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ST. JOHN, N. B. MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1920.

THE PANAMA CANAL

It is announced that as soon as the Harding Administration comes into power it will enact legislation relieving American ships passing through the Panama Canal of the tolls now collected. This action was shadowed when the Republican platform was adopted in Chicago. It contained this clause: "We recommend that all ships engaged in coastwise trade and all vessels of the American merchant marine shall pass through the Panama Canal without payment of tolls." Senator Harding is committed to this policy which amounts to a repudiation on the part of the United States of a clause in the Hay-Panama treaty, which is as follows:

"The canal shall be free and open to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations observing these rules on terms of entire equality, so that there shall be no discrimination against any such nation or its citizens or subjects in respect of the conditions or charges of traffic or otherwise. Such conditions and charges of traffic shall be just and equitable." This clause did not originate in the Hay-Panama treaty. It was taken from the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850, which defined the obligations of both countries with respect to the canal.

The Mail and Empire points out that had the Clayton-Bulwer treaty not been abrogated it would have been impossible for the United States to undertake the construction of the canal, Britain having equal rights. Moreover, Great Britain would never have yielded her rights in the isthmus had she not been assured that her vessels would not be discriminated against. There would have been no point in making such an improvident bargain. The suggestion that American ships might be thus benefited was made by American vessel owners some years ago, when Mr. Hay was living. He publicly declared that the clause meant exactly what it said, and that it would be a serious breach of faith to grant this special privilege to American vessels. The repeal plank was put in the Republican platform at the instigation of the meaner minds of the party and consented to by others, perhaps in the belief that it never would be translated into legislation. It has been warmly applauded by the Hearst papers, but by no other prominent journals we can call to mind. It is denounced as vigorously by the Republican New York Tribune as by the Democratic New York World, the latter observing that it "can think of nothing that is better calculated to destroy all confidence in the good faith and international responsibility of the United States than the legislation which the Republican platform advocates and which Mr. Harding has approved."

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

Appropos to the recent activities of the Lord's Day Alliance which have resulted in a man who on Saturday night overlooked the fact that his stock of cigars or cigarettes were somewhat low, having to go "smokeless" all day Sunday, we commend the following article, which appeared in a recent issue of the Montreal Herald, to the attention of this busy body:

"A delegation of the Social Service Council of the City of Quebec, which included the secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance, waited on the mayor of that city on Tuesday and asked that steps be taken to close the moving picture theatres on Sundays. This is coincident with a movement started last week in the United States by the Lord's Day Alliance to close up all places of amusement on Sundays, including ball parks, golf links, ice cream parlors and a number of other places of popular resort. A Western mayor whose city some time had Sunday baseball discovered on examining the records that the arrests for intoxication and other misdemeanors were much less numerous when several thousands in a remote part of the city gathered to witness a game. There is a story of John Knox calling on John Calvin on a Sunday and finding him playing a game of bowls. It is after all a matter of conscience how a man spends his leisure hours, on Sunday or other days. To make the vast majority conform to a Puritanical Sunday has proved impossible, the Mayor of Quebec told the delegation, and he suggested that the closing of all popular resorts in the city might lead to the opening of far less desirable places outside the jurisdiction of the city."

"A day of rest, affording opportunity for church attendance and family reunions, is highly desirable, but there is also time for healthy recreation and wholesome amusement. The duty of trying to restrict by

NOVELIST REVEALED AS BRITISH SPY

(Mail and Empire)

Mr. R. M. W. Mason is known to Canadians and to novel readers generally as an extremely entertaining author. He has scored several notable successes, and his fine story, "Miranda of the Balcony," proved a hit on the stage. He will be almost a stranger, however, when introduced as Major Mason, secret agent of the British Government in Mexico during the war. He was in charge of the British spies who were sent to Mexico early in the struggle, and it was due to him and his subordinates that every important move made by Germany with regard to Mexico was known to the British Government. How Major Mason came to be selected as a spy is not disclosed. It may be that some member of the Government had read his thrilling "At the Villa Rosa," surely the best detective story written in many years, and inferred that a man who could devise such a plot would be a likely man to defeat plotters. At any rate, he became a secret service man, and was sent to Mexico, where it was known the Germans were working, and where the Carranza Government was recognized as being strongly pro-German.

A Reformed German

In an interview with the New York World Major Mason tells how the Government came to employ its most valuable spy. He was a German spy originally, and was sent to England shortly before the war broke out. Whether he was marked down by the British secret service or voluntarily disclosed himself is not mentioned, but after operations in England for some time he was instructed to proceed to India and do his best to stir up the natives. Now, the German had lived in India, and knew just what horrors would follow to obey his orders, and then, if not before, the British authorities came across him. It was decided that he could be used to the best advantage in Mexico, where it was necessary, if the plots of Von Bokhardt were to be frustrated, that some Germans should get into his confidence. Upon Major Mason devolved the responsibility of getting the spy to Mexico and remaining in communication with him.

Forged Passport

To get him over to San Francisco was not difficult for the United States had not yet entered the war. There he was supplied with a forged British seaman's certificate, and a photograph substituted for that of the original. The broken seal was retouched so that a microscope would be needed to discover that it had been tampered with. Major Mason said that these precautions were necessary because the Mexican border was very closely guarded, and it would have been difficult for the spy to cross by the usual route. To have him reach a Mexican ship and then strike out for the capital, once there he had only to reach the German Ambassador, make his supposed identity known, and receive praise for his cleverness in outwitting the stupid British and the almost equally stupid Americans.

Taking Long Chances

The plan succeeded admirably, and the spy when he reached port had only to hint to the local authorities that he was a German agent to be given every assistance in carrying out his schemes. He reported at once to Von Bokhardt, who had never a suspicion that he was not what he represented himself to be. Major Mason had arrived in Mexico City before him, and it became a nice problem how the two were to communicate. The city swarmed with Mexican spies and also with German spies and they worked hand-in-glove with each other. Eventually a Mexican friend of Major Mason's rented a house in an old section of the town, which faced the town hall. At five or six in the evening Mason would arrive and enter from one street. Three or four hours later the reformed German would enter by the other. As the novelist remarked, both of them took long chances. Had the German chosen to betray him, his life would have been worth little. Had the German been detected in his double game he would have been assassinated.

Valuable Information

It was necessary, too, that the spy should be checked up. For some time it was difficult to discover whether he was not double crossing the British Government. But he proved loyal, and through him everything that the Germans did in Mexico and much they decided elsewhere was revealed to the British, for the spy had been placed upon the German General Staff. It cost a good deal of money to get this information, but it was priceless. After the war the former German spy was treated handsomely by the British Government, and he need do no more work so long as he lives. Major Mason says that the British Government employed women spies, but that they were used for unimportant work, such as the carrying of messages and the vamping of susceptible enemies. He does not believe that the Germans ever contemplated destroying the Tampico oil wells in order to cripple the British navy, because they had it all framed up to seize those wells as soon as they had won the war.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Bouquets for the Towns. (Hamilton Herald.) It is claimed by the Farmers' Sun that the U. F. O. success in East Elgin was a victory for "the common people." Evidently the U. F. O. does the people in the towns and cities as uncommon people.

Do It Now. (Guelph Mercury.) When you think of Christmas shopping then think of the comfort to the salespeople if you don't delay the job till the last of the week. Spread it all over the week that interests you'll be just as glad as the three girls who wait on you. Shop early is a good motto about this time of year, though it seems to be seldom heeded.

Benny's Note Book
BY LEE PAPE

I took my shoes to the shoemakers at lunch time yesterday to see if he could do anything with him, which he said he could and he gave me a ardent ticket for the movies, saying on it, Admit one to one performance at the Little Grand, good only on the afternoon of the day punched.

With the day punched was yesterday, me thinking, G. I can go after school leaves out if I don't get kept after school, G. I'll be so good in school this afternoon Miss Kitty will think in somebody else, I'll be so good she'll think in sick.

And when I went back to school I sat up at a desk as anything, and whenever Miss Kitty looked towards my direction I started to look as polite as the dickens, thinking, G. she won't dare keep me in.

With after a while Pats Simkins setting rite in back of me started to whisper, Hey Benny, are you coming out after supper tonight?

Me just acting as if I thaw I didn't hear him, on account of not wanting Miss Kitty to catch me talking, and Pats whispered, Hey, what the heck the matter, are you deaf?

Me just keeping on setting up state and looking polite, and Pats whispered fear as anything, Hey you big prun, why don't you answer won't you're whispered to, you loused Sweets?

Me just looking polite as if I didn't know a insult was I heard one, and Miss Kitty said, Charles Simkins, you will remain after school for persistent talking, and I want to congratulate Benny Potts for sitting there and not paying any attention to you. Benny, I will reward you by letting you stay and sharpen the drawing pencils.

Me thinking, Heck, goosh shang it, heck. Not wanting to say I didn't want to on account of it being supposed to be a honor. And by the time I got around to the Little Grand the people was just coming out.

Proving some honors are more trouble than they're worth.

Also if more shopping on other days than Saturday would work out every week of the year to the advantage of customers and merchants alike.

A Gift Your Wife Will Welcome

Satisfies the U. F. O. (Brookville Recorder and Times.)

No use monkeying with the fact. Nobody is satisfied with East Elgin except Crerar, McDermand and the Farmers' Party, and even they must admit a big shrinkage in vote since the provincial election. At the last election the U. F. O. candidate tore up this Tory constituency by over 1,000 majority, and the other day he got 208 plurality. None of the three candidates running got a majority, so that it is hard to just size up what the election in that riding indicates in its entirety.

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Malice Aforethought. Scene—A servants' registry office. Dyspeptic-Looking Person: "My name is Piffle Mr. William Piffle. This establishment supplied my wife with a cook last week." Registrar: "Quite right, Mr. Piffle. Dyspeptic-Looking Person: "Well, I would like you to come and dine with us this evening." Passing Slow.

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