

THE ST. JOHN EVENING TIMES

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TAXATION.

The taxation committee of the board of trade has submitted a report, which is supplemented by a valuable statement, by Mr. W. M. Davis, dealing with the whole question of taxes, but especially with the tax on personal property. It is pointed out clearly that an equitable system of taxation on personal property is impossible. It is true, some people insist that there should be a personal property tax as well as a real estate tax, and that a good deal of difficulty surrounds any attempt to devise a satisfactory system which would not take some account of personal property. The assessment committee's report, however, will find the board of trade's committee's arguments and expressions of opinion valuable. Doubtless the board of trade will meet and discuss the report of its committee. There will of course be diversity of opinion, but the more exhaustively the subject is considered the more likelihood there will be of the commission arriving at a more equitable system of taxation. It is recognized that the city must have an increasing revenue. It is agreed that the present assessment law is not equitable. No amount of patching will make it satisfactory. Out of full and free discussion and careful study and comparison a new and better system must be devised. The taxpayers should read the board of trade committee's report, which appears in today's Times, and give it careful consideration. They should also give expression to their views.

INDEPENDENCE AND UNITY.

The first parliamentary gun for the independence of Canada under the old crown was fired this week by Mr. W. F. Maclean, writes the Ottawa correspondent of an American paper. The words of Mr. Maclean, which this writer thus interprets, were as follows:

When we speak of increased autonomy for the northwest I am reminded that there is something to be said of the need of greater autonomy for the dominion. The time has come when the bounds of our powers as a country should be widened. I am not afraid of the future, and the problems it will present for solution. I am not afraid to say that Canada should be more independent than she is today. I am afraid to say that the time will come for the disappearance of the governor general, when Canada will be an independent state under the crown of Great Britain, and that the parliament of Canada will make the constitution being made on the other side of the water. I am not afraid to say that I hope to see the day when our supreme court will be our court, and that I hope to see the day when Canada will make her own commercial treaties under the crown. I am not afraid to say that I hope to see the day when the members of this house, mention has been made here of our imperial relations, and I believe a proposal will be brought before this house dealing with that subject. My ideas are somewhat different from some I see in the press. The trend of public thought, as I read the signs of the times, is in the direction of establishing a British empire made up of free and independent states under the crown of England, and working not through a great imperial council, but through negotiations between the governments of these free and independent states.

This leads the American correspondent to indulge in a dream of the future. Assuming that each colony has secured complete autonomy or independence under King Edward, he says:

What a monarch, what an empire might the world then see, and rejoice to behold, at least the colonial, liberty-loving, non-predatory world. Of course the independence of Canada and Australia and New Zealand under the crown implies the equal independence of Ireland, King of Great Britain, king of Ireland, king of Canada, king of Australia, king of New Zealand, king of South Africa, emperor of all the British dominions! Before so tremendous a title his majesty's present holding sounds rather small.

Next to getting his various kingdoms into shape to defend their individual holdings, and to contribute at their own sole will, as auxiliaries or co-operators to all sorts of peaceful and warlike movements for the common empire, that plain but prominent American might reasonably think to improve the natural and other relations of the empire to the great republic of the blood. Could he fail to perceive that each or all of the equally independent kingdoms under his sovereignty would be free to negotiate with the big republican brother? A world-wide round table would thus have been created for the English-speaking peoples. Also, if any two of these desired a little dickering by themselves, the two could sit temporarily at a side table. Brother Jonathan and Father Bull could fix up their mutual interests, wholly unembarrassed by the British cabinet's lot of dependences that are tetchy simply because inferior and subordinate. Each separate council of the British empire would be similarly free to dickering and deal with the big brother. Over all of the British kingdoms would be the one arch, his interests and dignity common pride and care of all.

He, presumably a rational being, could be trusted to see that no one of his auxiliary kingdoms—to use Sir John Macdonald's phrase—made a deal that would be injurious to any other. The ramifications of agreements between the independent British kingdoms, and the huge republic, and everyone of these with all the other civilized powers, would surely tend to consolidate in peace the entire world.

It is true that a permanent, advisory, common council, or conference on general interests would be necessary. Is there one reason why representatives of the republic should not sit at that great round table of independent powers? More and more, as the big brother grew mightier and wealthier, he would be deferred to. Thus, gradually, kindly, happily, the hegemony of the race might pass to the hands of the republic. Early decentralization of the empire would seem the best way to accomplish that evolution of precedent without danger that it may bring through race-disruption, and blood, and tears, and an immense calamity to mankind. Consolidation of interest, and surely the paramount interest, the true ideal. If Canada go soon resolutely to independence under the crown, her statements may bring to the attention of the British independent kingdoms, and so lead to the only race union that could steady the world.

There is no pressing demand in Canada at the present time for a greater degree of autonomy than the country really possesses. Doubtless the time will come when Canada will desire more autonomy, and when other powers the lack of which at present do not cause the people to lose any sleep. But in the course of the changes that may come, the man to avoid is the man with a cut and dried scheme. Present conditions are satisfactory, and suited to the needs of the time. They have been evolved in the process of time around one central idea—unity of the empire. Men able to meet the changing conditions have never been lacking, nor will they be wanting in the future. Not by gradual changes, but by gradual development will the problem of inter-imperial relations be solved. Not greater independence, but greater unity is the tendency of the times.

SENATE AND PRESIDENT.

The United States senate is of opinion that President Roosevelt is assuming the role of a dictator. At least many of its members resent the president's action with regard to San Domingo. He has announced without consulting the senate that the United States will administer the customs, pay the bills and guarantee the integrity of the island republic. The official statement will be found elsewhere in this paper.

The senators are of opinion that the president cannot, without consent of the senate, make an agreement guaranteeing the integrity of a foreign country. They hold this to be their prerogative, and unless it can be shown that a satisfactory treaty has been made with San Domingo, and they are willing to ratify it, there is likely to be some very keen criticism of the president.

On Monday Senator Bacon introduced a resolution by which the president is respectfully requested, "if, in his judgment not incompatible with the public interest, to inform the senate whether any agreement has been made between the United States and the republic of San Domingo; and, if so, the nature and terms of said agreement; and particularly whether any agreement has been made by which this government undertakes to guarantee the integrity of the territory or government of the republic of San Domingo; and whether, under said agreement the government assumes any responsibility or obligation pecuniary or otherwise, to the republic of San Domingo or to any other government in behalf or on account of said republic of San Domingo."

After some debate these resolutions were referred to the foreign relations committee. Discussing the matter a Washington despatch says:

"The right of the executive branch to negotiate protocols, it is asserted, cannot be strained into covering agreements of a lasting character, for which the approval of the senate is not sought. Republican senators generally approve what the administration has done in San Domingo as a scheme of settlement, but they are little behind the Democratic senators in thinking the Senate should be consulted before such an arrangement goes into full force. This is likely to complicate action on the arbitration treaties, where the boundaries of executive and senatorial responsibility have also been a subject of dispute. If this method of adjusting the Dominican trouble is not backed by the Senate, it is argued that Venezuelan affairs will soon be treated in the same way, thus sidetracking the Senate."

It may be taken for granted that the president will have his way, and that the United States will gain a grip on Santo Domingo which will not be relaxed.

The vigor and intelligence with which the city council grasps the situation continues to excite wonder and admiration.

JAPS HAVE LOST NINE WARSHIPS.

The Blockade and Fighting Off Port Arthur Was Very Costly.

(Exchange.)

By way of encouraging a young officer chafing at guard service, Nelson remarked that it was "easier to fight the Nile six times over than to keep on station all winter in the blockade." In the case of Togo's fleet it has been the experience also that to watch and to ward before Port Arthur is more fraught with danger than actual battle. Out of the nine vessels (fighting vessels, not transports) the loss of which the government acknowledges, eight were blown up by mines, fixed or drifting. (The supreme loss of the Russians, that of the Petropavlovsk, with the excellent Adm. Makarov aboard, likewise came by means of a Russian mine.) In the east, and in Japan itself, the navy are not popularly known, and as it may be the same at home, their list is herewith given:

First-class line-of-battle ship Hatsuse, 15,000 tons.
First-class line-of-battle ship Yamashiro, 15,000 tons.
Coast defence ship Hulyen, 2,350 tons.
Protected cruiser Sol Yen, 2,350 tons.
Unprotected cruiser Klamon, 1,800 tons.

Torpedo boat No. 30.
Torpedo boat No. 48.

With the protected cruiser Yoshino, 4,180 tons, sunk through collision, Japanese naval strength has, therefore, been reduced at least by one fighting vessel. Official admission includes as being out of the combat for the present, the first-class line-of-battle ship Amagi, 15,000 tons, the destroyer Hataname, 275 tons. Injured by contact with Russian mines, these are not yet repaired, and probably cannot be before spring. Eleven Japanese vessels, though known certainly to have been put out of service, temporarily or permanently, by agency or submarine mines distributed about the sea approaches to Port Arthur.

In men, the Japanese navy has suffered a loss of 2,100 killed and wounded, and of those not yet repaired, 1,400 were killed or wounded by the same indirect warfare. Only 540 of the casualties resulted from actual battle, and 216 were due to the accident of one ship by another. Details given by the War Office show that the deaths and disabilities due to fighting were 72 in the engagement outside Port Arthur on February 9, 226 in that of August 10, 124 in that of Tsushima Straits; 14 in the landing at Kinowang Bay on August 14, and 94 in scouting operations. No casualties are published as having taken place since the Russian fleet issued forth, turned back, and lay under the forts till dawn, while an uninterrupted procession of torpedo-boats circled close and launched torpedoes at them; and none are yet announced here as occurring from the late torpedoing of the Sevastopol.

Some 40 vessels had been sent to harass the Baltic fleet, and yet Togo's fleet was not deprived of its fighting force. It was managed in this way: A few old coast-defence vessels, which carry one or two heavy guns fore and aft, were detached; a cruiser or two of duty at China and at Formosa, were added; the Hongkong Maru and the America Maru, 17-knot ships of the Japanese passenger line to San Francisco, were suddenly stopped on their intended run, a naval crew put aboard with an abundance of coal, and nine three-inch guns, and dispatched to join the Harassing squadron, which meanwhile had been enlarged by several torpedo boats, a mother ship, and two collars. They were to rendezvous at Formosa and proceed south.

This Harassing squadron was to have been in time to intercept that of the Baltic fleet, which, coming through Suez, was to assemble at Madagascar, with the part that rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Just below the Philippines in the Sulu Sea there is a matchless battle-ground not touched by coal. Waters are calm and flat as an artificial park pond; they are the waters where the United States steamship Wisconsin made the world's record for gun practice. Among the islands are refuge waters absolutely quiet, retired, whence torpedo-boats could dart on errands with every circumstance favoring. They could drift among their squadrons of old-fashioned coast defenders, new converted cruisers, and strike at any enemy happening along.

WALL STREET MYSTERY.

Edwin Lefevre has just begun a tantalizing mystery serial in the February McClure's. Scene, the realm of high finance—a field particularly interesting just now, and one that Mr. Lefevre knows accurately, as evidenced by his penetrating "Wall Street Stories."

The "Golden Flood" this serial is called. It shows the president of the greatest New York bank, and the richest man in the world, who got worked up to a latter of apprehension by a very quiet young man. His unusual operations with Assay Office gold checks cause the excitement. The president and the richest man don't know what he's up to—and neither does the reader.

Koen knowledge of the intimate psychology of Wall Street leaders makes this story unusually taking—and it's such an astonishing puzzle!

IN TELEGRAPHIC AND GENERAL NEWS THE TIMES LEADS.

ROYAL STANDARD FLOUR FOR BREAD.

WHOLESALE BY

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RUSSIA FACES AWFUL CRISIS.

(Mail and Empire, Tuesday.)

Sunday saw the bloodiest voting in modern times at St. Petersburg. Yesterday the revolt spread like a wave. Will to-morrow see the expected Russian revolution unshaken? So far as one at this distance is able to judge, it will not. Prophecy is vain in such a terrible crisis, and the thought is horrible that these thousands of brave lives have been sacrificed in vain, but at the same time there is every reason to believe that autocracy's grasp upon the situation will still hold after the smoke has cleared away. That it may be shaken, and that it will one day be torn away and the present despotism destroyed is certain, but the time is not yet. We must remember that it is in Russia that these huge, abortive movements are afoot.

This view is not popular must be freely admitted, and there are wise men who take a much more optimistic view of the situation. Gorky, the noted author, believes that the hour is at hand for the emancipation of the Russian people. Tolstoy, the Russian people, Tolstoy is 1901 said: "Again all Russian men are divided into two conflicting camps, and the steps taken to put down the revolutionaries are not to be commiserated. It is very possible that this time the disturbance will be repressed, though it may also happen that the soldiers and police, upon whom the Government rests so much, will see that what they are forced to do is the great crime of fratricide and refuse to obey; but even if the disturbances are quieted at present, they cannot be stifled. They will continue to spread in a concealed form and sooner or later break out in increased violence and produce greater suffering and crime."

In recalling this prophecy of Tolstoy, a leading member of the Diplomatic Corps, who is well acquainted with Russian conditions, said in "Tolstoy's" prophecy was made with knowledge, and it looks as though it would be fulfilled now. The Russian Government is facing the greatest crisis in its history. From the fact that the steps taken to put down the revolutionaries have not been in the usual Russian manner, one is led to believe that the Government is not longer put out of service, temporarily or permanently, by agency or submarine mines distributed about the sea approaches to Port Arthur.

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After Christmas Card FROM W. Tremaine Gard.

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