

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1912.

RECEPTION OF MR. BORDEN'S NAVAL POLICY.

The reception accorded the naval programme submitted to Parliament by Mr. Borden on Thursday, by the Liberal press, is not as bitter as was expected. This is probably due to the fact that while no official announcement had been made in advance the programme brought down was not a surprise. Indeed the question had been generally discussed by the newspapers for the past two weeks, during which period not much fault was found with it. The moderate criticism of the measure by the French press is a surprise. Even Bourassa is only half belligerent and to all appearances is casting about to find some other hook to hang his hat on and hold the Nationalist party together. The Montreal Witness and the Montreal Herald both seem to accept the Borden policy in full. Mr. Hawke, who tells people that he is an Imperialist, is to all appearances the only really vicious opponent Mr. Borden has—worse even than the Toronto Globe, who accuses Mr. Borden with being altogether too penurious in his dealings with the Empire. In addition to presenting the ships to the Imperial Government he should have sent them fully manned and instructed the paymaster to draw on the Dominion Treasury for the cost of their maintenance also.

Among those who have given the question fair and careful consideration there is a strong feeling that Mr. Borden has not only made a generous contribution to the Empire, but that he has also adopted the best possible method of aiding the Mother Country in her present emergency. The moral effect of the action of the Overseas Dominions on the naval question will be of far greater service to the whole Empire than mere money grants or the presentation of ships of war fully equipped. It is a notice to the whole belligerent world that in the matter of defence of its interests the Empire is a unit. If the British Islands are attacked; if the prestige of Britain on the high seas is endangered; if it is not Britain alone that will have to be consulted but the rapidly growing nations in all sections of the world.

With half the Dreadnoughts Great Britain can now wage war or defend her interests against any nation on earth. She has established and equipped many bases where her ships can be repaired in case of damage and so circumstanced as long as Great Britain continues her present policy none other ever will be. Besides all this, if the Overseas Dominions undertake to add first class battleships to the navy as they are doing, and men can be obtained to man them, other nations will soon realize that to follow Britain, even at a distance, will not only be expensive but foolish. How long can the German Empire stand the strain of her present naval expenditure? How long will it be before the people will rise in revolt at the huge taxes levied for the support of the navy that is of no practical use to the country? An army Germany must have. A navy is of no value save to wage war on Great Britain. The people are beginning to realize the impotency of the German naval policy. With every part of the British Empire contributing towards the cost of the greatest navy on earth—a navy that has been invincible for a century—the building of great battleships will cease and the nations will allow Britain to peacefully police the seas and protect her commerce against marauders of every class.

Canada is prepared to do all that properly belongs to her to maintain the prestige of Britain on the seas. This is the sentiment which prevails from ocean to ocean.

Mr. Borden, in the best interests of the country, proposes an emergency contribution, but there is nothing in what he has said that makes this contribution the fixed policy of the Mother Country. There is nothing to prevent the construction of a Canadian navy and the setting of it afloat, manned by Canadians, should it be determined at any time that this is the best position for Canada to take. Mr. Borden was called upon to meet an emergency. He has done so and the country at large sustains the course he has taken.

THE AUTOMOBILE AND THE ROADS.

An official of the Board of Public Works of New Brunswick has given out the statement that there are over 7000 licensed automobiles in this Province, and that the revenue from this source will be over \$5,000 this year—practically double what it was last year. While the sum received is not yet a large one, it is big enough to attract attention, particularly as a few years ago, under the old Administration, it was scarcely sufficient to pay for the tags placed on the machines and the actual expenses of administering the law. As the number of autos has increased every year, and latterly at a much higher rate than at first, it is only fair to assume that next year the revenue from autos will not be less than \$12,000. Up to the present time the revenue has not been assigned to any particular purpose but has formed a part of the general revenue of the Public Works Department and has been expended by the department in carrying out the legislative programme of the year.

There has never been enough money to spend on the roads, particularly on such roads as are now demanded by a portion of the public, automobile owners principally. These and a few others desire macadamized roads, if not brick pavements. The cheapest macadamized road that can be built costs in the neighborhood of \$2,500 a mile. While such a road is an immense improvement on a dirt highway it is necessarily narrow and lacking in many essentials what a modern highway should be. There are over 12,000 miles of highway in New Brunswick, recorded in the office of the Chief Commissioner of Public Works. Of course only a comparatively small percentage of this mileage can be defined as trunk roads. The most important highways in the Province are those from St. Stephen, leading through St. John to the Nova Scotia boundary. Then there is another great highway extending up the North Shore from Moncton to the Quebec boundary, and still another from St. John, following the river to the Quebec boundary in Madawaska county. From Fredericton to Woodstock there are roads on both sides of the river, and from St. John to Fredericton there are three roads that may be followed. The old Royal road, the road from Fredericton to the North Shore, and that from Fredericton to St. Andrews are not as greatly used as in the old coaching days. There are many other roads in different sections of the Province which have lost their importance since the construction of railways. Still the Public Works Department has a vast and extensive work to do in administering the roads of the Province.

The automobile owners have long been publicly advocating better roads. Such roads are bound to come, and those who own and operate automobiles, and who

build them as well, will have to assist financially in the improvement demanded. The present revenue from this source would pay the interest on about \$200,000 which, by contributions from the general fund, would permit the construction of say 20 miles of improved highway. To provide for the construction of only one hundred miles of highway would necessitate a revenue from automobiles of \$40,000 and as much more from the provincial treasury annually.

When the amount of the grant proposed from the Federal treasury is learned, some definite scheme for road improvement can be inaugurated, but at the present moment the financial end of the scheme is what stands in the way. To have better roads means higher taxation, and so far the advocates of a lavish road expenditure are distinctly backward in coming forward with some feasible plan to meet the emergency. No doubt the new revenue received by the Government will be expended on the roads for permanent improvements.

A DANGEROUS SPORT.

When a man goes into the woods armed with a powerful rifle, to shoot big game, he should either be accompanied by a competent guide or possess sufficient horse sense to recognize a man from a bull moose or buck deer. In New Brunswick there have been but few fatalities from this cause—for many years there were none. The first occurred two years ago and this year the list has been further added to. This is a matter to be regretted, not only because human life has been sacrificed, but because people have taken out licenses whose nature is until they are hunters. It is the anxiety to obtain a head, good, bad or indifferent, that is productive of haste in discharging a rifle. Hunters of this class, fortunately there are not many of them, are liable to discharge their weapon into the brush without knowledge of what they are shooting at. They hear a noise and forthwith shoot as likely as not without taking aim. Then again it has happened that shots are discharged in the half-light of the evening or in the early dawn. No rifleman however expert can be sure of his aim when the light is uncertain. The New Brunswick game law prevents shooting at these hours, and wisely so. This is one reason why the fatalities are fewer here than in the great game preserves elsewhere. Every year for many years past there has been an increase in the number of game licenses issued, not only to residents but to non-residents also.

New Brunswick today contains the best game preserves in Eastern America and has a well administered game law. Taking into consideration that offences against this law take place miles from civilization the difficulty of a rigid enforcement of the law are generally understood. It would take a small army of men to establish a patrol of every district where big game abounds, as in the last few years moose and deer have been shot in every county of the Province, where a few years ago they were confined to a comparatively small area. It is possibly due to the spreading of the moose into localities nearer civilization than formerly that is due the increased number of "accidents" reported. The question of preventing such "accidents" has been freely discussed but no effective means has as yet been provided to meet the emergency. Heavy penalties have been provided in many States in the Union but these have not reduced the killings. There are no special provisions in New Brunswick where such cases are dealt with under the criminal code, if the report of the coroner shows that such action is necessary, and this is perhaps the best way.

The number of deaths caused by careless sportsmen in the United States has impelled the Detroit Free Press to make the following deliverance on the question: "Our annual northwoods slaughter being, however, we now pause to make note of the casualties. We learn from the Chicago statisticians that eighty-eight persons have been killed and fifty-three injured during the brief deer hunting season, Michigan contributing to this total twenty-four killed and eighteen injured. Deer hunting in the United States ought to be listed as an extra hazardous employment or diversion, permitted only to those of approved skill and judgment. Though we are not in possession of exact figures, it is safe to assert that the nation's hunting season has been responsible for more fatalities than the summer season of aeroplaning throughout the entire world, and that the man who goes into the upper peninsula woods has far less chance to return alive and sound than has the flier who goes into the upper air in an attempt to cross the English Channel or soar over the Alps. Were the hunting season and the aeroplaning season of equal lengths we soon would be buying flying machines for our sons as bribes to keep them out of the forests."

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

Early Christmas shopping is increasing in popularity everywhere. There is good reason why it should. In the first place the early buyer has much larger stocks to select from than those who delay until the last week before Christmas. Then the rush in the early days of December is not nearly so great. This gives time for a closer inspection of the goods and greater leisure in making purchases. In the last hours before Christmas clerks are often compelled to wait on two or three customers at a time. At the commencement of the shopping they can give their individual time to one customer with greater satisfaction to both customer and salesman.

The general prosperity which has been so marked in Canada this year has impelled the merchants to lay in large stocks of goods suitable for the Christmas trade. It is doubtful if ever before this year the shops in St. John had such well assorted stocks of goods, both of domestic and foreign manufacture, staple and ornamental. St. John has enjoyed unusual prosperity in the past twelve months. The people have money to spend and are already spending it. The Christmas rush has not yet commenced, but there is a steady buying of gifts, the interchange of which has come to be recognized as an important part of the season of peace and good will.

Mr. Robert J. Kerr, former passenger traffic manager of the C. P. R., testifying before a New York court the other day, said that one year the gross earnings of the C. P. R. Atlantic steamers were \$5,234,760 and the net earnings \$711,242. This is quite a business in itself, and apparently not unprofitable.

Current Comment

Queer Logic.
(Montreal Gazette.)

The Revolutionary Labor Federation of France proposes to inaugurate a strike against mobilization in case of a European war breaking out. The Federation's purposes, that of preventing the murder and misery of battle, is so good that there will be pity for its leaders if they try to put their programme in force. Men who, when their country calls its people to its standards, try to stop obedience, are likely soon to face a firing party with their rifles in a row behind them.

Useless Christmas Giving.
(London Free Press.)

Useless giving is the bane of Christmas. Christmas giving is a nightmare to many good people. It is a practice which has been abused until it has become a burden of very real proportions. Unhappy the life that is wrapped in self and business and family cares to a degree that dwarfs the joy of giving to the plane of a generous deed. It is not giving at Christmas that is the trouble; it is the abuse of giving at Christmas.

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NEWS IN SHORT METRE

LOCAL.

Mons. Stagni Here Tuesday.
Monsignor Stagni, the apostolic delegate who is to consecrate Bishop LeBlanc here on Tuesday next will go from here to Halifax for a short visit. A reception is to be tendered him there by the clergy and laity. He will leave Halifax for Ottawa on the following Monday.

F. E. Biddescombe Killed.
While working on George McArthur's house at Riverside yesterday Francis E. Biddescombe, one of the best known carpenters in the city fell from the roof of the house to the ground, a distance of about thirty-five feet, striking a joist on the way down. He was brought into the city and died about two o'clock in the afternoon. Besides his wife he leaves three sons and three daughters. Mr. Biddescombe was 65 years of age.

Peterson Gets Ten Years.
His Honor Judge Forbes yesterday morning sentenced William Peterson to ten years in Dorchester on a charge of stealing 30 razors in February last. He was given in charge a few days ago by his wife for mistreating her. Herman Phillips was given five years in Dorchester on one of three charges of theft, forgery and obtaining money under false pretences, and suspended sentence on the other two charges.

Forty Hours Devotion.
Yesterday morning the Forty Hours' Devotion was commenced in St. Peter's church. At 7.30 o'clock solemn high mass was celebrated by Rev. Simon Grogan, C. S. R., who was assisted by Rev. E. Holland, C. S. R., as deacon, Rev. J. O'Regan, C. S. R., as sub-deacon, and Rev. Charles McCormick, C. S. R., as master of ceremonies. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place after mass. Those who took part in it were Bishop-elect LeBlanc, the priests of the church, the altar boys and the men of the parish.

A New Policeman.
William Oliver, aged 30, was sworn in a policeman yesterday morning, and went on duty last night. The new man is 30 years of age and is 5 feet 11½ inches in height and weighs 160 pounds.

Civic Pay Day.
Cashier Willet yesterday paid out to workmen employed by the city during the past two weeks the sum of \$3,862.32.

Vessel to be Sold.
In the Admiralty Court yesterday morning Judge McLeod, at the request of S. A. M. Skinner, plaintiff's solicitor, gave judgment for \$1,131.83 to Charles M. Kerrison for supplies furnished the schooner Vineyard. An order for the sale of the vessel to pay the claim was signed and the sale will take place in this city on Wednesday next, December 11.

PROVINCIAL.

Convicts Escape.
Dorchester, Dec. 6.—Two convicts in the maritime penitentiary escaped yesterday. Anthony Votour, of Kent county, doing a five years' term, and John Houdread doing a two years' sentence. They were at work in the quarry and during the dinner hour they made their escape into the woods.

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