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THE PEOPLES' PAPER

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THE MORALE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

By common consent the most important question before the British public today is not the Home Rule Bill or any other piece of proposed legislation; it is not even the fate of any political party in or out of office; it is the future condition, near and remote, of the British army. The truth and importance of this fact has been clearly perceived and courteously stated by foreign publicists and military authorities. Not a single important journal in either Germany or the United States has taken occasion from anything that has happened to utter a sneer against the British army, and some of them have gone out of their way to speak appreciatively of its splendid military record for the past few generations.

None the less, the British army has drifted into a perilous crisis from which it may be rescued only by calm consideration, frank admissions, and much swallowing of senseless and obstinate pride. Nothing can be urged against the soldiers and their non-commissioned officers: rank and file, and those in command who have risen from the ranks. The military people who are clearly on trial are the commissioned officers; the civilians who are in the same fix are the politicians who have incited the officers to make fools of themselves, and have been doing the same thing without any outside incitement. Judging from the most recent despatches it is not too late to clear up the whole situation with a minimum of official discredit and national humiliation, but this implies on the part of the blunderers and offenders a degree of moral courage and saving common sense that would have prevented the bungling if it had been present in available supply.

The theory of the British army is that it is an organized body under martial law for only a year at a time. If parliament were to fail any year to pass the so-called "Mutiny Act" a private soldier could safely refuse to obey his officers and could hit back if he were attacked by them. In such an event the disintegration of the army into a mass of individual units would take place instantly and completely; but it will take place just as surely if the present demoralization among the officers is allowed to go on. Already it is very hard to secure recruits to keep up the numerical strength of the regular army, and the contemplated strength of the "Territorials" has never been even closely approached. What the effect of a continuation of the present demoralization will be on the business of recruiting is a question for very grave consideration.—Toronto Globe.

UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Contrary to the opinion of certain critics, the United States is not altogether unprepared for intervention should developments in the Mexican situation make such a move imperative. There are now 20,000 American troops in close proximity of the border, with 20,000 more within easy reach, while more than 100,000 militiamen could be mobilized within a couple of weeks.

More significant than this, the coasts of Mexico are being patrolled by squadrons of the heaviest American fighting ships, and it would be possible, not only to establish an effective blockade of her ports within a few hours, but also to land several thousand marines to co-operate with the army in the space of only a few days. Meanwhile the majority of the Americans resident in Mexico have left the country and most of those who still remain through force of circumstances seem to be so placed as to be in little danger in case hostilities should break out. As to American property in Mexico, such a large proportion of it has already been destroyed that the prospect of further loss cuts little figure, says the Vancouver Sun.

On the whole the United States is much better prepared for a struggle with Mexico than she was in 1848, when, without a base of supplies and sometimes cut off from communication with the home government, General Taylor swept through Northern Mexico with an army of less than 7,000 men and defeated the splendidly equipped force of Santa Anna, which outnumbered his own more than three to one at the battle of Buena Vista. The two nations were then comparatively equal in numbers and equipment, though because of internal troubles Mexico was supposed to have the advantage in men already in the field at the beginning of the trouble. Indeed, in almost every important engagement of the war the Mexican forces outnumbered those of the United States, and on no occasion did the American troops suffer defeat.

At the present time the United States has nearly twice as many men in the regular army as were actually engaged in field service during the war of 1848, while her resources are probably a hundred-fold greater than they were then. With Mexico the situation is reversed. That country has pro-

gressed very little during the past seventy-five years, and, if anything, her military resources and equipment are inferior, relatively speaking, to what they were then.

All this would indicate that it is not fear of the outcome of a collision with Mexico which restrains President Wilson from intervening. His aim then, no doubt, is to avoid, if possible, a costly campaign, which would involve the loss of thousands of American lives, and would saddle the United States with responsibilities with regard to Mexico which far-sighted Americans are not anxious to have forced upon the nation. Recent incidents in Mexico, however, are strongly trying the patience of the president and his advisers. The enquiry into the death of the Scotchman Benton, showing that he was stabbed, not shot, after a military trial, as Villa claimed, must undoubtedly powerfully influence the government's future attitude towards the rebels. To allow a cold-blooded murder such as this to pass without the strongest remonstrance, backed up by an adequate show of force, would be to place the life of every foreigner in the constitutional zone in Mexico in danger, and we may be sure that the European nations with subjects in the country will exert the utmost pressure on Washington to avoid such an evidence of weakness as would be evinced by the failure of the United States to exact retribution. The point, in fact, has been reached where the United States must take an aggressive hand in the game, or allow the other powers to take such action as they consider necessary to protect their subjects and safeguard their interests in Mexico.

TRADE RESTRICTION

The statement of Canadian Trade for February emphasizes the effects of trade restriction and hard times under the present government. Not since the time of the former Conservative government in 1896 has there been such a marked decrease in trade. During the month, imports fell off by no less than \$14,401,754, or over 25 per cent as compared with February of last year. Exports decreased by \$2,304,080 or about 10 per cent. The total falling off in trade during the month amounted to \$17,000,000. The process is still continuing.

The government's efforts at trade expansion, through their one "triumph" of statesmanship, namely reciprocity with the West Indies, have apparently proved a dismal failure. Official figures given in the Commons a few days ago by the minister of customs, show that trade with the West Indies was actually less during the last half of 1913, after the West Indies Trade Convention came into force, than it was during the last six months of 1912. Imports from the West Indies during the last six months of 1912 amounted to \$3,172,923. During the last six months of 1913 the total was \$2,812,953, a decrease of about 10 per cent. This decrease in imports more than counterbalances an increase in exports amounting to \$294,845. Trade with British Guiana shows a still larger falling off under the boasted Convention, negotiated by Hon. George E. Foster. As compared with the last half of 1912 there was a falling off during the last half of 1913, of \$626,342 in imports and a falling off in exports of \$19,480.

Meanwhile, despite the trade restrictions between Canada and the United States, marketing and buying follow their natural courses, and imports and exports continue to show a steady increase.

NOTE AND COMMENT

Did you "let well enough alone" when you voted for Borden?

Now it is proposed to put baseball strikers in jail. Strikers mean those who refuse to work, that is, to play, for the pay agreed upon.

A German duelist has been sentenced to thirty months' imprisonment, which goes to show that barbarism is slowly passing in civilized countries.

The government now needing argument as to the benefits of shifting taxation from buildings to land will probably continue to need argument while it remains a government.

At this distance it seems reasonably safe to believe that the political storm in Britain will not carry away the roof. King George and Mr. Asquith both have a lot of common sense.

Australia does not want to depend on Japan for Naval defence. Neither does Canada. British naval defence in the Pacific is the natural duty of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The members of the legislature who voted themselves eligible for employment by the Dominion government must have been alarmed at demonstrations by the unemployed in Toronto.

At the very moment when the C. N. R. is seeking help from the public treasury at Ottawa electric traction concerns in close affiliation with the C. N. R. are trying to "lift" a franchise to do a street car business on Toronto's streets despite the protests of the people. Can you beat that for audacity?

A contributor to The London Nation says The Manchester Guardian has raced ahead of The Times in its parliamentary reports, as well as in the freshness and power of its political writing. There is talk of a London edition of The Guardian. Lord Northcliffe has not yet conquered all the world of newspaperdom.

AT THE SIGN OF THE PASTE POT

What would you think of a hat that was so large it would safely shelter your father, mother, sisters and yourself under it should a sudden rainstorm come up. The men of Korea like these enormous hats and would not feel properly dressed without them. These hats look like great flower pots set on a round table six feet across. The crowns are nine feet in height and three inches wide, much like a chimney on a one story house. How do you suppose these large, round head coverings are kept on? Under the brim is a small, closely fitting cap, held on by a padded string which ties under the ears. The material of these hats is bamboo, so finely split that it is like thread, and lastly they are varnished to keep out the sun and rain and the wind.

You know the Korean people always wear black clothing, so these big hats are far more than their hats possibly could. In the rainy season cones of oiled paper are attached to the big bamboo head coverings in the shape of funnels, so, I suppose, that the rain pours off of them just as water does off a duck's back. A Korean keeps his hat on when he should take it off. Soldiers wear black or brown felt hats decorated with red horse hair or peacock feathers, and hanging from the sides, over the ears and around their necks are oval balls of porcelain, amber and a queer kind of gum.

In civilized countries the death rate has been falling for many years. Infant mortality especially has been reduced, while considered relatively to population deaths from typhoid, diphtheria and some other diseases have been cut to a small fraction of what they were only fifteen or twenty years ago; but finer analysis of vital statistics shows that the death rate for persons between forty-five and sixty-five has risen, and precisely between those years a person should be at the prime of ability and usefulness.

One complacent explanation is that we now save many weaklings who under ruder conditions would have perished long before forty-five, but are now tided just past that mark, without having sufficient vitality to carry them to ripe age.

A truer explanation is probably that given by a statistician of a great life insurance company: "Increased consumption of alcohol, and, more especially, the industrial conditions that have prevailed during the last thirty years." As to alcohol consumption of all intoxicating drinks in the United States has risen from under nine gallons a head in 1871-1880 to twenty-two gallons. And that the average industrial employee is less vigorous at forty-five than was his predecessor of thirty years ago is almost probable.

Long hours and the hard pace of the modern factory must tend to wear men out in their prime. We save them in infancy, but kill them in middle age. Fortunately the factory work-day is steadily growing shorter. Not only better factory conditions should cause a fall in the prime-of-life death rate. That exhausting labor send men to drink is quite certain.

Our life is just as narrow as we let it be. If we live in a lonely country place miles from a railway, we can study the plants and animals about us until we come to understand something of the secrets of the universe. If our lot is in the great city we have opportunities of studying human nature—seeing with our own eyes the development of characters as strange as novelist ever put into his books. Multitudes of men walked the same street as Dickens without seeing a hundredth part of what he saw. It is the power to see and not the object to be seen, that we lack, and this power may be, to a certain extent, cultivated by practice.

Some one inquired how banks made their money, and the information should interest most people. The deposit rate is 3 per cent but the loan rate is 6 per cent. The difference we see is 3 per cent, but this does not represent their real profit. It is 100 per cent. A banking business is like an ordinary business—the goods they sell are money; so they pay \$3 for \$100 for one year and they charge \$6 for \$100 for one year, so they have doubled the money they paid for the goods; therefore, they have made 100 per cent. This will explain how banks can build such large and magnificent buildings and pay such large directors' fees.

CANADIAN FIRM AFFECTED

The action of the United States government in empowering the executive to construct or operate railroads in Alaska and authorizing an expenditure up to \$35,000,000 for that purpose may have an important bearing upon the fortunes of the shareholders of the defunct Sovereign Bank of Canada. The securities of the Alaskan Central Railway, together with those of the Chicago and Milwaukee Railway, were hypothecated with the Sovereign Bank at the same time, and between them they constitute the chief assets which remain to be realized.—Monetary Times.

PASSING OF NATIVE TRIBES OF SIBERIA

DISEASES, DRUNKENNESS AND VICES, INTRODUCED BY TRADERS AND GOLD SEEKERS

London, April 1.—The consensus of opinion among independent observers appears to be that the aborigines of eastern Siberia in general are doomed to extinction at an early date unless some efficacious means can be devised and applied to check the process of decay and degeneration which contact with Russian civilization appears to have set on foot.

Anglo-Saxon administrators and pioneers are familiar with a similar phenomenon among the Indians of the United States and Canada and some other primitive races. They will not, therefore, be induly denunciatory of Russian officialdom for its failure to cope successfully with a situation almost invariably created when the principal object impelling intercourse between a primitive and a civilized people is self-interest. But even his consideration cannot make the phenomenon itself any less depressing.

The disastrous influence of Russian proximity is asserted most powerfully in the extreme northeast of the Siberian continent. There such tribes as the Omok and Arintay have perished altogether. The Tchuvatchy, and Yukagiri are rapidly diminishing, while the Koriki, Gody and Tehukchi, Tungusy, Orocheni and Gilyaki, alike dependent for the most part upon the chase for a livelihood, complain that the advent of the Russian is the signal for the retreat of game into the remotest regions of the interior, whither they must perforce follow if they would avoid starvation.

Decrease in Some Tribes

We are told, writes a correspondent of the Times, that in 1862 the Yukagiri in the Yakutsk province numbered 1,518; but by 1894 they had been reduced to 436, and today they are not more than 300. In other words, during thirty years they had decreased by 71 per cent, and during fifty years by 85 per cent. It is much the same story with the Lamut, who roam the Verkhoyansk and Kolymsk districts, and who have to thank the Russians for the loss of virtually all their deer. In the '80s these peoples numbered 2,000; in 1896 there were scarcely more than 600, and at the present day it is doubtful if there are 400.

The intrusion of a "higher" form of civilization has introduced into their midst the horrors of smallpox, venereal diseases in their most virulent forms and the craving for strong drink, vodka more particularly, factors which are fast doing their deadly work. On the other hand this same propensity has created hitherto unknown needs, of which Russian traders take the fullest advantage. The aborigines have learned the use of money, to acquire which they are induced to part with their products for nominal sums.

From greedy traders one rarely looks for anything better than the exploitation of the weak. The pity in this case is, if Russian authorities themselves are to be credited, that there has hitherto prevailed even in official circles a tendency to view the question of the native tribes from a purely fiscal standpoint. In 1905, for example, S. A. Buturlin, an agent of the Home Department, visited the Kolymsk district and made a report in which he revealed some unpalatable facts.

In 1900 it appeared from a Government communication that the form of native tribute styled "yasak," a payment in kind, was actually being levied upon "dead souls," members of the Yukagiri tribe who had long since ceased to exist. In one case the tax imposed on the basis of sixty-nine able-bodied workers, whereas in reality there were only nineteen. In another case the tax list for 1905 estimated the local population at twenty-two, of whom thirteen were supposed to be workers. In reality, however, there were but three families living, comprising a veteran of 70 with an old wife, another old man of 60 and his wife, and a man of 40, his wife and two old parents. Thus in practice one man of 40 was required to pay taxes for thirty persons.

Sufferers From Famine

At the station Omolonsk Mr. Buturlin met the provincial assessor, who had just left Novo Kolymsk, and who reported to him that he knew nothing of the existence of famine among the populations; that during his three years of service he had weaned the natives from the habit of importuning the authorities for help and had taught them habits of independence. As a matter of fact the agent discovered that during the previous year the wretched natives had been reduced to eat shoe leather and had received no assistance.

In another case a Russian assessor sent by the headman of Yukagiri tribe a cold blooded order to compel his fellow tribesmen to hunt for furs at a time when the natives were suffering from hunger and were destitute of warm clothing. In the event of disobedience, and of subsequent representations on the score of famine, the order stated that the "authorities will be compelled to distribute the Yukagiri tribe among the other tribes, under the supervision of the authorities."

"In view of the well known mutual ill will prevailing between the original inhabitants, named Yukagiri and Lamut, and the comparatively later arrivals, stationary or semi-stationary Yakut," writes Mr. Buturlin, "such a project was in reality tantamount to a threat to

surrender tribes incapable of enduring a settled existence to the yoke of the Yakut. It may be readily understood that this order evoked among the roving natives talk about wholesale suicide as the only escape from the situation."

Somewhat late in the day it is beginning to be realized that the extinction of these primitive peoples bids fair to entail disaster not only upon the victims themselves but also upon the country as a whole, since their disappearance will have the effect of transforming almost limitless expanses into an inaccessible desert. The native tribes, in the course of centuries, have learned to adapt themselves to their harsh and intractable environment, and they alone are capable of peopling these areas. For the Russians such an undertaking would be impossible. The native question was raised recently during a meeting at Khabarovsk convened for the purpose of discussing the provincial estimates for the Udsak and Khabarovsk counties.

The following representations were made:

"That a statistical investigation of the condition of the native tribes should be carried out. That a permanent committee on the native question should be established, with the object of diffusing among the natives education, agricultural knowledge and medical assistance. The Governor-General of the Pri-Amur to be petitioned on the subject of creating a special fund by means of a Government subsidy for the needs of the native population and in the meantime that the settled native tribes should be accorded exactly the same privileges as the Russians in the matter of land, fishing and timber rights.

"The amelioration of the position of the native hunters, who should not be prosecuted for hunting without licenses. Permission to be granted to the natives to enjoy the use of land for kitchen gardens. The necessity for compulsory vaccination and for the training of the natives as 'feldshers,' a sort of assistant surgeon, was also recognized. On the other hand, the peasant participants in the meeting rejected a proposal for the appropriation of provincial moneys for the maintenance of native schools, urging that the latter should be supported by the State, on the ground that the natives did not pay provincial dues."

A pleasing exception to the almost general rule of decline and decay above described is afforded by the Burjats and Yakuts in eastern Siberia. The former in the Irkutsk government have increased steadily since 1857, and the same remark applies to the Transbaikalian region. In numerous cases they have abandoned their nomadic mode of existence and have taken kindly to agriculture, while at the same time they have begun to adopt many Russian customs as regards food, furniture and dress.

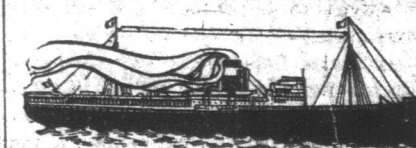
Similarly the Yakuts, under Russian influence, have developed very considerable agricultural interests; they are the owners of big herds of cattle and engage in hay making. They favor Russian dress and frequently construct their

dwellings in the Russian style. Both the Yakuts and the Burjats are quick to learn, and in the Yakutsk province Yakut scholars often constitute quite half of the total in the schools, while some of them qualify for higher education.

In general the example of the Russian agricultural population is a salutary one for the natives; the reverse is true of Russian traders, gold seekers and so forth, whose influence for the most part has the effect of engendering among the natives such vices as mendacity, cunning, thieving and drunkenness.

SASKATCHEWAN'S OATS

Messrs. J. C. Hill and Sons, of Lloydminster, have been successful in winning, for the third time in five years, the world's prize for the best peak of oats at the National Corn Exhibition held recently at Dallas, Texas. The trophy, valued at \$1,500, now becomes their property. No more notable triumph has been achieved since Sir Thomas Shanks Messy's prize of \$1,000 in gold for the spring or winter wheat was won by Saskatchewan farmer. Great efforts were made by United States farmers to win the trophy on their side of the border. Messrs. Hill and Sons have succeeded in proving to demonstration that for oats, as well as wheat, Saskatchewan's soil and climate are unequalled.



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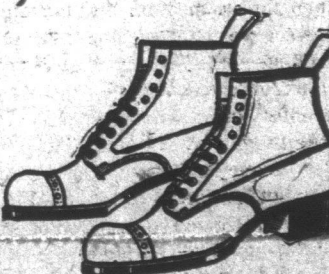
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