

The St. John Standard

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M. V. MACKINNON, Managing Editor.
ALFRED E. MCGINLEY, Editor.
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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1918.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H. M. The King.
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

ECONOMY UNDER THE FOSTER GOVERNMENT.

The annual report of Hon. P. J. Veniot as Minister of Public Works which was laid on the table of the Legislature on Wednesday afternoon contains abundant evidence of the reckless prodigality with which the public money of the province is being dissipated on the services administered by his department. Take the two items of ordinary bridges and ordinary roads. We find that during the year the government expended on ordinary bridges the sum of \$217,145.38, and on ordinary roads \$226,843.93, or a total of \$443,989.31. The appropriation for the services was \$300,000, so already the Fosterites are \$143,989.31 over-expended on these items alone. Under the rule of the former Government the appropriation for ordinary roads and ordinary bridges averaged \$300,000 per year and this amount was expended, as the people well knew, with far better results than we have today.

During the last election campaign members of the Foster party raised their voices in every county in the province in protest to high heaven against what they termed the gross extravagance of the Murray Government. Yet in its first term, Mr. Foster's "business administration" has eclipsed all records for prodigality and has thrown away the road and bridge money by the handful, obtaining for the people but very indifferent returns.

It should not be forgotten that during the year the Foster government borrowed \$500,000 on account of permanent roads. Mr. Veniot's report shows that to the close of the fiscal year they had expended \$334,066.65 of this, while Mr. Smith of Carleton in reply to a question as to the expenditure on permanent roads since the close of the fiscal year, obtained the information that \$78,086.76 had been spent. Add the two amounts and the total is \$412,153.41 as the total of permanent road expenditure. To this, add the sum over-expended on ordinary roads and bridges and we find that out of their bond issue and all their ordinary appropriation the government has spent the appalling total of \$856,142.72 on the roads and bridges of the province, and this takes no account of expenditures on permanent bridges.

The question can well be asked: What have the people received for their money? Instead of practicing economy the Foster government is doing the very reverse. There has not yet been opportunity at Fredericton to bring all these matters out across the floor of the House, but there can be no question but that before the present session has ended the Minister of Public Works and his colleagues will be called sharply to account for their recklessness. Mr. Foster in opposition promised the people a business government. Mr. Foster in power seems well content to sit supinely by and allow stronger hands to run the ship of state. And judging from present indications the course taken by Pilot Veniot leads straight for the rocks of provincial bankruptcy. It will not do. It is not what the people of New Brunswick were led to expect when this government took office, but every day reveals the truth of the situation and the truth is that a government which won its way to power by false pretenses finds, when enthroned in the administrative benches, that it is utterly incapable of properly administering public affairs. The material is not there. One cannot make constructive statements or careful administrators out of the men by whom the present leader has surrounded himself.

THE SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN.

That the women of this province should have a voice and vote in the selection of the men who administer our provincial affairs as well as those who go to Ottawa to care for the business of the Dominion, will appeal to all as sound common sense. Let us, for a moment, depart from the path of argument usually followed in the discussion of women suffrage and consider the question purely from a business standpoint. If it is a good argument to say that the interest of the women in the affairs of the Dominion is sufficiently great to entitle them to a vote in Dominion elections, why cannot the same reasoning be applied to votes for women of New Brunswick in provincial affairs? The business man, agent of this province vitally affects the people of this province, men and women alike. It is to our provincial government that we look for the administration of our schools, for the provision of our roads and bridges, for the encouragement of agriculture

and the development of our resources. Why then should the women of the province not have a voice in selecting the men to take charge of the administration where their real interest lies?

As to the argument that participation in politics or in public life will have a tendency to degrade the women of the land, that has been answered every day since the outbreak of war. The women of the land have practically taken charge of some of the greatest undertakings necessary to our participation in the war and they have done it well. It is not recorded that their activities in this line have tended to rob them of their womanly qualities or make them less gentle or less refined. Therefore that argument falls and the thing to consider is not the effect participation in politics will have upon our women, but the effect our women will have upon our politics. The Standard believes that the effect will be good and that public life will be better and cleaner when the women have a voice in the selection of public representatives.

That the women will exercise their franchise with intelligent discernment and a keen regard for the interests of the country is well demonstrated by the experience of the last Dominion election. In that contest the women worked for their men folk overseas and they worked well. To them in very large measure must be given the credit for the splendid victory achieved and it is a certainty that in the future they will play an ever-increasing part in the public affairs of this country. That this is their right is recognized by the Prime Minister of Canada, who will introduce a bill at the present session at Parliament to give women the vote in Dominion elections.

In the light of this action Hon. J. A. Murray, Opposition leader in the Legislature, is entitled to a full measure of credit for the resolution he introduced in that body yesterday by which he took the first step in the direction of securing the franchise for the women of New Brunswick, the resolution passed the House without a dissenting voice and it is assumed that a bill will soon be submitted to give effect to the desired reform. It is to be hoped that when that bill comes before the House the gentlemen supporting Premier Foster will give to the same measure of support they accorded to yesterday's resolution. If they do not they will show themselves to be sadly out of joint with the times, for woman suffrage is one of the political reforms that is certain of adoption in all parts of the civilized world. At present, of all the Canadian provinces, only the Maritimes and Quebec withhold the franchise from women, and in Nova Scotia a measure is already being taken to remedy this condition. New Brunswick should not lag behind. Mr. Murray and those who voted with him in the Legislature yesterday will merit the warmest commendation and support of all who believe that our women should take the place in the public life of the country to which they have shown themselves to be entitled and for which they are eminently qualified.

WHAT MR. H. M. BLAIR GOT.

In the Legislature a few days ago an enquiry from Mr. Smith of Carleton elicited the information that Hon. Mr. Veniot had engaged Mr. Harry M. Blair as a special official for the collection of delinquent motor vehicle fees, and for the enforcement of the act. Mr. Blair was employed by the department for three months and at that time drew from the public treasury the sum of \$1,200. In the report of the public works department this amount is classified as follows:

Three months' salary at \$125.....	\$375
Monthly allowance for expenses including use of car three months at \$275	\$825
Total	\$1,200

Mr. Blair, it will be remembered, is the gentleman who was formerly employed as secretary of the department and who figured rather notoriously in an investigation conducted by Mr. M. G. Teed, K. C. into certain bridge expenditures of the department when under the superintendence of Mr. John Morley. At that investigation it was shown that Mr. Blair had also been concerned in a transaction involving the gift of certain stock in a company holding a contract with the department. Now companies holding provincial contracts do not make gifts of stock to officials of the department with which they are doing business, unless they expect some favor in return for such gift. Evidently it was so in Mr. Blair's case although that gentleman, when on the witness stand, declared

there was no improper relation between him and the company and rather intimated that the gift of stock was made purely as an evidence of friendship on the part of the contractor. What the commissioner thought of this evidence may be gleaned from the fact that he referred to Mr. Blair as a man whose testimony he would not believe under oath. Following that investigation Mr. Blair speedily terminated his connection with the provincial public works, but did not remain long out of the service. Mr. Veniot took charge early last year and lost no time in seeking to reward Mr. Blair for his services to the party in connection with the Carleton county by-election and in other ways. Consequently, we find this gentleman, who has already been stamped by a royal commissioner as unreliable, figuring once more on the department payroll, only this time he appears as a special collector of delinquent motor vehicle fees, and for three months' work in that connection manages to extract \$1,200 from the province. Surely Mr. Veniot has amply rewarded the ex-secretary for his political labors, but there is no reason why the public should pay the bill. It is quite possible that an officer for the collection of such fees is a necessary official. But such an official should not cost the province \$1,200 for three months' work, and when it is remembered that the official in question is Harry M. Blair, the discredited and dismissed one-time secretary of the department, the whole transaction has a mighty suspicious appearance.

THE GERMAN DRIVE.

The German offensive with all the force the Kaiser's armies have been able to muster has been expected for some time. That they should secure preliminary successes is not a matter of deep concern, because beyond doubt the Allies will at once reinforce the threatened positions to an extent which will make a further aggressive impossible. This operation is not likely to be decided in a few days, and while the Germans may succeed in attaining some of their objectives, it is a certainty that such a success will be attended by very heavy losses.

It will be much easier to count the German army after this offensive has finished than it was before.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WILL IT BE TOO LATE AGAIN?

To the Editor: Once upon a time, before the era of the great war, there was a slogan which ran, "Wake Up England." Since 1914 England had a great awakening, and now fully realizes the menace to her existence. This slogan was afterward changed to read, "Wake Up Canada." Hitherto the message has not been properly impressed upon our people here. Premier Borden has repeatedly insisted on the equality of opportunity, service, and sacrifice; but it is not followed to its logical conclusion. Far from it. The history of the Military Service Act, as at present developed, shows a very pronounced objection to equal service and sacrifice. The theory back of the Act has not been carried out in practice. We have

undoubted proof that the provisions of the Act have not been followed with strict impartiality, either as to class or individual. Handicaps, official and otherwise, have tied the hands of those appointed to apply conscientiously the principle of selective conscription. The very class of men are kept home who would be the ideal type of fighters. The misfits who are not of much utility at home, or at the front, have to be returned home at a great expense to the country. The Government, for reasons best known to itself, has to a great extent, by its own procedure, nullified a law of its own making, which was originally intended to raise the reinforcements demanded by and promised to our gallant representatives who are over there in Europe, fighting to the limit of human endurance, to preserve our national and individual freedom, and to protect us all from the internal effects of a possible victory for Germanic absolutism. At a time when the struggle for the maintenance of universal freedom, and the principle of international justice, is at the maximum. At the very time when the people of those nations principally concerned are rallying to their respective flags to the last man, we, the people of Canada, in spite of the undoubted menace to our vital interests, look calmly on while others fight our battle. We know it is our fight. The truth of this fact has been demonstrated to us times without number. Our attitude seems to be insane, apathetic.

We appear to have no interest in the issues involved, outside of the purely selfish one of how much can we make out of the war? The maxim of many who have claimed exemption can be best defined thus: "I'll be numbered with the missing, but never, never, with the slain. Or, let those fight who will, I'll be a stalker still."

There are many cases where there are three to five or more brothers in one family. In very few cases will they listen to an appeal for at least one of the family to volunteer for service. I have made such appeals many times so far without result.

In the case of farmers, when we have tried to use the principle of selective conscription, and compelled one to take his place in the ranks, we have been confronted with official hints to leave them alone, as a privileged class. Affidavits are plentiful to prove men are over or under the age limit, when collateral evidence is to the contrary. When we contrast the official figures, we see that the very thing for which the Government received a mandate,

Little Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE.

The Sparrows.

O the sparrows sing and hop and fly,
And fly and hop and sing.
And walk on the snow in their little bare feet,
Proving you can get used to anything.

They don't fly south in winter,
When the other birds have all flew.
O is it because they are braver,
Or because they miss something if they do?

They always seem extra busy,
And make little chirps with their tung.
And whenever you look and can't see any,
They're home slipping their tung.

They don't fly away till you get rite up close,
Being because they're either tame or lazy.
But if one let you get close enough to put salt on his tail
The others would think it was crazy.

Sparrows are very fond of crumbs,
And with pleasure they peck them rite in.
But if you offered one a hole loaf of bread,
It wouldn't know wate to begin.

They like to set on telephone wires
And look around with animation,
And you never can tell, when you're telephoning,
Whether there's sparrows on your conversation.

YOUR SICK CHILD IS CONSTIPATED! LOOK AT TONGUE

If cross, feverish or bilious give "California Syrup of Figs."

Bath, N. B. W. H. BRAMLEY.

A BIT OF VERSE

THE LITTLE FATHER.

Nichol, Nichol, Little Father,
How I wonder where you are?
You who thought it best to fly,
Being so afraid to die.
Now the sullen crowds are gone,
Now there's naught to fire upon;
Sweet your sleigh bells ring afar,
Tinkle, tinkle, Little Father.

Little Father, with soul so small,
How are you a Czar at all?
You're had been a happier lot,
In some peasant's humble cot,
Yet to you was given a day
With a noble part to play.
As an Emperor and a man;
When it came—"then Nicky ran."

Little Father, beware the hour
When the people strike at power;
Soul and body held in thrall,
They are human after all.
Thrones that reek of blood and tears
Fall before the avenging years.
While you watch your sinking star,
Tremble, tremble, Little Father.

A BIT OF FUN

Usually the fellow who depends on a boost to get him to the top has to have help after he gets there.

The race isn't always to the swift, but the slow are seldom favorites in the betting.

Spring has every opportunity to make herself popular this year.

The Joy Out of Life.

They had been dining in state in the dining car, husband, who is a teacher of English, was glad that little daughter had behaved so perfectly. Mother also was in a happy frame of mind. There were numerous other diners in the car and the parents were proud of their child. Not a single thing had happened to mar the serenity of the occasion. Finally the meal was over and they started to leave the car. Their way took them past all of the other tables. Suddenly the little girl felt impelled to ask a question.

"Mother," she called in a shrill voice, "aren't we going to wash the dishes?"—Indianapolis News.

AT SCHOOL.

The young "pride of the family" had been to school for the first time in his short six years.

"What did you learn?" asked his mother, as mothers always ask on the afternoon after the morning before.

"I didn't learn nothing," he replied. "I have to go back to-morrow."—Indianapolis News.

NOT PIKERS.

"O, Mary! Last night I dreamed we had the nicest little runabout, and—"

"John Henry Smith, you do right back to sleep and dream a REMONSTER, or get out and walk! There'll be no cheap dreaming in this family!"—Richmond Times Dispatch.

PITY THE NEIGHBORS.

"Is your daughter fond of the needle?"

"Very, if you refer to the gramophone needle."

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Illustrations

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New York, March 20.—Southern Railway system lines east and west 2nd week March Inc. \$285,700. From January 1, Inc. \$2,690,600. Washington, Feb. 22.—Germany will remain on offensive.

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