

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1916.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H.M. The King. TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

INTERESTING, IF TRUE.

One of Mark Twain's characters, when first told the story of Jonah and the Whale by his Sunday school teacher, is reported to have gazed steadfastly at the teacher for a minute and to have ejaculated: "Them statements is interestin', though tough." The story sent by the Toronto News correspondent from Ottawa to his paper, to the effect that Hon. William Pugsley, General H. H. McLean and Dr. Michael Clark are expected to bolt the Liberal party on the question of a war time election might be similarly characterized. It is interesting, if true, and more interesting in the light of the relation to the Liberal party and Liberal press of today of at least one of the gentlemen named.

It would not be a new thing to learn that General McLean or Dr. Michael Clark did not approve of the tendency of the Liberal leaders to place politics ahead of their patriotism. General McLean, it may be remembered, was the only Liberal member of the House of Commons to support the Borden Government's proposal to contribute three dreadnaughts to the British navy. He both spoke and voted in favor of the plan. Dr. Michael Clark, too, is one of the really patriotic Liberals, a man who with sons at the front recognizes that the prime duty of this country at the present time is to win the war, that there should be no question of party politics but all energies should be unitedly turned toward the only object worth attaining.

Mr. Pugsley, as well, has held that there should be no election during the period of war. He made this very definite in an interview published in the Manitoba Free Press on September 15th, 1915, when he said: "The present circumstances are so grave from the standpoint of Canada and the Empire that it would be DEPLORABLE IN MY OPINION TO HAVE THE PEOPLE DIVIDED UPON PARTY QUESTIONS. Another of the reasons why I favor putting off an election until after the war is because I think it would be a great pity to hold one just when the energies of all the people of Canada, and especially the members of the Government who are primarily charged with the duty of attending to the recruiting and equipping of the soldiers should be devoted to this one end."

If the Toronto News story should prove to be correct and the gentlemen named should be found opposing the Liberal party on the election question one of the most interesting phases of the whole situation would be the attitude of the Telegraph and Times. These newspapers, adept in political and journalistic acrobatics have executed some wonderful manoeuvres in their time, but they were never yet confronted with a task quite so difficult as this one may become—to juggle Dr. Pugsley and Frank B. Carvell at one and the same time and keep them both in the air, would tax the abilities, even of men who have already been on both sides of the political fence as well as astride of it. The situation is worth watching.

THE COST OF LIVING.

The Commissioner who will introduce a resolution calling upon the City Council of St. John to investigate the cost of the necessities of life in this community will, if the resolution is adopted, win for himself more than transient popularity. There is really no reason why the St. John city council should not so act in the matter of the cost of living. The power to take such action has been conferred by the Dominion Government's order-in-council, and in the city of Toronto there is to be such an inquiry, the point being decided by the council yesterday. The Toronto council will investigate the cost of foodstuffs and fuel, and the Toronto Mail and Empire in discussing the matter points out that under the authority conferred by the Dominion Government's order-in-council any city council can require statements on oath, under heavy penalties, from any dealers in necessities, revealing practically all information on the subject of their dealings.

Continuing the Mail and Empire says: "The powers conveyed by the order-

in-council are sufficient for eliciting information on any vital point touching supplies or prices. From the facts to be gathered, it will be possible to form sound opinions on the big subject of middlemen's operations and profits, and whether there is collusion in hoisting prices out of line with costs. The great merit of the Government's proposal is that it protects a merchant doing a legitimate business on a fair basis. The order-in-council will enable special inquiry into cold storage supplies and profits. If it is found that slackness by the railway companies in placing cars of perishable foodstuffs is leading to waste there ought to be action by the Railway Commission forcing them to give that work precedence over other yard-shunting. The city should take up that matter."

More than ordinary interest will attach to Toronto's action, and if it produces good results that will be encouragement for other municipalities to proceed similarly. Investigation in Toronto may show that railway transportation costs are far too heavy a toll on foodstuffs. A general finding to that effect would provide a good basis for demanding that freight rates on necessities be lowered considerably, the railways to be allowed to make up the difference in revenue by rate increases on luxuries. Many reforms may grow out of vigorous use of the powers conveyed by the Dominion Government's order.

MEN STILL NEEDED.

Judging from the recruiting returns from this province for the week ending on Saturday the young men of seven counties in New Brunswick evidently believe that the war is over and done and that consequently there is no necessity for recruits. Generally the returns from the province were disappointing, although St. John held its end up better than most centres. Nothing is to be gained, however, by scolding, young men cannot be tongue-lashed into the King's uniform. They must realize the need for men and answer it of their own volition. Letters received in the city yesterday indicated that young men who left Canada the last of September were less than a month later in the front line trenches and under fire. Such statements emphasize two facts, first that the Canadian soldiers are well trained when they reach England, and secondly that the need for men is so great that the newcomers are being pushed to the front at a much more rapid rate than in the earlier days of the war. The call for men to don the King's uniform and do their bit for the Empire and for their own homes is as insistent now as at any time since war began and those who have not responded to it should delay no longer.

THE SHADOW OF AN ELECTION.

Mr. Fielding emerges from political retirement to say that the shadow of a general election hangs over his party. The former Minister knows that there will be no election until the Opposition precipitates one, says the Toronto News. With a view to quieting partisan strife and to concentrating the national energies on the great business of the war, the Government has formally stated that Parliament will be asked at the coming session to consent to a further extension of its own life. If the Liberals agree there need be no political contest in 1917, or even in 1918, if peace is still in the distance.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues are concerned only with the tragic task of defending the Dominion, the Empire and civilization. With everything Canadians hold dear at stake, the Administration has no time for politics and does not talk politics. Ministers do not even take the trouble to meet the campaign of deliberate misrepresentation carried on against them ever since the end of 1914. Any election shadow that hangs over the Opposition is a shadow of their own conjuring. Even Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking at the same meeting as Mr. Fielding, admitted that he might not consent to the extension of Parliament.

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Little Benny's Note Book

Me and Skippy Martin and Skippy quiet little cuzzin Joe was wawking alone, me and Skippy talking about how long turtles live and wat it woud be like if there was a war in this country, and different things, Skinnys cuzzin not saying anything, on account of he never does unless somebody speaks to him first, and we passed a man standing there smoking a pipe without any collar or coat on, and wat was on the pavement next to his shoe but a dime.

G, did you see it, sed Skippy wen we got past.

Yes, but if we go back and pick it up that man will say it be lawage to him, hes pretty tuff looking, I sed.

Thats wat I was thinking, sed Skippy. And we kep on wawking slow, me, saying, How about if one of us goes up and asks him sumthing and wite hes bizzy ansering the uther one can reach down and get it.

All rite, Ill ask him and you reacht down, you havent got so far to reacht, sed Skippy, wat shall I ask him.

Ask him wat time it is, I sed.

No, that wout take him long enuff, maybe he aint got a watch enyhow. I know wat, Ill ask him wat year Cristofer Columbus discovered America, that will make him think a wite.

No, I sed, that aint sensible enuff, ask him how far it is to Wiffle Street, it will take him a wite to remember there aint eny sutch street, and Ill be reachtng aifle.

All rite, sed Skippy. And we started to tern around, and Skippy sed Wy, wares Joe. His quiet little cuzzin not being with us eny more, and I sed, G, I bet he snuck back and got it wite we was talkng.

The darn kid, sed Skippy. And we ran back to see and the dime wasent there, but the tuff looking man still was, and Skippy sed, Did you see a little boy with glasses go past, mister?

I ainty did, sed the tuff looking man, I guess you meen the blame kid that jest ran past and pritty near nooked me into the street reachtng over to pick sumthing up.

Aw heck, sed me and Skippy.

May Be Hari-Kari For Liberals

No Party Can Afford to be Beaten by the Old Flag Three Times in One Generation.

The Monocle Man, in The Canadian Courier.

There are rumors in the air that the Liberal party proposes to commit "hari-kari" next year. It seems almost incredible to an old stager like myself that any group of public men should deliberately march to political death down a road which they have trod to that undesirable consummation within my own memory. But persistent rumor insists that this is precisely what they are bent on doing; and all the surface signs of the situation point to the same stark insanity. This astonishing rumor is that the Liberal party proposes to refuse its support this next session of Parliament to a further extension of the life of that body, and so precipitate a general election in Canada during the most critical period of a great war—a war in which the very existence of the British Empire and the independence of Canada are at stake.

That will mean, of course, an Old Flag election. If the Liberal party takes the responsibility of forcing a dissolution of Parliament in war time, they cannot possibly escape the responsibility of splitting this nation wide-open on party lines in the midst of a life-and-death struggle in which Liberals and Conservatives are dying daily, side by side, in the same uniform and under the same flag. The boys on the Somme do not know whether they are Liberal or Conservative—they only know that they are Canadian soldiers fighting for the greatest cause in history—viz: human liberty—against the most insolent challenge ever delivered to it by a nation of blood-drunk bullies. But an election in Canada, thrusting ballots into their hands to be marked, would remind them of their petty differences, back home, and invite them to divide when the basic need of the Allied armies is unity. It would not be effective, you say; and I agree with you. But the invitation would be there; and the responsibility would be with those who compelled an election.

Still, without arguing the question—except to point to the fact that there is today a party trace in Britain, in France, in Italy, in Russia, even in Germany—I think it will be admitted that the election will be fought on an issue of patriotism—on an Old Flag issue—and that it will be the party which forces an election which will be accused of unpatriotic conduct. That is, the Old Flag will be energetically flapped in its face. Now, I should think that the Liberals would have a wholesome respect for the Old Flag as an election property, and would be exceedingly careful about presenting it to their opponents as a party weapon. No sincere Liberal will regard it as a good reply to this statement to plead that the Old Flag would, in such a case, be improperly used. Every sincere Liberal would at once plead that the Old Flag had been improperly used against his party on the two historic occasions when it worked the defeat of that party—that is, during the two reciprocal campaigns of 1891 and 1911. I have my own opinion on that subject, and it does not agree

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on the cold-blooded basis of political judgment, what do you think of that? There are the Liberals, credited with the intention of deliberately taking the wrong end of a patriotic issue when patriotism is the one great force in the community—when there is hardly a home from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, which does not dread the moment when the shadow of a telegraph messenger will fall athwart the threshold, with a tragic message from "somewhere in France."

Ah, but—it is suggested—the Liberals will have the true patriotic issue. They will criticize the conduct of the war. Does any sensible person really imagine that they can get by with that? We are all criticizing the conduct of the war—we all know things that could have been done better—but is there any God-given military genius among the Liberals to whom the people will turn in the midst of war to save us from mistakes? A Kitchener might carry a mid-war election on such ground—against a Pacl-fact Government; but certainly not one civilian government against another. It is also suggested that they will attack "war graft." The present Government would have to discredit the work of its own commissions to deny that there has been "war graft." But will the Liberal front bench come into court with such clean records that the people will believe that their sole purpose in precipitating an election in war time is to put an end to "graft?" Go to.

No; the naked fact will stand out from any refusal by the Liberals to support an extension of the life of the present Parliament—that they have compelled a party to fight in Canada in the midst of a world-war in which our sons are dying. Our Government will be driven to forget about the Germans for long weeks while they fight the Liberals. The cautious, partisan, selfish unpatriotism of that course will be THE ISSUE of the elections; and there cannot be a moment's doubt as to what the people will do to the party responsible for this crime against the nation, against the Empire, against the Allied cause. The party which deliberately invites the nation to pronounce judgment on its conduct in forcing a war election will be committing suicide—and there may be a long period before resurrection. No party can afford to be beaten by the Old Flag three times in one generation.

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