THE WEEKLY ONTARIO.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1919

A MERITED RECOGNITION

The selection of Mr. Nelson Parliament, M.P.P., for the speakership of the Ontario legislature by the Drury Government comes as a merited recognition to one who has shown himself to be a friend of agriculture and fair-minded to supporter and opponent alike.

Mr. Parliament has grown by experience. He has risen to every occasion and met every expected demand since he entered public life. The speakership will prove no exception. Mr. Parliament's natural tact and good judgment will make him one of the most efficient and acceptable presiding officers that the provincial legislature has had.

It is difficult, at this distance, to understand the somewhat ill-natured reference to the speakership in the manifesto issued last Saturday by the Liberal leader. He asks,—

"Is it fair to bargain secretly with an elected Liberal member for his appointment as speaker at the next session?"

The Ontario is unable to see anything unfair or improper in Mr. Drury asking Mr. Parliament to eccept the speakership. It is quite in accord with British parliamentary practice. In the British House of Commons it quite frequently happens that the speaker is of the political party opposite to the one in power.

The speakership is a sort of judicial position and the occupant is supposed to be free from partisan bias.

Mr. Parliament will not need to compromise either his honor or his Liberalism by accepting it.

Mr. Dewart's suggestion of secret bargaining is not well founded. Mr. Drury stated in a published interview at the time the cabinet was being formed that he expected Mr. Parliament to accept the speakership It is therefore strange that Mr. Dewart should, three weeks later, talk about the secrecy of something that had some time before been published in a national newspaper.

Mr. Parliament was elected as the nominee of the Liberal party in Prince Edward and, should he be elected to the speakership and accept that honor, he will have done nothing inconsistent with his attitude towards the Liberal party.

Prince Edward Liberals knew perfectly well that Mr. Parliament was a member of the United Farmers, that he was receiving United Farmer support and that he had endorsed the U. F. platform. The Farmers' platform is almost identical with that of the Liberal party though less comprehensive.

As The Ontario sees it, Mr. Dewart's manifesto was both ill-natured and ill-timed and a piece of bad tactics that came very near to making it a blunder of the first magnitude.

THE COAL SITUATION

The settlement proposal of the coal question by the United States government will probably strike the general public as eminently fair to all parties. In allowing the advance of 14 per cent in miners' wages, Fuel Administrator Garfield explains that he has "given the industry as a whole an average increase commensurate with the increase in the cost of living," and then "let that amount of increase be apportioned in accordance with the wage bases that are acceptable to the employers and employees."

According to the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics at Washington, the cost of living has risen 79.8 per cent since 1913 in the United States. The increase now necessary to bring the average wage of mine workers up to this point is 14 per cent. There was a general impresion among the public that miners were already enjoying large wages, and certainly a great many of them are. But Mr. Garfield's figures show some average increase necessary to put the miners where they were in 1913, and his suggestion as just noted is that increase in wages be apportioned according to local circumstances of both operators and miners here and there.

Mining is a hard life and perhaps the average wage should be such as to place the worker in a more advantageous position than he had six years ago. But few would quarrel with the government's decision to make the miner as well off now as then. And, as Mr. Garfield points out, even lacking the increase of 14 per cent, he is better off than the general run of workers, who have lost considerably in the ratio of advanced wages to advanced prices

As for the operators, they are not to be allowed to charge more at present for the coal. That phrase "at present" will not be liked if it suggests a permit for a boost later on. The operators need not complain, for a statement of the Internal Revenue Bureau at Washington shows that the coal mines east and west have made "fabulous profits" in the last three years, ranging all the way from 15 to 800 per cent on invested capital and averaging around 100 per cent. Yet Mr. Penna moans that the 14 per cent raise will turn the profit of Indiana mines into a loss. Mr. Garfield replies that they will have to close up then, or run at a loss. But the real answer to such plaints is the nationalization of the mines, so that the less profitable production can be kept up by help of the bonanzas.

The American government is playing the game fairly and wisely with miner, operator and consumer. It is to be hoped that the machinery now being arranged will prevent great strikes in future by continuous adjustment of difficulties and demands.

AMERICA AND THE PRINCE

As might have been expected, now that the Prince of Wales has departed, the question is being asked in some quarters as to what was behind the Canadian tour of the heir to the throne. Was the whole business merely a move in empire politics? Was the purpose of Prince Edward's visit to demonstrate just how Canadians feel towards royalty? Whether or not the political reason—if there was one—that lay behind his tour, has been met there isn't the slightest doubt that personally the prince made good. And this applies to Americans as well as Canadians. During his brief visit to the United States he was treated with the greatest cordiality. The American press mirrors this feeling splendidly; the great New York dailies—with the exception of the anti-British Hearst newspapers—publishes handsome tributes to the prince. The New York Herald was especially happy in its reference to the prince. This is given in part as follows:

It is foolish for any one to talk of the Prince of Wales as a "nice boy." New York knows better than that by this time—at the close of two days' close observation. He is a man, thinks like a man, speaks like a man, and acts like a man. What is more, in speaking he does not repeat himself—a rare virtue

Enthusiastic and impressionable women exclaim rapturously: "Isn't he cute!" or "Isn't he a dear!" But it is to be remembered that he is twenty-five, three years older than William Pitt the Younger was when he became premier of England; that he has had four years active service in the war—wearing the Croix de Guerre, conferred by Marshal Foch for an individual act of gallantry—that he is a trained officer of the British navy; has put in more than a year in a university; speaks and writes three foreign languages, and had four years as a tutor one of the most accomplished men in his line, outside George Meredith's "Egoist."

If any one had doubts as to where the speeches of the Prince of Wales came from, the question was settled on Tuesday. The newspaper men asked for his impressions, after he had returned to the Renown. He sent for a secretary and dictated on the spot a long message to New York, which was far better and more important than the speech which he made at the City Hall when he was made an Honorable Freeman of the city.

"Just before the American tour began our visitor was made in one night a member of the Bar and a Bencher of the Middle Temple. Describing his gown as camouflage, he made on that occasion perhaps the only witty speech heard in that venerable hall since the evening when the late Joseph H. Choate took "honorary silk."

He has no delusion about the things that have come to him "in due course," and has said that he prizes his war medals more than the Garter, an order which has no connection with merit. When an heir to the throne is created Prince of Wales he also gets that famous and select decoration for evening and state wear.

It is from his grandmother, the Queen Mother Alexandra, that, Prince Edward gets his tendency to look very young. Even today she has the figure of a girl. Through her, too, he lost any likeness to his former German relatives.

Those who have heard this new "New Yorker" agree that there are few young statesmen who have not reason to envy his tact, his discretion, and his gift for saying the right thing, and above all, his sincerity."

From the above it will be seen that his highness made good with America, just as he did with Canada.

THE TURK PROBLEM

Turkey s now the only nation officially at war with the British Empire. This not because the Turk is holding out for better terms. Turkey today is completely at the mercy of the Allies and must submit to any conditions, but the future status of the Ottoman in Europe must be clearly defined, settled once for all, if there is to be any assurance of peace in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. It is this difficult problem whch is delaying ratification. The main issue is, of course, as to whether the Turk shall be ousted frm Europe. Rumania, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria have already declared officially that they cannot consider the Balkan queston settled until the Turk is removed to the other side of the Bosphorus. Turkey on the other hand clings to the little strip she holds in Europe, principally because of religious sentiment, and therein lies a great danger. To see holy Constantinople turned over to the Christian would constitute the crowning insult and debasement to the Turk from Sultan to street beggar. The immediate effect might mean bloody insurrections throughout the entire east. The torch of the Jehad sweeping through India, Persia, Palestine, Egypt, Afghanistan and Beluchistan would bring a period of massacre in which millions would perish, and Britain's hold in eastern lands be terribly shaken. Armenia, too, must be looked after in whatever arrangement is made. The United States has been asked to accept the mandate for this stricken nation, but the squabbling Senate makes acceptance remote if not improbable. A firm hand will have to be employed by somebody in order to prevent further butcheries, but at the same time Moslem national and religious sentiment cannot be ignored. The Turkish problem is the most difficult the Allies have faced as it holds the possibility of further warring in the Near East.

THE BALTIC ADVENTURE

According to despatches from Berlin, Germany's mad Baltic adventure has collapsed and the army in the Baltic provinces, the size and activity of which gave the Allied Governments much anxiety, is rapidly disappearing. The Iron Division, which Pan-Germans hailed as the nucleus of a new and mighty German war host is reported to be in disorderly retreat, lacking in food stuffs and equipment and harried day and night by the forces of the Letts and Lithuanians. Another German column, which has been operating in the vicinity of Libau, has been badly cut up, losing three thousand men in one engagement close to the coast in which Allied warships took part. Fragments of this grand army which von Der Goltz boasted would never submit to orders of the peace conference, and which he stated would hold all Russian provinces occupied by German troops, are straggling back to the Fatherland, cold and starving, and incensed at those responsible for the adventure. The German peril in Eastern Europe has vanished with the breaking down of the Baltic adventure, and it is clear that at the present moment Germany possesses no army that even approximates readiness for war.

Undoubtedly the failure of the Baltic hazard has brought sharp disappointment to millions of Germans who counted on the embarrassment the affair might cause the Allies to wring better peace terms from the Versailles conference. Rather than go to the expense and peril of a prolonged campaign it was thought the Entente nations would make some concessions. But although this hope of hampering the Allies has vanished, Germany, judging from the Berlin press, is frankly delighted at the failure of the United States to accept the peace treaty. In government and political circles it is said there is great reojicing over the American Senate's action, although it is, of course, not openly expressed. There is a distinct hope amongst all factions at the German capital that America's refusal to ratify the pact will in time bring America into some sort of an alliance with Germany against the Entente nations. Thus Germany would be able to have her revenge. Nobody who understands the American people will admit that there is any possible international situation that would find the United States lined up with Germany, but Germans believe it quite possible and will be certain to openly and secretly aggravate the present exasperating peace treaty situation. If America remains outside the League of Nations it will not only impede the regulation of Europe, which is so necessary to permanent peace, but will also encourage Germany to fresh conspiracies against the harmony the Entente alliance is endeavoring to establish.

BULGARIA'S PUNISHMENT

Bulgaria is to pay heavily for the greed, treachery, selsfihness and cruelty which marked her behavior throughout the war. By the conditions of the peace pact signed at Paris Bulgaria must pay an indemnity of $450,000,000, surrender to Greece all of Thrace, return territory taken from Serbia, and is ordered to reduce its army to 20,000. In addition, the Bulgars are denied a corridor to the Aegean, and must turn over to an allied commission for trial all officials, military or civilian, charged with atrocities.

Thus ends Bulgaria's splendid dream to be the king pin of the Balkans, a "Germany of the Near East." In order to reach the pinnacle Ferdinand and his advisers lined up with the Hun. German gold and promises apparently opened a short and spectacular path to a glorious position. They cast aside decency and honor in order to gratify ambition. The Bulgarian turned against his kinsmen, the Russian, and threw in with his ages-old enemy and persecutor, the Turk, purely for material gain. Sofia had no quarrel with the Allied Governments, in fact was on the best of terms with them, but it believed that by striking a bargain with the Central Powers it could grasp the dominating power and influence in the Balkans, making vassals of its neighbors.

Bulgaria's course, too, during the war, was of the vilest. Even while neutral she was striking at Serbia's back, and her treatment of the Serbs when she had them in her power is a story of ferocity that has never been equalled, save in Moslem massacre of Armenians. Bulgaria butchered and plundered, not as did some of her allies, with the object of shortening the campaign and inspiring terror, but in order to exterminaate a people that she fears might in the future interfere with the fullest realization of her desires.

Before the war, Bulgaria, at least to the western world, held an excellent reputation. The people appeared to be democratic and industrious, progressive and tolerant, concerned only in winning for themselves a place in the sun for the development of trade and industry. All the time beneath the surface was the savagery, ruthlessness and faithlessness of her guide and model, Prussia, and when Prussia tempted it was natural and easy to take the lure. Today Bulgaria is broken materially and stands outside the good will and respect of her neighbors. She has gone down in the ruck with the others who struck at liberty to gain riches and power. History holds few such vivid pictures of the heavy chastisement that comes to nations

Germany is impudently defiant, and if the Entente powers, rather than run the risk of offending Washington, refrain from forcing compliance, she will make a laughing-stock of her conquerors and the peace conference.

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The deplorable rioting at Kitchener Monday night was rather a rough way of serving notice that "Kitchener" has come to stay, and while it wasn't a method that Kitchener would have approved, it should put the quietus on alleged pro-German propaganda.

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Carl Emily Junck, the Chicago millionaire importer, said at a sangerfest: "Only an incurable optimist, like my friend Wash White, would regard Germany's future as promising and hopeful. I met Wash the other day with a big, raw gash in his forehead. 'What does that gash mean, Washington?' I asked. 'What does it mean?' grinned Wash. 'Why, Mr. Junck, it means lood luck, dat's what it means. I prayed de Lawd last night to gimme a good luck sign, and de fust t'ing dis mawnin' when I opened de stable do', de mule Lazarus up wid his hoof and fetched me a kick in de face. Dar's luck fo' you, Mr. Junck—a hoss shoe in yo' face befo' breakfas'. Golly, but I hope de luck keeps up de same fo' de rest ob de year."

LIFE ON MARS

I have heard a learned professor say that Mars has living folks, while another gifted guesser hailed his arguments as jokes. And they fussed around and wrangled like a pair of locoed cats, and they got their wires all tangled and grew sore beneath their hats. Some indorsed the learned professor, held as gospel his belief, some stood up for t'other guesser, helping him to yawp and beef. And the row became a riot, so the whole bunch went to jail, where they had a frugal diet that was void of toast on quail. You may climb the highest steeple with a telescope in hand, and you cannot tell if people drill around on Martian land. There's no earthly way of proving if inhabitants are there; so your arguments, though moving, are but piffle and hot air. So we waste the moments precious, chewing rags the livelong day, letting habits vain enmesh us, when we should be baling hay. Whether Mars has people on it, I protest, we'll never learn; but this world of ours, doggone it, has inhabitants to burn; here they are, where Nature flung them, on a prehistoric day, and our work is here among them, not a billion leagues away.—Walt Mason

OTHER EDITORS' OPINIONS

MR. PARLIAMENT'S COURSE

Mr. Hartley Dewart, the Liberal Leader, is naturally anxious to keep his following in the Legislature in tact and resents attempts of the Drury Government to gain seats at the expense of the Liberals. In this connection the matter of the Speakership has been mentioned. It is rumored that Nelson Parliament, Prince Edward county's representative, has been asked to act as speaker. In seeking aid from Mr. Parliament Mr. Drury is not going very far outside his own ranks. In accepting the Liberal nomination several months before the election Mr. Parliament stated his position very clearly before the convention. He wanted it thoroughly understood that he should be at liberty to support the farmers' platform in the house should he be elected. The convention approved of his stand and he was nominated without a dissenting voice. And there was no misunderstanding his position during the election campaign. If Mr. Parliament has been requested by the new administration to accept the Speakership his supporters in Prince Edward will expect him to accede to the request and give the Government and the Legisalture the benefit of his experience.—Picton Gazette.

ARE WORSE STORMS COMING?

The Province suffered on Saturday night one of the worst storms in its history, taking a toll of human life, and doing property damage that will run into millions. Oshawa was fortunate compared with many other places, though the storm here was quite bad enough for most people.

But what are we to say when we read the dire prophecies of Albert F. Porter, who is said to be an astronomer of some note. Mr. Porter predicts unprecedented storms around the 17th of December and explains the situation from an astronomical viewpoint as follows:

"The planets in their orbits swing in great eclipses about the sun. They are linked to the sun, and to each other, by chains of electro-magnetic energy whose compelling forces counteract each other and hold each planet in its regular path.

"Whenever two planets wheel into such position that they pull together on the sun—either in 'conjunction' on the same side of the sun, or in 'opposition' with the sun between them—their united pull causes the sun's gases to 'explode'—to leap out into space in the whirling volcano we call a sunspot. These sunspots in turn cause storms in the atmosphere of our earth—doubtless on other planets as well.

"Two planets united are enough to cause a small sunspot and a small storm. Three cause a larger one—four make a very great storm indeed.

"But, on December 17, 1919, no less than seven planets will pull jointly on the sun. These will include all the mightiest planets, those with the most powerful pull. Six of them—Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune—will be in conjunction; grouped together in the greatest 'league of planets' ever known in the annals of astronomy. They will be massed in the narrow limit of but 26 degrees, on the same side of the sun.

"Directly opposite, coming into opposition with this gigantic league, will be the huge planet Uranus, and the six planets will pierce the sun like a mighty spear.

"Our earth is outside the league at an angle of nearly 90 degrees—in perfect position to receive almost the full force of the monster electrical disturbance, as it leaps into activity on what, to us, will be the eastern horizon of the sun's disc.

"Such a close grouping of planets has never been recorded before. The whole solar system will be strangely out of balance.

"What will be the outcome? My knowledge does not permit me to state, beyond the fact that the storms eruptions and earthquakes may be tremendous in their strength and scope."

Let us hope that Mr. Porter has miscalculated the exact date and that the terrific disturbance which he thinks is booked to occur on December 17th arrived ahead of time and has already spent its full force in the violent storm which occurred last week end. However, in case the student of the starry heavens may have judged rightly we will be forewarned and will try to get to a place of comparative safety when the storm gives warning of its approach. It will be at least interesting to await the fateful day and see whether any unusual disturbance occurs just around that time.—Oshawa Reformer.