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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1913.

The Evening Times and Star

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The St. John Evening Times is printed at 113 1/2 Water Street every evening (Sunday excepted) by the St. John Times Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd., a company incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies Act.
Telephone—Private branch exchange connecting all departments, Main 311.
Subscription prices—Delivered by carrier \$2.00 per year, by mail \$2.25 per year in advance.
The Times has the largest afternoon circulation in the Maritime Provinces.
Special Representatives—Frank R. Northrup, Brunswick Building, New York Advertising Building Chicago.
British and European representatives—The Clougher Publishing Syndicate, Grand Trunk Road, Trafalgar Square, England, where copies of this journal may be seen and to which subscribers intending to visit England may have their mail addressed.
Authorized Agents—The following agents are authorized to canvass and collect for the Evening Times: H. Cecil Kelmood, S. K. Smith, Miss Helen W. Hallett, and J. E. Cogswell.

TAX REFORM

The movement in the direction of a much lower assessment on buildings than on land is steadily gaining ground. It is said that nearly one-third of the members elect of the lower house of the New York legislature are pledged to support a reduction of the tax rate on buildings. A correspondent of the New York Evening Post gives some interesting facts showing the growing popularity of this policy. He says that two or three years ago a man who was put in charge of the tax department of the city of Houston, Texas, began at once to assess building values at a lower rate than land values. The result was such a degree of growth and prosperity for the city that this man was promptly re-elected, and the cities of Galveston, Beaumont, Waco and San Antonio adopted the Houston plan of taxation, with some slight modifications. Not only so, but the man who inaugurated the new policy in Houston has been requested and has delivered addresses in various cities in the south and west. The town of Pueblo, Colorado, two weeks ago adopted a single tax amendment to the city charter, and the same has been done in the city of Everett in Washington state. Thus the movement is steadily gaining new friends in the United States, and the like is true in Canada. Has not the time arrived for a vigorous tax reform movement in the city of St. John?

BORDEN THEN AND NOW

"Fight the ballot thief and the briber," shouted Hon. R. L. Borden in a speech in Halifax in 1905 when he was clamoring for an opportunity to put down bribery and corruption in Canadian political life. The Halifax Chronicle, at this rather awkward time for Mr. Borden, when the Chateaugay by-election is being prodded and the tory candidate in Macdonald has admitted bribery by agents rather than face the election court, recalls some of the lofty professions made by him when he announced his Halifax platform and since. In that platform the first plank declared that "untainted elections were essential to the success of democracy." Hence he sounded the rallying cry to "fight the ballot thief and the briber." Continuing in the same lofty strain he said:—"Strike not only at them, but expose and send to the penitentiary if possible the respectable gentlemen who supply the funds and superintend the work at a safe distance. Fight also any influences within your own party which favor corrupt methods."
These it will be remembered are the words of a statesman who now regards the Hon. Robert Rogers as one of the finest examples of political purity to be found in Canada. But Mr. Borden went on:—"If there be no party fund, details of which may not be known and the expenditure of which cannot be made public. Let the elections be conducted according to honorable, decent and clean methods."
In 1908 Mr. Borden declared that he would "prefer overwhelming defeat to victory won by improper means." Later in Toronto he advocated the appointment of a public prosecutor with power to intervene in any case where the proceedings upon any election petition were unduly delayed. In fact the Chronicle is able to show from Mr. Borden's own speeches that if he is to escape condemnation as a wholly insincere and unreliable politician he must proceed to mete out punishment to some of the criminals who have been busy in the interests of tory candidates in the bye-elections. In the words of the Chronicle:—"What will Mr. Borden do about it?"

BRITISH LAND SCHEME

The land scheme of the British government aims among other things to recreate country life for the laborer and his family. In a summary of a recent speech made by Mr. Runciman, minister of agriculture, it was stated that the laborer's wages, his cottage, his garden, his allotment, the education of his children, and a fair chance for him to rise in life will all be the concern of the new ministry of land.
A fact that perhaps has not been clearly understood at this distance is that peasant proprietorship is not demanded by the small English farmers. Mr. Runciman says that farmers would prefer to continue as tenants under good landlords, with ample compensation for improvements, and fair compensation for disturbance if they should be turned out. He said:—"They do not want to tie up their capital in land ownership for a return of about three per cent. when they can make it yield from ten to twenty per cent. If it is all devoted to the actual operation of their farms. Ample working capital is the first condition of their success, and I have come across cases where, even when the purchase was completed, the farmer has been tempted in hard seasons to borrow from the bank on security, or to float a mortgage on his farm. The magic of property is quickly destroyed by the misery of a mortgage. As a competitor with a small holding tenancy scheme, peasant proprietorship suffers from the serious objection that no man wishes to be a peasant proprietor for the whole of his life. Small farms are taken because the tenants want to use them as the stepping-stones to higher things. So far as I can gather there is no demand for peasant proprietorship, but there is a significant and increasing demand for small holding tenancies. We cannot overtake it and we need land, not finance."
Mr. Runciman says there is no position so enviable as that of a tenant farmer on a first class estate under an opulent and generous landlord, but so few occupy that position that a radical reform is necessary. "The time has passed when any young man worth his salt will remain in the country districts if the only thing to be preached at him is that he should be content in the position in which it has pleased God to place him."
Under the new scheme cottages must be provided for laborers, and with every cottage must go its garden or allotment, of half an acre or less, according to the conditions prevailing in the locality. For these of course the land must be purchased. Along with better housing there must go better wages for the agricultural laborer, and the whole aim of the scheme is to better the condition of the farmer who has a small holding and the agricultural laborer whose condition at the present time is miserably poor. How poor it has been may be gathered from a statement made by Lord Saxe and Selk, himself a landlord and heartily in support of the Liberal land policy, when he said that it was found necessary in many cases in villages where cottages were notoriously deficient to educate the laborers up to demand better accommodation. His lordship said that the first essential was to raise wages, and the government's proposal had brought a new hope to the laborers on the land throughout the country. Agriculture in many places is, he declared, a sweated industry, and, so far as housing is concerned, the state must step in and provide cottages for the laborers.
As an effect to the government scheme the Conservatives have presented a land purchase proposal, but it has not been worked out in any practical way and is so very hazy, and would involve such an enormous financial responsibility, that it is not favored even by the majority of Conservatives. The government scheme, on the other hand, is proving to be popular throughout the rural counteries.

WEST INDIA SERVICE

The exporters, merchants and citizens generally of St. John are intensely gratified with the improvement that has been made in the West India steamship service. The first steamsip of the new service and the last of the old were moored, one below the other, at the wharf yesterday, and a glance was all that was required to impress the onlooker with the very great improvement made by securing the vessels of the Royal Mail Steamship Packet Company. The Cobeguid now in port has all the accommodations of a big ocean liner, and with it a large cargo carrying capacity. She and her sister vessels were especially built for the trade of tropical countries. The accommodations for passengers are exceptionally good. The business men who enjoyed the hospitality of the company and the captain yesterday at luncheon, were delighted with the ship and the better prospects for trade with the West Indies. Hon. William Pugsley voiced a general feeling when he said that the next step should be to remove restrictions upon trade between Canada and the West Indies, and give it a better chance to grow and flourish.

BIRTHDAYS OF NOTABILITIES

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
Joseph Gibson of Ingersoll, Ont., a prominent layman of the Methodist Church, was born in Cheshire, England, seventy-one years ago today. He has been for some years president of the Ontario branch of the Dominion Alliance, is a past grand master of the A. O. U. W., and has held office in various capacities in the Methodist Church.

H. J. P. Good, one of Canada's best known newspaper men and prominent in sport, is sixty-five years old today. He was born near Birmingham, England. After living many years in Toronto, where he was later editor of the Sunday World, he went to Winnipeg to take charge of the magazine features of the Telegram.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23
Sir Gilbert Parker, an eminent Canadian novelist, was born in Camden East, Ont., in November 23, 1850. He has lived in London since 1897 and was knighted in 1902.

Frederic Nicholls, general manager of the Canadian General Electric Company and interested as president or director of many industrial and financial concerns, was born in England on November 23, 1856.

Henry Marc Auld, for several years associated with the Canadian Geological Survey, and now living retired in Ottawa, was born on this date in the year 1838 at Belle Riviere, P. Q.

Robert John Fleming, general manager of the Toronto Street Railway Company, and at one time mayor of the city, was born on this date in the year 1838 at Belle Riviere, P. Q.

Lighter vein
Blaming Jonah
Mother—Johnny, you said you'd been to Sunday school.
Johnny (with a far-away look)—Yes, mamma.
Mother—How does it happen that your hands smell of fish?
Johnny—I carried home the Sunday school magazine and the outside page is all about Jonah and the whale.—Tit-Bits.

Football Days
"You know your lesson today," said the head of the team accusingly.
"Yes, captain."
"Well, let it pass this time, but it looks as if you were neglecting your football."
Welcome
"I'll have to arrest you," said the policeman.
The man who was having trouble with his wife threw both arms around the officer and exclaimed:
"This isn't an arrest. This is a rescue."
Diplomacy
Tommy—"Pop, what is a diplomat?"
Tommy's Pop—"A diplomat, my son, is a man who remembers a woman's birthday, but forgets her age.—Brooklyn Citizen.

Serious
"What's the matter, old man?"
"I told my wife a joke to keep her quiet while buttoning up her dress and she went and laughed and tore them all out again.—Pun.

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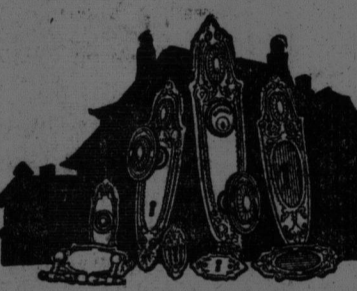
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PARTED
Do you remember how the sunset sky Blazed red and gold
When we were parting? How, at our good-bye;
Black thunder clouds that rolled Angriy around, were touched with purple passion,
Like that sharp pain Which seemed to seize our hearts and in them fashion
A storm of fire and rain? And how the thrush upon the bending twig
Was mute with fears: And future things looked terrible and big
Though blinding haze of tears
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Baby Dolls 5c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 35c, 45c, to \$12.00 each
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