORD'S VIEW.**

The current issue of Mr. Lindsay Crawford's Journal, The Statesman, has this to say:

"There are aspects of the enforcement of prohibition in Ontario and elsewhere, that must appeal to the sane person who is not swayed by bigotry or passion. The drinking habits of the people are, in some significant respects, worse than formerly. More whiskey is being consumed by young people and more spirits, of a type that destroy the individual, morally and physically, are being consumed. If the end of prohibition is to stamp out intemperance, that end has not been attained. Experience must in time convince the most ardent temperance reformer that temperance is not to be found in prohibition that destroys the chief barrier to intemperance. Government control of sales and the rigid enforcement of the law against drunkards will in time be found to be more conducive to temperate habits than a system that deprives the law of the moral support of a large section of the community, and that leads clericalism to forsake their sacred calling for the pursuit of the smuggler and bootlegger."

Mr. Crawford may be a wild enthusiast on the Irish question, but he appears to be perfectly sane on some other matters.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

**Latest Comic Paper.**  
 Farmers' Sun views with alarm the prospect of a drop in farm products, and with indignation the fact that the price of other commodities don't fall fast enough. Farmers' Sun deserves honorable mention as a comic tri-weekly.—Hamilton Herald.

**Disturbance.**  
 Lindsay Crawford, the chief Canadian spokesman of the Self-Determination for Ireland League, proposes to address meetings in Edmonton and Calgary early in the New Year. Wherever he and his associates have gone in the pursuance of their mission throughout the Dominion, they have been responsible for reviving religious and racial prejudice, without in any way helping towards giving a better understanding of the Irish problem or in aiding its solution. We have enough purely Canadian troubles of our own without throwing the Irish discussion into our communities as a further source of discord. The question has to be settled in the British Isles, and the more outsiders mix up in it the worse the situation must become. In Eastern Canada efforts have been made to stop Mr. Crawford's meetings, but the unwelcome of this is generally recognized. Real friends of Ireland will, however, do nothing towards encouraging the extension of his campaign in this direction.

## A BIT OF VERSE

## THE UNBROKEN LINE.

We who have trod the borderlands of death,  
 Where courage high walks hand in hand with fear,  
 Shall not be hearken what the Spirit saith:  
 "All ye were brothers there, be brothers here!"

We who have struggled through the baffling night,  
 Where men were men and every man divine,  
 While round us brave hearts perished for the right  
 By chafed shell-holes stained with life's rich wine.

Let us not lose the exalted love which came  
 From comradeship with danger and the joy  
 Of strong souls kindled into living flame  
 By one supreme desire, one high aim.

Let us draw closer in these narrower years,  
 Before us still the eternal visions  
 We who outmastered death and all its fears  
 Are one great army still, living and dead.

—CANON SCOTT.  
 Quebec, Christmas, 1920.

## THE LAUGH LINE

**Real Christmas Spirit.**  
 Cultivation of the proper Christmas shopper Attitude:  
 To smile amid the clangor in sweet similitude of Gratitude.

**To Be Relied On.**  
 "Hiram," said Mrs. Cornwell, "Do you think that political speaker will make an effort to reduce the high cost of living?"  
 "You mean the one who stopped here for dinner?"  
 "Yes."

**Slow Work.**  
 Guide—"This wonderful redwood tree has taken centuries to grow to its present size."  
 Tourist—"No wonder! It's on a government reservation."—Cartoons Magazine.

**Stoney-Hearted Girl.**  
 "Elsie changed her hair to red in spite of her fiancé's pleading not to do so." "How could she so disregard a loved one's dying request?"—San Francisco Chronicle.

**Cheaper.**  
 "Fancy your getting married again, Mrs. Smale. I hope you have done wisely."  
 "Yes, mum; I reckon. Yew see, I 'ave so much washing to take 'ome now, if I 'adn't got 'e I should have been forced to buy a donkey, sure 'nough."—London Tailor.

**Mean.**  
 "Ma, teacher's awful mean."  
 "Hush, my son, you musn't say that."  
 "Well, she is! What do you think? She borrowed my knife to sharpen a pencil to give me a bad mark."—Boston Transcript.

## Depends on Conditions.

"Politics costs nothing," commented the ready-made philosopher "Did you ever," rejoined the habitual contradicter, "try to get a little politeness out of a haughty head-writer with a 25-cent tip?"—Washington Star.

**The Subtle Insult.**  
 "The young bootblacks, whose hands are close together on Tremont street, quarrelled the other day," said a clever paragraph in Wren's Weekly. "I'll get even with that guy yet," vowed the smaller of the two. "Gee! to fight him, are yer, Jimmie?" he was asked.  
 "Now," said Jimmie, "but when he gets two politins a gent, I'm goin' to say that gent some o' the things off the chair, 'Shine, sir? Shine?'—Arms (Seattle).

**His Opinion.**  
 "Look here, Uncle Riley," triumphantly called the proprietor of the Right Place store in Paducah, as he finished looking over a painting, which read: "Selling out at cost." "What d'ye think of that?"  
 "Another he nailed," cracked old Riley Remaker. "Ugh! best best!"—Judge.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PA'Z

Last Saturday nite I was laying on the setting room floor feeling thankful I didn't half to do any setting, and pop sed, "We sleep too much, that's what the matter with the human race."

My goodness, you're not mad at the hole race, are you? sed ma, and pop sed, I've bin reading a few things that Edison has to say about oversleeping, and he's rite. We waste half our life in bed and there's no excuse for it. Edison only sleeps about 4 hours a day and look at the wonderful things he does.

It he's that wonderful with only 4 hours sleep just think how wonderful he would be if he slept his full 8 hours, sed ma.

That's a woman's argument, sed pop, I bever ill try it myself, I don't say I could get along on 4 hours sleep, but I bet I could on 6.

G, ill try it with you, pop, lets begin tonight, I sed, and pop sed, Well I wasn't counting on beginning immediately, but its never too early to start a good thing, suppose you start with 7 hours sleep and ill start with 6 and well take a wawk brite and early before breakfast tomorrow. You go to bed at 9 and im pretty tired, ill be in bed by 10.

Hee hee, sed ma.

Laff on, sed pop.

With she did, and I went to bed at 9 o'clock and wen I wook up I herd the setting room clock striking 4, begin just 5 hours and I quick jumped out of bed and went down stairs in my pajamas to see if pop was awake yet. Wich he was, and I sed, Hay pop, hay pop. Wich about the 10th time I sed it pop opened one eye saying, Hay?

Its 4 o'clock, I sed, And pop opened his other eye, saying, Wat of it? Who sed it wasn't?

7 hours for me and 6 for you, aint you going to get up and take a wawk like Edison? I sed.

Go back to bed, its dark as pitch, sed pop, and ma opened one eye and sed, Hee hee, and pop shut both eyes and went back to sleep again, and I went back to bed and didn't get up till 9 o'clock, making 12 hours for me, and pop didn't get up till 11, making 13 for him.

## PILES

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