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THIS PAPER HAS THE LARGEST CIRCULATION IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

St. John, N. B., April 18, 1900.

WHITHER ARE THEY DRIFTING?

The Tories are at present in that inauspicious condition which is best described as wobbling. They do not know where they are at. This is partly due to the exceptionally strong position which the government has attained, and partly to the extraordinary attitude recently shown by Sir Charles Tupper. Having returned to the latter, we cannot wonder at a sense of uncertainty which just now pervades the rank and file of the party. They must realize that their leader has in them occasion to look ahead to the general elections with feelings of grave apprehension.

A month ago they were filled with the idea that the disloyalty campaign had gained a strong footing among the people, and that it would be the means of drawing general attention from the country and overwhelming success of the Liberal fiscal policy. The sending of the brigantines to South Africa had been the most of by the opposition. They had the government of having shown defiance and apathy; of being hostile to England; of being dominated by French-Canadian influence. Following this came the troubles in Montreal, respecting which general accounts were published and broad cast over the country.

Tories were jubilant. Things seemed to be coming their way. Then came the new preferential tariff and its additional concession to Great Britain. Considerations of tact, one might suppose, would have led the Conservative leaders to approve of this measure and continue to cling to the strong position which they had held so proudly for months before. But in the eyes of their chagrin, aggravated also by the most inspiring budget ever presented to parliament, they tossed their heads and squarely against any advantage being given to England unless England gave corresponding advantages to us.

They declared that sentiment was all right in its place; but business was business, Canada must insist on having her fill of flesh. This change of base, from being ultra-British to being more or less anti-British, has been a most discouraging circumstance to Conservatives at large. But they were yet to see their leader pile upon them. Sir Charles Tupper went to Quebec—Sir Charles the staunch imperialist, the man of all men to be trusted not to falter in his pro-British opinions—and there the wreck was complete. He cut himself away from the traditions of his party, scoffed at Imperial Federation, boasted of his triumph in breaking up the Imperial Federation League, painted a lurid picture of crushing load of taxation which Canada would have to bear in consequence of aid she was rendering to the empire, denounced the preferential tariff in superlative terms, and in the most direct way possible made a bid for the support of

those who have not sympathized with the Imperial policy of the present government.

That portion of his speech in which he told about the Imperial Federation League is worthy of being placed on record in the columns:

I was a member of the Imperial Federation League, and when I found that a number of active spirits in that league were young men without a great deal of experience, whose aim it was to compel the colonies and outlying portions of the empire to make direct contributions to the army and navy of Great Britain, I opposed that policy, on the ground that, in my judgment, it would break up the empire. Any gentleman who wants to know exactly what my sentiments were on this great question will find them in the October issue of The Nineteenth Century for 1890. I waited six months after that article was written to get all the criticisms of the policy put forward and I replied six months afterwards to my critics. In those two articles, which after careful consideration I stand by every word to-day, you will find the views I then expressed on the question of Imperial Federation.

I declared that the statement that Canada has done nothing for the empire was a fallacy. I pointed out that Canada has spent millions upon the great imperial highway that every statesman in England admits has been of tremendous advantage to the empire, showed what had been spent upon our militia system, and I said that under these circumstances the imposition of an imperial tax upon Canada for the army and navy of Great Britain would, in my judgment, be a great mistake. I said what we have done in the past is a guarantee of what we will do in the future. You must leave it to the independent judgment of the people of Canada and to the spirit of the people of Canada to come to your aid whenever and wherever they think it necessary. They say that I broke up the league by taking that position. If so I am proud of it. I opposed the policy because I believed it would be fatal to the empire.

Staunch and active Tories must have rubbed their eyes and wiped their glasses when they read such a statement coming from their leader, who, not many weeks ago, was thundering against the government because they had not done more for the empire, had not sent thousands more of men, and had dared to prudently assert in the first order in council that the action of the government, having been taken without parliamentary sanction, should not be construed as a precedent. There was the speech, however, in black and white, and in no way could it be got around. No wonder they have been seized with a sickening fear as to what the next move will be, what the next wobble will lead to. No wonder they look ahead to the elections with dark forebodings. Yet most people will be apt to see in this collapse the richly merited retribution which should fall upon those political leaders who lent their influence and energies to the wicked task of stirring up racial and religious animosities in a country like this. They will see in it a recurrence of the fate which overtook the man who tried to blow both hot and cold, which is merely a variation of the attempt to be super-loyal in Ontario and anti-British in Quebec.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SHIPPING INTERESTS.

The passing of a vote of \$80,000 for a lightship to be placed on the Lurcheur Shoal and of \$10,000 for its maintenance during the coming fiscal year will be accepted as a proof by the mercantile and shipping interests of the desire of the government, to leave nothing undone that will promote the commerce and shipping of Canada. The Lurcheur Shoal is the most dangerous obstruction to navigation in the Bay of Fundy, indeed it may be said to be the only one, with the exception of Quaco Ledges, that the sailor fears. Its dangerous character is due to the fact that it lies so far off the coast so that a vessel cannot make a straight course from Seal Island to St. John but has to keep to the northward, and in doing this she may go too far and fall on the reefs on the south side of Grand Manan. With the Lurcheur Shoal guarded by a lightship the master of a steamship can go on his course with confidence, knowing that he will have due warning before nearing this dangerous ledge. Not many vessels have been lost on the Lurcheur Shoal, but it is all the same a menace to navigation and no doubt the existence of the shoal has been the cause of many vessels being lost on the coast of Grand Manan. In seeking to avoid Scylla they fell on Charybdis.

The maintenance of this lightship will be more costly than many lightships, but the money will be well spent if it is the means of wholly removing a danger which has impaired the good name of the Bay of Fundy. We have always maintained that the Bay of Fundy is the safest piece of navigable water in the world, the small proportion of disasters in proportion to tonnage navigating it proves that, but while the Lurcheur Shoal remained unguarded the enemies of the Bay of Fundy had something to point to as a reason why ships should not come here, and we all know how unscrupulous, untruthful and malignant these enemies have been. The government, therefore, deserve and will receive the greatest credit for its action in providing for this lightship, which has long been demanded by the commercial and shipping men of the maritime provinces, but which until now has

been steadily refused by successive Conservative governments.

The placing of a lightship on this shoal is only one illustration of the interest this government takes in everything that relates to the safety of our shipping and the improvement of the business of our ports. All over Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, new lighthouses are being built to the extent of some \$50,000 annually, the government giving an attentive ear to every claim and representation on this subject that is made by shipping men, and doing their best to answer it. One would suppose that the opposition, many of whom are from maritime constituencies, would also take an interest in this matter and give their best support to the government in the granting of supplies. But this is by no means the case. With them a factious opposition to everything the government suggests takes the place of patriotism and the most frivolous objections are interposed for the mere purpose of embarrassing the government and preventing it from building lightships. The other evening Mr. Foster tried to prevent the minister of marine from obtaining his grant of \$50,000 for lightships on the ground that the name and cost of each lightship was not specified. Now, this grant is for the coming fiscal year and the imposition of such a condition on the minister of marine would merely have the effect of preventing him from building any lightships which the interests of commerce might demand until after the 30th June, 1901. No urgent piece of work could be undertaken immediately, as will be the case under the existing arrangement, which gives the minister a free hand. Mr. Foster and the opposition will find that they have been guilty of a great blunder by their course in this matter.

A HARD HIT PARTY.

The desperate expedients of some of the opposition papers to antidote Sir Charles Tupper's speech at Quebec plainly show how hard the party has been hit. Most of them, like the Montreal Gazette, have practically ignored the remarkable deliverance of the Tory leader, apparently on the conviction that the less said about it the better. The Montreal Star, however, makes a bold effort to help the party out of its new-found trouble by asserting that too much has been made by the government press out of Sir Charles' speech; that his Imperialism, while not the same as Mr. Tarte's, is capable of explanation. But it does not offer any explanation, and the gratuitous reference to Mr. Tarte seems wholly irrelevant. There is this difference, however, between Mr. Tarte and Sir Charles Tupper: Mr. Tarte is vice-president of the Imperial Federation League, having been re-elected a month ago. While Sir Charles left the league, and by doing so that he smashed it by standing out against Canada giving a dollar toward British defence.

The leading organ of the party has taken a most extraordinary course. It has not published a line of Sir Charles' speech at Quebec, nor has it alluded to that address in an editorial way; but it announces the discovery that the government means to land Canada over to the United States. This is what the Mail and Empire says: "The cat is out of the bag. It is the old anti-British unrestricted reciprocity scheme, and it is the International Commission is still in existence; it is suspended until a general election in Canada shall be over. The International Commission is still in existence; it is suspended until a general election in Canada shall be over. After the election Laurier, if successful, will withdraw the British discount and negotiate for unrestricted reciprocity instead. The anti-British campaign of Bourassa, Monet, Angers, Ethier, and the other governments in Quebec is designed to give the majority in parliament necessary to the accomplishment of the change."

The most charitable view of a statement like the foregoing is that the editor, after reading Sir Charles Tupper's speech, became a raving lunatic. We do not like using strong or offensive terms; but we must either assume that the writer of such rubbish has either parted with his reason or is guilty of a grave offence against the truth. We prefer to regard it as a case for restraint and medical treatment. It will be seen that the strongest possible counter charges cannot alter the plain purport of Sir Charles Tupper's speech at Quebec. To make the silly and unfounded assertion that the government contemplates the course indicated by the Mail and Empire does not put a different complexion on Sir Charles Tupper's bold bid for the support of those who are opposed to imperialism. It does not change a single syllable of his zealous denunciation of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's desire to bring Canada into closer union with the Empire, his picture of the overwhelming taxation which would fall upon the people of this country if we undertook to share in the defence of British interests, his graphic account of the "folly" called "Imperial Federation" (told with the authority of an ex-president of the league), nor his sweeping condemnation of a preferential tariff which gives Britain an advantage. These things are all recorded and cannot be obliterated nor neutralized by any process of bluster or misrepresentation.

The plain truth is that the great body of Conservatives throughout the country feel that their leader has dealt them a deadly blow, and that too at a time when they most needed help. Had he been de-

liberately trying to wreck his party as completely as he boasts or having smashed the Imperial Federation League he could not have adopted a course better calculated to achieve that result. We do not, however, suspect him of any such motive. It rather looks as if he had made up his mind to let the English-speaking provinces take care of themselves, and make a daring effort to weaken the premier in Quebec by heading an anti-British movement. If this a correct diagnosis, then all we have to say is that he has made a grave tactical blunder. There may be an anti-war feeling in Quebec; but there is no sentiment finding general acceptance in that province which is hostile to England, and what there is of it is mostly on the Tory side.

THE COMMAND OF THE MILITIA.

Sir Charles Tupper attacked the minister of militia in the House of Commons the other night because he had suggested that the time might be near at hand when the area of choice might be widened in the selection of an officer to command the militia by including in it the officers of the militia itself. In other words, Dr. Jordan thought that if a man could be found in the Canadian militia fit to command it he might receive the appointment which can now only be held by an Imperial officer. This seems to be a very reasonable and sensible proposition and the Telegraph commended it at the time, yet for making it Sir Charles spoke of Dr. Jordan as if he had been a traitor to the flag and one who desired to sever the ties which bind us to the mother country. Yet we believe that the great majority of the people of Canada not only are in favor of Dr. Jordan's proposition, but would even go much further and say that in every case a Canadian ought to be appointed to the command of the Canadian militia. The reasons in favor of such a course are numerous and lie on the surface. The reasons urged against it are for the most part imaginary. Sir Charles declared that it was necessary that the commander of the militia should be familiar with the very latest improvements in the military profession. So strong was he on this point that he would have him changed every five years and a new man fresh from the army appointed. This looks quite plausible, but what is there in it? Have we not a military college at Kingston which is able to keep pace in its teaching with Sandhurst and the other military schools of the United Kingdom? Have we not military newspapers which keep us informed of every improvement in the military profession, so strong was he on this point that he would have him changed every five years and a new man fresh from the army appointed. This looks quite plausible, but what is there in it? Have we not a military college at Kingston which is able to keep pace in its teaching with Sandhurst and the other military schools of the United Kingdom? Have we not military newspapers which keep us informed of every improvement in the military profession, so strong was he on this point that he would have him changed every five years and a new man fresh from the army appointed. This looks quite plausible, but what is there in it? Have we not a military college at Kingston which is able to keep pace in its teaching with Sandhurst and the other military schools of the United Kingdom?

Any delay which is now taking place, we may be sure, not without cause. Neither Kitchen nor Roberts are in the habit of making premature movements and when they once begin to move it will be with effect. No doubt the need of new clothing fit for colder weather is one great cause of the pause in the movements of the army, and the necessity for a larger transport service may be another. In the great operations of war it is better to be prepared for every contingency than to make a premature advance which cannot be maintained.

A SERIOUS SITUATION.

Our American friends are having internal as well as external troubles. A recent issue of the Nation contains the following: "The industrial situation in Chicago is very deplorable. For more than a month, building operations have been practically suspended, and not a few employers declare that they shall be obliged to give up their business or transfer it elsewhere. The labor unions in the building trades have followed the example of the great manufacturing corporations, and formed a trust or combination which is absolute in theory, and nearly so in practice. The extent of their power is shown by the statement of Mayor Harrison that on election day the non-union contractors and employers of Chicago need expect no protection from the police. Most of the policemen, he said, would be needed at the polls, and if these non-union employers did not see it to shut down for the day, they would have to take the consequences. Mayor Harrison mentioned only non-union employers, but his threat was, of course, directed equally against the non-union laborers. They know very well what it signifies to have it officially proclaimed that the officers of the law will not defend them against assault."

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Canada is now represented in South Africa by three different contingents, two of them embodied by the government of the Dominion and the third the gift of a Canadian private citizen, Lord Strathcona, whose munificence has been the admiration of the whole Empire and who has done more than any one man in it to assist in this Imperial contest. These several contingents number altogether about 3,000 men and this number could easily be doubled or trebled if it were found necessary. The spirit of the people of Canada is such that they are prepared to make any sacrifices to sustain the honor of the flag and the Empire. Since the capture of Bloemfontein and the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith there has been a lull in the operations of the war and the Boers have scored some minor successes. But these will count for nothing in the final event, for they are but pie-tricks which every great nation must expect to receive when it goes to war.

THEY HAVE TROUBLES, TOO.

Whatever views some American journals may take of our British troubles in South Africa, it is quite certain that they must feel humiliated by the news which comes from almost daily respecting the situation in the Philippine Islands. Although the Rev. Mr. Grant saw no drunkenness or disorder among American soldiers in Manila, and although Bishop Potter found a model government there, the official reports are, nevertheless, somewhat depressing. Thus, in recent despatches to the Associated Press we read that the transport steamer Sherman sailed from Manila for San Francisco, and that she had on board 175 military prisoners and 25 insane. On the same date the transport Sheridan arrived at San Francisco, bringing 110 military prisoners, 11 naval prisoners, and 11 insane. These routine reports are seldom noticed nowadays, yet

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the fact was given out at San Francisco the other day that the military prisons at Fort Leavenworth, and at Alcatraz Island, California, are now full, and that it will be necessary for the government to erect a new penitentiary for the increasing number of criminals coming from Uncle Sam's side of the fence. This is a distressing news, and affords food for reflection as to the gravity of the problems with which our neighbors are grappling.

THE TRANSVAAL MISSION TO EUROPE.

The commissioners for the Transvaal are now in Europe, their business being to induce some of the European governments to intervene in their behalf and bring about a peace favorable to them. They and their masters evidently think that some of the peace feeling which prevailed at the time of The Hague convention can be used in their favor, and that the jealousy of Great Britain which prevails among the nations of Europe will also assist them. They want a peace, but a peace on their own terms which will give them what they might have expected at the end of a war in which they were the victors.

Gradually we are beginning to learn something about the causes of this war and the hopes of the people of the two republics. There is no doubt that before striking the first blow Kruger had assurances which satisfied him that he would receive help from some European nation in the event of the Boers winning some initial success. Their plan was to overrun Cape Colony, in which event the Dutch colonists were to rise and declare for them, thus in a moment doubling their available force and limiting the area of British rule to Cape Town and its vicinity. Similarly Natal was to be overrun by the Boers and the British forced to take refuge in their ships. If this result had been brought about some of the great powers may have made it a pretext for intervention, and at all events the case for the Boers would have been much stronger than it is now. But the plan failed because of the obstinate resistance offered at Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith. The Boer armies instead of marching south to Durban and Cape Colony were detained in front of their beleaguered towns and the tide of invasion was stayed. The Dutch colonists did not rise and although they nursed treason in their hearts they were afraid to show it. A few of them escaped from Cape Colony and joined the Boers, but the vast number of available force quiet. Thus the plan failed and now the circumstances are reversed and the country of the invaders is being invaded.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

Signor Marconi has been lecturing in London on the use of his system of wireless telegraphy in South Africa, from which we extract the following from the Standard's report: "It was the intention of the war office that the wireless telegraph should only be used at the base and on the railways but officers on the spot realized that it could only be of any practical use at the front. Accordingly the assistants volunteered to go to the front, and on December 11 got up to the camp at De Aar; but when they arrived there they found that no arrangements had been made for the supply of poles, kites and balloons which were essentially part of the apparatus, and had to be obtained on the spot. To get over the difficulty they manufactured some kites. The partial failure was due to the lack of proper preparation on the part of the local military authorities, and had no real bearing on the practical utility of the system when carried over under normal conditions. It was reported that the difficulty of getting through from one station to the other

the consequences of their own treachery and folly. But for the ultimatum they issued there would have been no war, and all the blood that has been spilled would have been saved. Great Britain having been forced into this contest will not stay her hand until it is brought to a victorious conclusion and the Boers are under her feet. This announcement has already been made by the British premier and it was repeated in still more emphatic terms by the governor of Cape Colony, Sir Alfred Milner, who said the other day to a deputation of clergymen at Cape Town: "There must be no compromise or patchwork in the settlement and no opportunity for misunderstanding, intrigue, the revival of impossible ambitions, or the accumulation of enormous armaments. The British will no longer tolerate dissimilar and antagonistic political system in a country which nature and history have declared to be one."

This is the proper kind of language for a British governor to hold and it is well that any European power should understand once for all that no intervention will be tolerated. "Hands off" is the order, and if this order is disobeyed there will be trouble. Fortunately no power is in a position to intervene. France will not because this is the exhibition year and she desires no war. Russia has enough business on her hands in the east without involving trouble in the west. Germany is pledged to neutrality; Italy is friendly to Great Britain and Austria could do nothing even if she desired. The mission to Europe will therefore be a failure and peace must be made on Great Britain's own terms.

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