

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N. B., MARCH 11, 1899.

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Important Notice. Owing to the considerable number of communications received at the office, we are unable to acknowledge them all. We are sorry to hear that some of our correspondents are unable to send their communications to the office.

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Business for Correspondents. This paper has the largest circulation in the Maritime Provinces.

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Harbor Facilities. Some time ago the city engineer was instructed by the common council to report upon the cost of completing the three berths on the north side of the present city wharves at Sand Point, which formed a portion of the original plan of harbor improvements at that place.

Warlike Preparations. The cable letter from London by Postley Bigelow is rather of an alarmist character, and if it is really true that Russia and Germany are in alliance against Great Britain with a prospect of France also joining the combination the prospect cannot be regarded as a pleasing one.

The Loss of the Labrador. The Montreal Gazette goes out of its way to administer a severe rebuke to the TELEGRAPH because of our comments on the loss of the Labrador, and on the judicial finding of Captain Smith of the Royal Navy Reserve.

The Boston civic authorities have decided to exterminate the English sparrow. The English sparrow was doomed to destruction ten years ago by some of the states but he still lives and flourishes.

THE WORLD'S SHIPPING.

As recently published statistics of the world's shipping are of great interest at the present time, because they afford a measure of the progress of each of the great nations in sea-going tonnage, which is a very good way of measuring the growth of a country. These figures are brought down to the close of 1898. The number of sailing vessels of fifty tons and over now in existence is 28,885, of an aggregate tonnage of 8,983,769 tons. The number compares with 29,315 ships, and the capacity with 8,894,732 tons, in 1897. Of steamships of 100 tons and over, the number is given as 11,881, against 11,576 a year ago, and the gross measurements as 18,827, 132 tons, against 17,889,006 tons, an increase of 306 vessels and of nearly 1,000,000 tons. In steam tonnage all the chief maritime countries of the world show a gain when the two years are compared except France, which shows a loss of about 50,000 tons. The gain of the United States tonnage was about 138,000 tons. The comparative figures of steam tonnage for the two years in the largest merchant navies were as follows:—

Table with 2 columns: Country, 1898, 1897. Rows: Great Britain, Germany, France, United States, Norway.

It will be seen by the above that Great Britain has a very long lead over all other nations. The steam tonnage of the United Kingdom is almost seven times as large as that of Germany, twelve times as large as that of France and twenty times as large as that of the United States. The tonnage of Germany increased last year less than half as much as that of Great Britain, so that the ambitious empire has great deal of leeway to make up. It is a significant circumstance that the tonnage of France declined so much in spite of the large tonnage paid to shipping.

The sailing tonnage of the most important countries for 1898 is as follows:—

Table with 2 columns: Country, 1898, 1897. Rows: England, Norway, Germany, France, United States.

All of these countries except Norway show a falling off in sailing tonnage during the year, and the tonnage of Norway is kept up by the purchase of old vessels which other nations find unprofitable. The doom of the sailing ship seems to have been pronounced. It is clear from these figures that Britannia never ruled the waves more completely than she does at present.

Warlike Preparations. The cable letter from London by Postley Bigelow is rather of an alarmist character, and if it is really true that Russia and Germany are in alliance against Great Britain with a prospect of France also joining the combination the prospect cannot be regarded as a pleasing one.

The Senate and the Legislature. The Senate is calling at the legislature of Nova Scotia to pass, by an almost unanimous vote, a resolution endorsing Sir Wilfrid Laurier's plan for Senate reform.

The Nova Scotia resolution, which was introduced at the instance of Attorney General Longley, is "that an humble address be presented to her majesty the Queen praying that the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, respecting the legislative functions of the senate of Canada are unsatisfactory and should be so amended as to bring that body more into harmony with the principles of representative government, and praying that her majesty may be pleased to recommend to the imperial parliament such an amendment of the said act as will provide that if the house of commons passes any bill or resolution which is not in accordance with the provisions of the said act, the house of commons shall have power to amend the same."

A similar resolution is before the Ontario legislature, with the addition that senators should not be appointed for life, but for a term of years. The legislature of Quebec will also deal with this question, and possibly the matter may be discussed in the legislature of this province. Of course the cry is raised by the Tory press that the legislatures have no mandate to deal with this question. The Sun holds to this view very tenaciously, although it warmly approved a resolution introduced by Dr. Stockton at the last meeting of the legislature giving the government of Canada

John as things in which no one in Montreal need take any interest, they naturally awake feelings in the breasts of the people of the maritime provinces which had better be set at rest. We shall say nothing against the city of Montreal or the dug out channel which leads to it, or the shoals and dangers of the lower St. Lawrence, through which Montreal must be reached, but we have a right to speak out on behalf of our own port and the waters which lead to it. The reason of the TELEGRAPH's reference to the Labrador disaster was that the loss of the Assaye and Warwick at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy two years ago was made the text of an attack on this port, and given as a reason by the proprietors or managers of the Dominion line why their steamships should not come to St. John. Now one of the steamships of that same line, after navigating the Bay of Fundy in safety, goes ashore on the coast of Scotland at a point fifty nautical miles north of her proper course. That surely is a matter in regard to which it was proper to make some comment, not only for the purpose of vindicating the Bay of Fundy, but also to show that the masters of ocean steamships are as liable to error as other men. Capt. Erskine may be a first class man and we have no desire to prejudice his case, but he certainly was very far astray when he carried his ship to the Skerryvore Light. He will, as we have already said, receive a fair trial, and his judges will not be men who are afraid to do right for fear of the attacks of British shipping papers, some of which, we regret to say, write as if their opinions were for sale.

When the representative of the Dominion line was in St. John a year or two ago it was difficult to make him believe that the rock on which the Assaye was wrecked was quite as much a source of danger to steamships going to Portland, Me., as St. John. Last winter, however, a steamship from Portland went on the same rock and gave a practical illustration of the fact which we have stated. As a matter of fact a steamship that is going from Portland to Europe is in much greater danger from the rocks about Cape Sable than one going from St. John. Yes in the case of the Assaye, as in that of the Warwick, an attempt was made to blame the Bay of Fundy, and to discredit this port for an accident which was not due to any cause that could not have been guarded against.

As for Capt. Smith, in whose interest the Gazette's article appears to have been written, he should be the last man to seek publicity through the medium of the press. His verdict in the Warwick case was so ridiculous that the minister of marine set it aside, and although, owing to a clause in the British Merchant Shipping Act, this reversal of the verdict did not avail the universal voice of shipping men on this side of the Atlantic approved of what Sir Louis Davies has done. Capt. Smith may have been a good master of an Atlantic liner, but in his present position he is a decided failure.

The other day the strength of the German army on a peace footing was increased, and now the French army is also to be increased. The information communicated to the members of the German budget committee showing the necessity for an increase in the German army was of a confidential character, no statement being made public as to the enemy against whom these preparations were being made. But in the French Chamber of Deputies there was no hesitation in indicating the enemy whose attacks were to be guarded against, for Germany was pointed out as the nation against which it was necessary to be fully prepared. These preparations and counter-preparations are likely to go on in both countries for an indefinite period, or until both nations are bankrupt. Germany has now on a peace footing an army of 885,000 officers and men, and there are in addition armies in Algeria and Tunis, which bring up the total to 916,000. On a war footing the French claim to be able to place as many men in the field as Germany. These two nations have been facing each other, in an attitude of scarcely veiled hostility, for almost thirty years, and the expenditures of both for military purposes have enormously increased in that time. France is the richer country, but the expenditures forced upon her are becoming too great to be borne. The debt of France is about \$8,200,000,000 or twice as large as the debt of Great Britain, and it takes not less than \$250,000,000 a year to pay the interest and other charges upon it. Germany has a comparatively small debt, but it is rapidly increasing, because the expenditures of the country are larger than the income. That is a part of the price which the French and German peoples are paying for their bloated armaments. Another part of it is the loss of two or three years of his life by every able bodied young man, which has to be given to service in the army.

These thoughts are suggested by the statement that the budget of the United Kingdom this year will show a deficit in consequence of the increased expenditures for the army and navy. That may

be so, but this deficit, whatever it may amount to, will not last long for British finance does not encourage deficits. At the most it will be only a nominal deficit for under the existing scheme of appropriation the national debt is being paid off at the rate of about \$32,000,000 a year. As the expected deficit will only be about \$7,000,000 there will be actually a surplus on the year's operations of about \$25,000,000. Great Britain has been forced into large naval and military expenditures by the attitude of the continental nations towards her, but her revenue increases so fast that these extra expenditures can be met with ease without imposing undue burdens on the people.

Now that the Khalifa has been driven out of Khartoum, and into the desert the British government is able to go on with the work of internal improvement. One of these is the great dam at Assouan, which has been aptly described as one of the greatest works attempted in Egypt since the foundation of the pyramids. It was first conceived by the late Khedive Ismail, and its priceless sediment are poured into the Mediterranean. The First Napoleon suggested a dam to hold back the surplus waters and irrigate a larger area, and in 1837 the construction of the great barrage, a few miles below Cairo, was begun by a French engineer. It took 24 years to construct, and then was not a success. Sir Colin Moncrieff took the matter in hand in 1884, effectively strengthening the barrage, which, since then, has contributed greatly to the prosperity of the country. Now it is proposed to construct some four miles to the south of Assouan a huge wall of granite a mile and a quarter in length, seventy-six feet high in places, and thirty or forty feet in width. The enormous dam, unequalled by any similar structure existing, will intercept the current and form on the south side a reservoir about 670 square miles in area, a vast shallow lake three times as big in superficial area as the Lake of Geneva, and according to computation, impounding 1,000 million tons of water. How large an extent of country may be fertilized from this reservoir cannot, of course, be stated exactly, but it is computed at 2,500 square miles.

The Star complains that Winnipeg is disfranchised because of the death of its representative in the house of commons. It then goes on to abuse the government as follows:—

The trouble is that the Manitobans only revise their lists just before a provincial election, and consequently the lists now existing are about three years old. The franchise act provides that in old lists shall be prepared; and consequently this list is being got ready. The government which abandoned the system of a mixed federal franchise and deliberately placed the parliament of Canada at the mercy of the ragged franchisees of the various provinces, must bear the full responsibility for this result of its policy.

The term "ragged franchisees" is much more applicable to the old Dominion lists than to the provincial lists. In this province the lists are revised every year, and the late election was run on absolutely new lists. The Dominion elections were usually run on lists two or three years old. Let the people of Manitoba prepare their lists every year and they will not be disfranchised.

The following well deserved tribute to the minister of railways is from the Stratford, Ont., Beacon: "Judge a man by his acts. Hon. Mr. Blair is roundly abused by his political enemies, who find him a hard man to beat, but the people have reason to applaud him. He is the only minister of railways Canada has yet had that has stood up for the people against the great railway interests. At the meeting of the railway committee of the privy council the other day he gave it pretty plainly to be understood that he would not permit collusion between the railways and the Standard Oil Company monopoly to continue and the solicitors for these companies wailed. As long as Mr. Blair stands for the people he need not care about the abuse of his enemies."

It is stated on behalf of the captain of the Labrador that the captain had been on deck since 2 p.m. on Tuesday when the ship struck. As the ship struck on Wednesday morning at 7 o'clock that would give the captain a watch of seven hours, which is too long for any man to take and preserve his proper mental balance. There ought to be more than one man on board a large passenger-steamship capable of making out the lights or headlands on the coast he was approaching, and certainly a man whose mind had been on the strain for seventeen hours would be in a very bad condition to exercise good judgment in such a contingency.

Great Britain is blamed at Peking for inducing Italy to demand from China a lease of San-Man Bay for a coaling station and naval base on the same terms as those under which Germany holds Kiaochow Bay. Italy's demand includes the concession of three islands on the coast of the province of Che-Kiang, with the right to construct a railroad from San-Man Bay and other preferential railway rights. Why should not Italy have a Chinese port? Her claims to one are quite as good as those of Germany.

The Dowager Empress of China appears to be a genuine Tory of the ancient British pattern which our Canadian Tories are trying to imitate. Here is an English translation of her recent decree with regard to the press:—

Since newspapers only serve to stir up the people and tend to overthrow the present order of things, and since writers of newspapers are the dogs of the literary class, the existence of such dangerous implements can not result in good. We hereby order, therefore, the complete suppression and cessation of all newspapers that have heretofore appeared in the country. All publishers and editors will be arrested and punished with the utmost severity of the law.

The above sounds rather ridiculous to modern ears, but at the beginning of the present century English judges were practically carrying out the law in the spirit of the Dowager Empress.

The defeated and demoralized opposition, which was so effectually snuffed under a couple of weeks ago, seems to desire to guide the policy of the government, and is giving Mr. Emmerson its orders through its organ, the Sun. This paper is in a sad state over the fact that we are using the same kind of ballot in provincial elections that was adopted by Sir Leonard Tilley forty years ago. There has never been any demand for a change in this ballot until the last defeat of the opposition, and it is quite likely that Mr. Emmerson will think that there is no real demand for such a change now.

It appears that Hon. Edward Blake is not leaving the British parliament after all. The story first appeared in the Montreal Star, and it appears to have been invented by that paper which has allowed its political spite to destroy its value as a newspaper. The Star thought that the return of Mr. Blake to public life in Canada might provoke jealousy among the present leaders of the Liberal party, but so far was that from being the case that there was not one of them who would not welcome his return.

The Talbot, in which the remains of Lord Herschell are going home to England, is one of the new second class vessels of the Eclipse type. She is 5,600 tons displacement and has a speed of 20 knots. The Talbot, like all the vessels of her type, is armed with quick firing guns, five of 6-inch, six of 4-inch, and several smaller guns. She is the largest vessel in the British North American squadron with the exception of the flagship Renown.

The Montreal Star contains an excellent portrait and a well-written biography of Bishop Sweeney, who is now the dean of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Canada. The venerable bishop is now in his seventy-eighth year, and in the enjoyment of excellent health, a blessing which it is to be hoped he may long retain.

LAST SAD RITES. Howard Douglas Clark's Funeral Largely Attended. The funeral of the late Howard Douglas Clark took place Wednesday afternoon from his late residence, Union street, and was attended by a very large number of friends. The Carleton Cornet band headed the procession, and was followed by Golden Rule Lodge, I. O. O. F. and the True Blue Lodge of Orangemen followed—a body guard of Orangemen and Old Fellows walked beside the grave. The services at the house and grave were conducted by the Rev. Mr. Fenna. Interment took place at Cedar Hill. The funeral was the largest seen in Carleton for a long time.

THE TALBOT SAILS. For London with the Remains of Lord Herschell. New York, March 8.—The British cruiser Talbot, which is conveying the body of Lord Herschell to England, passed out to sea this afternoon. The forts at Hamilton and Wadsworth saluted the Talbot as she passed. The cruiser passed out Sandy Hook at 8:45 p.m.

Danger of Smallpox. In several towns of Maine smallpox is quite prevalent and some of the customs authorities fear it may be introduced into this province. Cases have been reported from Auburn, Lewiston, Livermore Falls, Winslow, Augusta and Waterville, although the authorities of these places have been at some pains to keep the existence of the disease quiet. From such a terrible and deadly scourge people have always fled, and it looks as if the emigration has begun. In times past similar stampedes have proved the most effective means of spreading disease. Customs authorities noticed a great increase in the amount of Maine baggage they have been called upon to inspect. Collector Seal was notified and came to the conclusion small pox was the cause. He called upon Dr. Bayard, chairman of the provincial board of health, and informed him of the increase in travel. Dr. Bayard said there was a possibility of the disease being introduced from Maine, but he was powerless to prevent it, as there was no statutory provision for inspection or vaccination of immigrants from Maine. Statistics collected by the local board of health show that at the present time not more than ten per cent of the citizens of St. John have been vaccinated, and that year by year the number is growing less. The local board of health has on hand a supply of vaccine lymph, and that is about the only protection we have against an epidemic at the present time.

It is a popular belief that a holy bush planted near a dwelling protects the house from lightning.