

THE STAR ST. JOHN N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26 1910

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ST. JOHN STAR.

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THE UPPER HOUSE.

This is a hard year for upper houses. Over in Russia members of the Duma would gladly move to abolish the council of empire were it not for the fact that they are a little afraid of being abolished themselves. Here in Canada Mr. Lancaster found a few jokers to join in his endeavor to obliterate the senate. That this stupid chamber has survived is not due to its mercy on the part of the leader of the anti-movement.

In Britain, the government professes an intense desire not to reform but to paralyze the power of the house of lords. And on top of all this there comes the announcement that the senate of the recently organized Australian commonwealth is a mere puppet.

In an article in the Empire Review for January Mr. F. A. W. Gibbons discusses in an interesting manner what he describes as the failure of the Australian senate. From what he says it might be judged that the upper house in this commonwealth does not enjoy even that measure of success attaching to the Canadian chamber and that there is very general dissatisfaction among the people over the system by which the members of the Australian body are chosen. The commonwealth follows an elective system under which half of the thirty-six members retire at the end of each three years. A similar method was in vogue in Canada previous to confederation, but was discarded in favor of the appointive plan. Mr. Gibbons in his article asserts that instead of the Australian senate filling the position of a protector of the rights of the vast out-lying provinces, it has become a mere tool of the central government.

It is interesting to note that the senate of the United States is chosen from each state—it gives its attention to no interests other than the pecuniary interests of its own members. He alleges that it is controlled by the ruling party in the house of representatives, that it pays no attention to the wishes of the dominant parties in the various states and that it utterly fails to exhibit any independence either in initiating legislation or in commenting on that proposed by the lower house.

The writer contends that as each state votes as a single electorate, this has led to the adoption of the ticket system by which the Labor party, although in the minority, vote so heavily for the ticket of their central organization and thus get more than a fair share of the membership.

STRICKEN PARIS.

Had the present disastrous floods overwhelmed France in one night the world would have been astounded at the devastation. But as the terrible conditions now existing have developed gradually during a period of a week or ten days, we have had time to quietly observe the progress of the ruin and, contradictory though it may seem, fail to properly realize the extent of the damage already done. While one quarter of the entire republic is reported to be under water, while hundreds of villages and towns have been either swept out of existence or temporarily submerged, and while the property loss in the outlying districts has undoubtedly been enormous, it is in Paris itself that the damage is greatest and the suffering most intense. Topographically, Paris is very unfavorably situated to combat a disaster of this nature. The river Seine, entering from the southeast, describes an arc, practically passing through the middle of the city. In its course from the southwestern corner, it sweeps around the district of Boulogne, and flows north and northeast past the Bois de Boulogne and on through Clignancy. Thus while Paris is on both sides of the Seine, the Seine is also on both sides of Paris, a situation which at a time like this renders transportation in certain directions exceedingly difficult.

Over the river, in the city proper, are some twenty bridges, of which six of eight are architecturally magnificent. At that point in the centre of the city where the Seine turns sharply to the southwest, is the Alma bridge, one of the most imposing, and at the same time one of the most difficult to protect from damage by wreckage sweeping down the stream.

Along its whole course of seven miles through the city, the Seine is held in check by broad embankments, or quays for the discharge of goods. The Champs Elysees, the Tuilleries gardens and the Louvre on the river front, are almost the centre of the weather section of the city, and directly north of them are the districts representing the greatest financial centre in architecture and construction. The fashionable and principal business streets, which while not on the immediate river-front, are by the comparatively level nature of that part of the city, almost equally exposed to danger. On the left or southern side of the river are found the principal hospitals, the military depots, the Luxembourg and Bourbon palaces—the latter being the seat of the Chamber of Deputies—and many buildings of historic or artistic note.

Paris secures its water supply from a number of sources, including the rivers Seine and Marne, the Ourcq canal, artesian wells, and springs. That from the Seine is stored in reservoirs in the higher levels. The Marne water is used chiefly for street and fire purposes, because of its unsuitability for domestic use. The supply from wells and springs is used in direct service. Pumping stations are required for all of these sources, and as the rivers furnish much the greater portion of the supply, it is clear that the failure of the pumps near the Seine embankment, along with the contamination of the water, must bring about a very serious condition. This contamination is said to be largely due, just now, to the bursting of sewers. Underground Paris is labyrinthine. Its sewers, immense conduits ranging in diameter from six to seventeen feet, traverse the city in every direction, and are used not only for sewerage but for telegraph and telephone wires, pneumatic tubes and water and gas pipes. The collapse of a sewer may thus involve damage to water, lighting and other services, and it is stated that by reason of the tremendous pressure now imposed many of these conduits are bursting.

In fact every condition by which destruction through flood may be increased, is to be found in Paris. The city is level, lies low in the valley of the Seine, has no adequate protection against high water, and is rendered particularly liable to damage by the honeycombed foundation on which it stands.

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The Evening Chit-Chat

By RUTH CAMERON

What did we do before we had the telephone? You have heard that before, haven't you? Well, don't get excited, I am not going to answer it. I admit I can't possibly tell you what we did before we had the telephone, but I can tell you something I think we didn't do—and that is, break our engagements so lightly.

"Really, if I didn't think Elmer needed me to fill her tables I certainly wouldn't go to the what in this horrid weather. It seems such an undertaking to me to get dressed for this weather and the fire does look so nice." I heard my next-door neighbor say the other day.

"Why don't you telephone Elmer?" promptly suggested mother. "Ask her if she can't get someone to take your place."

"It's pretty late—I don't know as I ought to. She might get Anils to go over—" my next-door neighbor said, hesitating, and then, after the manner of those who hesitate, was lost.

"Oh, I guess I'll call her up and ask," she capitulated.

To a telephone plan of an incident, cold-my next-door neighbor would be highly indignant if anyone hinted she was not strictly truthful, so I suppose she must have begun to feel that cold just as she sat down to the said nothing about it before.

There was a knock at the door, the unfortunate hostess, naturally responded that she would doubtless be able to find someone to fill in.

And my next-door neighbor cheerfully went back to her easy chair before the fire and I came home de-lit to write this.

"Oh, dear, I promised to go to that church fair committee meeting," says the lady across the street, "but I do want to finish this waist tonight. I've been fussing over it for a week now and Elsie did so want it to wear tomorrow."

"Why don't you telephone the chairman that you can't come?" spake up her husband.

"And in three minutes it is done. 'So sorry, but some unexpected work came up. You will forgive me, won't you? My judgment—that's sweet of you, but I don't know as it's worth very much. You'll telephone me what I'll do for coal mined, for the lease of 5,000 acres of some of the choicest coal lands in Alaska in the Katalla and Matanuska districts. Such a tonnage royalty would not to the government, Mr. Ballaine claimed, as much as \$50,000 per hundred acres."

This proposal contemplates a radical departure from present practice in the government's disposal of the Alaska coal lands, and it comes avowedly to do battle with an established position in a bill which has been prepared but not yet introduced, designed to permit the leasing of such lands at a rate of \$10 per acre. It is said that the general features of the plan have the approval of the highest officials of the department, and of influential members of both houses of congress, including some of the most prominent industrialists of Alaska and Delegate Wickham of Alaska.

Mr. Ballaine, in his letter to Senator Beveridge offers to enter into a bond of \$100,000 with the government for the performance of part of the agreement he proposes, and he makes the charge that "other interests" have "headed by a former United States senator" in the bill referred to above, and under the provisions of which he declares, the government would extend an unconditional guarantee to a railroad or railroads which those interests propose to build in Alaska, and would virtually donate to them at \$10 per acre or more tracts of 5,000 acres each, to be selected by them.

Mr. Ballaine asks congress to authorize the head of a department to be designated in the legislation to enter into a lease with a coal company to be organized by him for 5,000 acres of Matanuska coal lands, under all the provisions for regulation and against monopolistic control of prices as stipulated in the bill recently introduced by Senator Nelson in conformity with the recommendations of Secretary Ballaine.

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MARRIAGES

BROWN-RITCHIE.—At the Methodist parsonage, on Jan. 21st, 1910, by the Rev. Neil MacLachlan, Joseph Harold Brown to Lucy Victoria Ritchie.

DEATHS

McKENNIN.—In this city, on Jan. 25th, James McKennin, in the 81st year of his age, leaving two sons and one daughter to mourn. (Boston papers please copy).

Funeral tomorrow (Thursday) morning at 9.30 from the residence of his son, Thomas, Spar Cove road, to St. Peter's church, where regular high mass will be celebrated at 10 o'clock.

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In loving remembrance of John McRobbie McAvity, who died January 27, 1909.

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to put up their prescriptions. They know by experience that the ingredients they prescribe will be dispensed by us, as they desire them. Dispensing is our particular hobby and our prescription department is specially equipped to facilitate this work.

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PRESCRIPTION DRUGGIST,
Union and St. Patrick sts.

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