

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH

It is a six-page paper and is published every Wednesday and Saturday at \$1.00 a year, in advance, by THE TELEGRAPH PUBLISHING COMPANY of Saint John, a company incorporated by act of the legislature of New Brunswick. THOMAS J. WATSON, Business Manager; JAMES L. BARTY, Editor.

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This paper has the largest circulation in the Maritime Provinces.

Semi-Weekly Telegraph.

ST. JOHN, N. B., JANUARY 4, 1900.

A SUGGESTIVE INCIDENT.

The manner in which every matter in connection with the Canadian contingent is turned to political account by the opposition, has been very well demonstrated of late by Mr. Clarke Wallace. With such men it is not a question how they can assist the government to discharge an important and laudable duty, but rather what they can do to occasion embarrassment and annoyance. It does not require a high order of ability to succeed in such tactics, although it is only fair to say that the great body of the Conservative party give no countenance to Mr. Clarke Wallace's methods at any time, and probably have a proper appreciation of the difficulties with which the minister of militia has to contend in the present crisis.

Mr. Wallace, like the rest of us, has been anxious for news from the Canadian contingent at the front. He knew the desire for information was general, and that it would be a great service to the friends of our brave boys to learn frequently of their whereabouts and movements. Here then, was a fine chance to have a fling at the government, so he set down and wrote a long telegram to the minister of militia, in which he drew a pathetic picture of the hearths and homes that were saddened by the death of news from South Africa, and called upon him to immediately arrange for a daily cablegram from Colonel Otter. With extreme thoughtfulness, Mr. Wallace handed a copy of this communication to the press on the same day that he sent it to Dr. Borden.

The minister of militia telegraphed a reply to Mr. Wallace, reminding him of the censorship and of the fact that quite as much was cabled from South Africa respecting the Canadians as any of the British regiments. At the same time he assured Mr. Wallace that he had been earnestly endeavoring to get word frequently from Colonel Otter, but without success. Incidentally he twitted Mr. Wallace with a stronger desire to create political capital than to get information, and to this there came a saucy rejoinder from the member from West York. He accused the minister of negligence and bad manners, to which Dr. Borden replied that he did not regard Mr. Wallace as a competent judge of either of these matters, and where the exchange of telegrams seems to have stopped for the present, Mr. Wallace may think he has played a commendable part; but most people, we apprehend, will regard his action as being in very bad taste.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

When Alexander Mackenzie passed away the Conservatives canonized him; but while he lived he was the subject of their most malignant abuse. This fact may not only be a comfort to some of the Liberals who are now being assailed with much unwarranted bitterness, but it ought to be an instructive object lesson to the people at large. When were the Tories sincere in their treatment of Mr. Mackenzie—when vilifying him, or praising him? It is impossible that they could have meant all they said in 1875 against him, as well as all they said to his honor in 1890. If he was a second-rate man in 1875, he could not fairly be ranked as a saint when in opposition.

The truth is that Mackenzie was neither a better nor a worse man in 1875 than in 1890. The only difference was that at

the latter period he had ceased to hold the reins of power. That, however, made an important difference to the Tories, who felt in 1875, as they feel today, that they have a sort of divine right to rule the country. When Alexander Mackenzie stood in their way he was classified as a rascal, and treated accordingly, just as they are treating the men who administer our affairs at Ottawa today. It is with the Tory leaders a matter of fixed policy to impugn the motives, question the integrity, and misrepresent the actions of all who are opposed to them. Then when some of the men whom they have slandered die the hypocrisy of the whole business comes out.

It may not be amiss to recall some of the things that were said by the Conservative press against Mackenzie in the seventies, lest it might be thought that we have been over-stating the case. Here are some gems from the Toronto Mail:

"No man ever hunted for, struggled for, intrigued for office more persistently than Mr. Mackenzie."
 "His perversion of facts is notorious. Yet in the face of a record for mendacity which we are free to say is referred to in amazement by scores of the members of the house of commons, who before they knew him well thought him honest and trustworthy, Mr. Mackenzie still tries to trade upon his surface Puritanism."
 "His speech stamps him as a man capable of descending to the most despicable means to retain his hold on office and its emoluments."

"His extra parliamentary utterances are the emanations of the narrow intelligence of a clumsy demagogue."

"Mr. Mackenzie has proved both to be incapable and corrupt, and his inept, extravagant, unscrupulous and hypocritical reign is at end."

Much more could be quoted to show the virulent nature of the criticism to which Mr. Mackenzie was exposed from day to day, and yet when he had ceased to be an active opponent the same journal was most outspoken in its references to his clean and useful life—a model to modern day Liberals.

As was recently remarked by the Montreal Witness, the tactics adopted by Conservative politicians against Canadian ministers of the crown would, if attempted in England, be sufficient to drive the offenders from public life. It ought to be so here. The scale of intelligence is quite as high in Canada as in England, and in the treatment of responsible ministers we ought to approach to the English standard. It is not complimentary to the judgment and morality of our people that such specious and mendacious appeals should be addressed to them. But there is probably little hope of improvement in this regard until the men who employ such tactics are made to feel that they are offending against popular good taste. That lesson will be taught them when the people show their disapprobation of mere gossip and unsupported allegations; when the member of parliament who attacks the honor or integrity of a minister is compelled to either make good his statement or retire. The case is hopeless while elections are content to recognize politics as a game, and slander as an unavoidable element therein.

"PEACE WITH HONOR."

If the shade of Lord Beaconsfield could have been present at the meeting of the St. John common council Wednesday he would have been considerably astonished to learn that his famous phrase, "peace with honor," which he used after his return from the Congress of Berlin, was regarded by some of the members of our civic parliament as indicating, in diplomatic language, "that a nation having suffered reverses may without loss of dignity accept the terms of its opponent."

The gentleman who is understood to be responsible for this interpretation of the term, "peace with honor," is Alderman Millidge, who was a barrister of ten years' standing when the Congress of Berlin was held, and who, therefore, should know better than to twist the meaning of Lord Beaconsfield's words in such a fashion. "Peace with honor," according to Lord Beaconsfield, meant the triumph of British arms and diplomacy; "peace with honor," according to Ald. Millidge, means British disgrace and defeat. It would seem from this that a few lessons in British history would not be without benefit to some members of the St. John common council.

Lord Beaconsfield, in the latter part of his life, was the god of the British Tories; he is their god still, although he has been dead for almost twenty years, his favorite fable, the primrose, is an object of Tory adoration, and Primrose leagues exist in all parts of the United Kingdom, while Primrose Dames have become a great power in all political contests in England. One of the things which made Lord Beaconsfield so much admired by the Tories was his conduct prior to and at the Berlin Congress, from which he brought, to use his own words, "peace with honor." In February, 1878, Turkey, after a war that had lasted about a year, lay prostrate at the feet of Russia. Nothing was left for the Sultan, but to sue for peace, for the Russians were within a few miles of Constantinople, and a treaty of peace was concluded at San Stefano which brought the war to a close. Great Britain and Austria considered that this treaty gave Russia too much and protested against it. Lord Beaconsfield was then prime minister and he threatened Russia with war if any attempt were made to carry out the provisions of this treaty. It was at that time that he brought native troops from India to Malta for the purpose of showing Russia that Great Britain's Eastern forces could be used in the West. A British fleet lay

in the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople, and it looked as if a war between Great Britain and Russia was certain. In this extremity Russia gave way and agreed to submit the treaty of San Stefano to be revised by a congress of the powers to be held at Berlin. At this congress Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria, Turkey and Italy were represented. The British representatives were Lord Beaconsfield, the Marquis of Salisbury, and the British ambassador at Berlin, Lord Odo Russell. The leading figure at the congress was Lord Beaconsfield, and as a result of his efforts the treaty of San Stefano was greatly amended, so as to be much less favorable to Russia, and the British premier on returning to London received, such an ovation as might have been given to a great conqueror returning victorious from a long and bloody war. In the speech which he then delivered, he told the British people that he had brought them back "peace with honor."

The common council have informed Lord Beaconsfield that our field artillery is still the best in Europe. Certainly in this campaign it has silenced all field guns brought against it. In the exceptional circumstances of guns of position being trundled about the country and used to out-range field artillery, the most we could fairly ask is that our authorities should at once adapt themselves to these novel conditions. This was very quietly done by the use of the naval guns on the spot, by the despatch of siege guns from home.

There is no doubt that this is a correct statement of the artillery question. Any superiority that the Boers have shown has been due to their superior size. It is surely absurd to expect a 15-pounder field gun, weighing perhaps half a ton, to compete with a 45-pounder weighing two tons or more. Field guns have to be light to enable them to be moved rapidly from one part of the field of battle to the other, but there need be no limit to the weight of guns of position. It is by the use of such guns that the Boers have been able to overcome the fire of the British field guns.

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The news that will interest the people of Canada most today is the account of the engagement in which the Toronto company of the Canadian Regiment took part yesterday. This is the first affair in which our boys have been engaged and they seem to have come through the ordeal in a most creditable manner. The skirmish in which they took part was made more notable from the fact that 200 men of the Queensland contingent also formed part of the force. Thus two of Britain's colonies, the greatest and one of the smallest, natives of countries more than ten thousand miles apart were united in an attack upon a common enemy. The force that took part in this brilliant movement numbered about seven hundred men. The object they had in view was the capture of a Boer laager, which was situated more than twenty miles to the westward of Belmont, in Cape Colony. The fact that a Boer force should be found in such a place is a proof of the boldness, not to say temerity, with which they are conducting their operations, for they were in what ought to be an enemy's country, although there is too much reason to believe that these northern parts of Cape Colony are full of men who are friends of the Boers. The details of the affair in which our boys were engaged will be found in our telegraphic columns, and need not be repeated here. It was a brilliant success because it was conducted on correct tactical principles and was carried out by men who were full of courage and zeal. The Canadians showed themselves to be superior to the Boers as marksmen and they went into the fight in a manner that would have done credit to

veteran soldiers. The people of Canada are proud of their sons and brothers in South Africa.

A great deal has been said by newspaper correspondents in London in regard to the alleged inferiority of the British guns to those of the Boers. Many good people were led to believe that the Boers had been able to purchase guns in Europe that were superior in range to the British field guns, so persistently and confidently was this statement made. In a recent article we expressed doubts of the truth of this story and we are glad to see it denied by no less an authority than Lord Wolseley, the Commander in Chief of the British army. Lord Wolseley says that the British field guns are at least as good as any field artillery in Europe. In regard to this point Conan Doyle, the famous novelist, says:—

"In the matter of guns I am assured expert officers that our field artillery is still the best in Europe. Certainly in this campaign it has silenced all field guns brought against it. In the exceptional circumstances of guns of position being trundled about the country and used to out-range field artillery, the most we could fairly ask is that our authorities should at once adapt themselves to these novel conditions. This was very quietly done by the use of the naval guns on the spot, by the despatch of siege guns from home."

The despatch from Bennett Burleigh, the famous correspondent, which we publish today, shows that a movement against the Boer force now besieging Ladysmith is contemplated and will probably be carried out this week. Burleigh is at Frere, the headquarters of General Buller, and is in a position to be accurately informed. If the recent rise in the Tugela River does not prevent the attempt we may expect to see Buller's army again trying to force a passage and this time there ought to be no thought of failure. Since the last attempt General Buller has been reinforced to the extent of at least 6,000 men; he is much stronger in cavalry and artillery than he was before, and he is equipped not only with howitzers but with heavy siege guns. He has men enough to hold the Boers at Colenso with a third of his force and with the remainder to execute a flank march by which their position can be turned and their defenses carried without the need of delivering a direct assault.

There is a very strong impression among the war correspondents at the front that we are on the eve of great events in a military sense, and that the British campaign in South Africa is now about to open in earnest. All the British command, with the exception of General Buller, are showing activity, and General Buller may not be an exception for nothing in regard to his movements has been allowed to transpire. All that we know of him is that he has been heavily reinforced, that he has now at least 30,000 men under his command, and that he has some thirty guns available for service. Beginning at the west of the British position in northern Cape Colony we find Colonel Picher still advancing towards Kimberley with his small force, which is composed mainly of colonists. Everywhere he is receiving a hearty welcome from the loyalists who have been so long threatened and oppressed by the Boers, and who now are at liberty to declare their sentiments and assist the British to the extent of their ability. It is understood that this advance by Col. Picher's force is but a part of a general movement on the part of General Methuen to turn the Boer position at Modder River and so relieve Kimberley. That such a movement is quite practicable will be easily seen by a glance at the maps, and if successfully carried out it would leave the Boer army at Modder River in a very dangerous position. One of the gratifying features of the campaign is the generous praise bestowed by the English press on the Canadians who are far superior as marksmen to the average British soldier, and therefore much more efficient in the field against such enemies as the Boers.

General French still continues his successful movements against the Boers. He was announced Wednesday that the Boers had been reinforced and had recaptured Colenso. If General French is constructing a trap for the Boers the more of them that walk into it the better he will be pleased. As a matter of fact the latest despatches show that General French has the Boers at his mercy. His guns and his men command both the road bridge and the railway bridge across the Orange River, leaving the Boers no way of escape except by a long and dangerous route by way of Nornberg. Stirring news is expected from this portion of the seat of war and it may come very soon.

OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT.

When parliament meets in a few weeks our Conservative friends will have a busy time trying to reconcile the various points of their political programme. On the stump, in the private canvass, and even in newspapers, it is possible to have one policy for Quebec and another for Ontario, New Brunswick or Manitoba; and

if, occasionally, something intended for purely Protestant consumption accidentally comes under the eyes of a Catholic the matter can be brazened out with a general denial. These games cannot be played in parliament. There the opposition must act upon the saying of the British minister: "It doesn't matter what we say; but we must all say the same thing." It is, perhaps, because the opposition finds so much difficulty in agreeing to "say the same thing" that they usually make so poor a showing in parliament. We all remember the howl that was raised in the opposition press over the extension of the Intercolonial to Montreal and the terrifying stories of the corruption that was to be revealed by investigation. We remember also that when parliament assembled, and a full investigation was held, the Conservative members of the committee freely admitted that there was not a suspicion of corruption in the transaction. Again, we hardly hear a word today about the awful state of affairs in the Yukon, which, according to the Tupper, had disgraced the name of Canada all over the civilized world. Oom Paul, according to Sir Charles Herbert Tupper, had never imposed such outrageous taxes as the present government at Ottawa. It was the meeting of parliament that spoiled this promising agitation. The attack upon the government was opened with great noise and fury, but declined away until it was an actual relief to the opposition to get rid of it. Some observers were inclined to attribute this failure to lack of parliamentary skill on the part of the opposition, and certainly the Yukon amendment, containing matter equivalent to many columns of a newspaper and having neither beginning nor end nor logical sequence, was a marvellous illustration of how not to do it. But the real cause probably was that the assailants of the government were in a place where they were compelled to state their case openly and in an orderly way, face to face with the men who were to answer them. Misrepresentation is a plant which does not thrive in the sunlight of free discussion. The parliamentary tactics of the opposition will not improve until they have a better case to present to parliament. It will be interesting to watch the opposition in parliament handling the question of French domination. When the present government was formed the cry was raised in the French provinces that French Canadian influence was paramount. To those who are familiar with this cry the speech of Mr. Chauvin, a Conservative member of parliament, at St. Jerome, the other day, will be interesting:—

"What advantage have we had," said Mr. Chauvin, "in what way has French influence increased since we have had as prime minister a French Canadian named Laurier? Is it in the senate? We had in the French group Senator Arsenault; he has been replaced by an Englishman, Mr. Yeo. Is it in the cabinet? Mr. C. A. Geoffrion, a loyal and fine type of Canadian, has been replaced by an Englishman, Mr. J. Sutherland. Is it for repatriation and colonization? Not one cent more has been spent for the repatriation of the French Canadians in the United States, but Doukhobors and Galicians who do not fight have been brought here, while Canadians are sent to be killed in the Transvaal. Is it for the French language? Only the members of the opposition speak French at Ottawa. Is it for an increase of French subsidy for Quebec? Sir Wilfrid Laurier has declared that he never took cognizance of the resolutions of the inter-provincial conference at Quebec favoring an increase. Is it for our share of public works? Sir Richard Cartwright has declared that it did not amount to one-third that of Ontario. Is it for our system of justice? We are refused the necessary judges at Montreal, and the allowance proper for the moving about of rural judges is measured out with many insults. Is it for our share of patronage? We have none, and the patronage of the Yukon went entirely into the hands of the English. Those are the advantages French influence has acquired from the much-boasted elevation of a French Canadian to the head of affairs in Ottawa. There can be little doubt that this campaign against Sir Wilfrid Laurier is being carried on vigorously all over Quebec, and that the denunciations are all the more fierce when there is no chance of their being reported."

Mr. Chauvin also attacks the government for its imperial tendencies while in the Protestant provinces Conservatives are posing as the only friends of Imperialism. These tactics cannot be kept up in parliament. The government there will be exposed to the fiercest criticism, and to that criticism, however severe, no government has a right to object. But the members of the opposition will have to make up their minds as to the grounds on which the government is to be condemned. They will not be able to please extremists in Quebec and extremists elsewhere at one and the same time. They will be obliged to choose a path somewhere between the two extremes. We very much doubt whether they will find a better one than that followed by the men who have had to bear the burden of a great responsibility in a new and difficult situation.

AN UNWISE MOVEMENT.

Thoughtful Conservatives would do well to realize the incalculable trouble which may be created by the kind of campaign some of their friends in Queens county have been instituting. It is no answer to say that Mr. Hetherington was indiscreet or that he spoke in Brunswick and at Cady's without instructions from his principal. The fact remains that he is understood to be in Mr. Foster's pay as an organizer, and will be judged accordingly. Where he is known it is quite possible that great weight would not be attached to his utterances; but in the other provinces he is sure to be regarded as a man of some prominence, who voiced the sentiments of a considerable community in New Brunswick. In fact, that is precisely what has occurred.

The proceedings at Mr. Foster's meeting in the parish of Brunswick have found their way into Ontario and Quebec, where they have been viewed with considerable alarm. Mr. Hetherington's ill-judged remarks in particular respecting the shoddy-ering of muskets and marching against fellow-citizens in Quebec have created an exceedingly painful impression in Quebec. We could very well understand the feelings of the majority in that province by putting such incendiary language in the mouth of a French-Canadian and applying it to the people of New Brunswick. Some may believe that such words were not uttered at the meeting alluded to; but it is worthy of note that they have been sworn to by men of good repute, and that Mr. Hetherington did not specifically deny having used them. We trust the people who have felt hurt by this unfortunate incident may soon learn that Mr. Hetherington's views are not shared by the great body of Conservatives in New Brunswick, much less by the Liberals in this province.

Equally mischievous were the unwarranted utterances in Brunswick parish respecting our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, than which nothing could have been more offensive. Surely we have had enough trouble along this line in the past without lighting the fires of sectarian hate and controversy. Every good citizen should frown upon such efforts, as we sincerely believe they do. There are large questions of public policy to be discussed in our political campaigns, without introducing religious or racial issues. We endeavored to show a day or two ago the logical end of such arguments, and in that view we believe the better judgment of the people will concur.

Mr. Foster's friends may think that something is to be gained in a Protestant community like Queens and Sunbury by assailing the minister of railways for his alleged preferences to Roman Catholics, and may be willing to risk the effect thereof in other provinces; but, as we have said before, it is a dangerous and unwise Canada continue in her present march of progress without the help of striking a blow at the harmonious relations between the two great races in this country, or between Protestants and Catholics. Upon the co-operation of these races and religions the very life of our Dominion depends. It may matter very little which party is in power at Ottawa; but it is of vital importance that our people should peacefully and heartily work together in the God-given task of making Canada a strong and prosperous nation.

THE ANTI-FRENCH CRUSADE.

Mr. H. B. Hetherington has not mended matters by this recent speech at Cady's, in Queens county, and whatever doubt there may have been as to what was actually said by this gentleman at Brunswick it is now clear that Mr. Foster's friends are disposed to begin a campaign against the minister of railways on racial and religious issues. This is very much to be deplored. No earthly good can come out of a struggle on such grounds, as we have learned by bitter lessons in the past, and it is not already too late we earnestly hope that the better judgment of thoughtful Conservatives will be exercised in silencing the men who are endeavoring to plunge this province into so hateful and dangerous a struggle.

Assuming that Mr. Hetherington is quite within the truth in denying some of the statements said to have been made by him in Brunswick parish, let us see what he at least admits. From the report published in the Sun we learn what Mr. Hetherington acknowledged:—

"He said that he had as much right to claim that Sir Charles Tupper, an English Protestant, should be supported, as Mr. Tarte had to say that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, because he was a French Catholic, should be supported as premier of Canada. It was mean and contemptible for Mr. Tarte to be appealing for support in Quebec for Laurier because he was a French Catholic against Sir Charles Tupper because he was an English Protestant."

It is clear from the foregoing that Mr. Foster's organizer had a good deal to say on the racial and religious question. He was endeavoring to arouse sympathy for

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