

## The St. John Standard.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1920.

## AGRICULTURE AND THE ROADS.

Two features of the Foster Administration that a great fuss is being made about by its friends are its agricultural and road policies. It is claimed for the former that it is the only progressive and beneficial policy the farmers have ever known or from which they ever got any benefit, while their road policy is something which has produced results so astounding that the like was never known before. It would be as well if these extravagant claims were looked into somewhat before being accepted in their entirety.

Comparing the expenditures upon agriculture for the year 1916 under the late Government with those of last year under the Foster administration, it will be found that precisely the same services were performed by the late administration as are being carried out by the present one, the only difference being that the latter had more money to spend than their predecessors ever had. Apart from the ordinary appropriations out of provincial revenue, which were much the same amounts under each administration, the previous one received from the Dominion Government a subsidy of \$41,944; whereas the present Government has spent from receipts from the same source \$53,419 in 1917, \$72,841 in 1918, and \$73,065 in 1919. The present administration has the money sent to them to spend, and of course they spend it. Naturally, therefore, they have been in a position to do much more for the benefit of agriculture than their predecessors did. Whether they have actually done more, however, is a matter as to which there is considerable difference of opinion. It is squandering money on useless fads is a test of efficiency, they certainly are entitled to the palm; but if with all this extra money to spend they have not been able to do something to benefit the farmers, they must be even more incompetent than most people credit them with being. With an average increase in the subsidy of about \$25,000 a year to work with, something is naturally expected.

Then in the matter of roads, the appropriation from ordinary revenue has been slightly more during the last two or three years than previously, for the simple reason that the revenues of the province have been higher than before and more money was available for spending; but since the Foster Government assumed the reins of power they have so increased their capital account no less than \$1,927,959, or very nearly \$2,000,000, down to the end of 1919, every dollar of which they borrowed. Now, the Dominion Government has undertaken to find \$1,200,000 for roads, provided the Provincial Government will find \$1,800,000 more. This means another big borrowing, making nearly four millions altogether. If the province does not get better roads with all this money spent on them, it ought to. But is it any credit to the Foster Government? If they had provided better roads with no greater monetary facilities than their predecessors had, there would undoubtedly be considerable credit coming to them; but with two millions already spent and another three in anticipation, the people naturally look for improvement, and well they may.

Good roads are not essentially what the people want. But the people here have not been able to get a lot of credit. It is a waste to saddle the province with such an enormous burden of debt in addition to all other liabilities. There will have to be large sums found to finance these new water power schemes if they are ever to materialize, which many doubt. The province is already paying heavily for interest; the amount has risen from \$351,000 in 1915 to over \$595,000 last year, and if this additional sum of \$1,800,000 is borrowed, it will be a great deal higher. Where is the province going to land? A man with an income of \$2,000 a year, all of which was already appropriated, would be looked upon as a fool who borrowed \$4,000 to buy an expensive automobile; yet that is the position of the Foster Government, which, with an income of two millions, and that insufficient for its ordinary needs, borrows four millions to spend on roads. It will be a multi-stroke round the neck of the provincial exchequer that will ultimately strangle it.

There is only one matter for surprise in connection with these two departments of the Government, and that is that Mr. Veniot has not wanted to commandeer a portion of the agricultural subsidy to spend on the roads, on the ground that better roads improve conditions for the farmers, and are thus an aid to agriculture!

Before endorsing the Foster Government and its programme, it would be well for the public to think awhile as to whether such a course is wise or not.

## SOME RESULTS TO DATE.

The plight to which the once powerful party of Laurier has been brought under the leadership of Mackenzie King is illustrated by the results in seven by-elections held in English-speaking Canada since Mr. King became leader. This is the record: Assemblée-Liberal candidate overwhelmingly beaten. Stormont-Glenagary—Liberals abdicated to the farmers. Carleton-Place—Liberals abdicated to the farmers. Temiskaming—Liberal candidate overwhelmingly beaten. Colchester—Liberals abdicated to the farmers.

St. John-Albert—Liberal candidate lost deposit. When it is remembered that four of the above constituencies went strongly Liberal in 1911—three of them were Laurier strongholds—the debacle of the party is realized. In political circles at Ottawa, it is now accepted as granted that the only formidable opposition to the Government comes from the Farmers' party, and when the poor showing of the agrarian candidate in Colchester is taken into account, the strength of the Meighen Ministry is quite manifest.

## THE FISCAL QUESTION.

In the discussion of the tariff question revived by the sittings of the Ministerial committee of enquiry, and likely to continue until after a general election, the point should be closely observed that the maintenance or destruction of Canadian industries hangs upon the decision. If it be conceded that the existence of manufacturers in Canada is desirable the controversy is concluded, and the whole matter resolves itself into one of tariff rates high enough to encourage domestic industries and low enough to prevent combinations in restraint of trade or excessive profits from undue prices. Few Canadian industries fostered and sustained by the fiscal policy of the past forty years could survive under the tariff advocated by the Council of Agriculture, commonly known as the United Farmers' party; nor is it pretended by the proponents of that policy that the manufacturing interests of Canada are worth preserving. The position of the United Farmers is this: we sell what we produce in the world's markets at prices fixed by world competition, and we desire to buy what we consume in world markets at prices fixed by open competition.

It is undoubtedly true, as the Montreal Gazette says, that Canadian farmers sell their surplus production abroad at prices determined by general economic conditions, but it is far from the fact that they sell all their products. The statement that 50 per cent. of the farm production is consumed within the country may be exaggerated, but an analysis of the figures establishes that more than 50 per cent. is marketed in Canada, and much farm produce has its sole market in this country. The concern of the farmer, however, is not more about price than about profit. He must have facilities for marketing his stuff, such as adequate and cheap transportation, which facilities are supplied largely out of the traffic proceeding from home industries. If the Liverpool market governs the price of wheat, the Canadian grower receives the Liverpool price less the cost of carriage. That is axiomatic; and the cheaper the carriage the larger the farmer's profit. Railways cannot live on wheat alone, nor remain robust if deprived of the diversified traffic of large urban communities. Wipe out the factories, depopulate the towns, eradicate the freightage of manufactures, and the chief sufferers from resultant impairment of the transportation systems will be the farmers.

This is the crux of the whole matter: is the manufacturing industry worth the price of fiscal protection? It is thought to be so in all European countries, in the United States, in Australia, and until recently was thought to be so by all political parties in Canada. What has occurred in the last five years to bring into being the dissident party known as United Farmers? High prices; that, and nothing else. The well-versed agriculturists who clamor for free trade to cheapen the goods they buy seem incapable of understanding that the universal rise in prices has been most conspicuous in foodstuffs, and that as prices of other commodities recede so will those of farm products. The Canadian tariff has not been raised, but has been lowered in recent years, yet prices have mounted, and it should be within the comprehension of the dullest mind that if higher prices follow a lower tariff, the tariff has not caused prices to advance.

Manufactures are worth preserving if

because they afford employment, increase population, diversify occupation, promote the self-dependence of the nation, sustain transportation systems, and distribute the burden of government. If urban centres are contracted by destruction of capital and industries, who is to bear the weight of public debt? That should be a consideration of some consequence to farmers. It is a fact, not complained of, but a fact, that the weight of taxation falls upon people who dwell in cities and towns, and by so much as the ability of these people to pay is reduced, by that much will the weight of taxation on the farmers be increased. We have heard of making a declaration and calling it peace; the free traders would make an industrial declaration and call it prosperity.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

## Silly Slander.

(Hamilton Herald, Ind.) It is highly creditable to Premier Meighen that his newspaper enemies, unable to find anything to criticize in what he says, must need fabricate statements, attribute them to him, and then view them with indignation and alarm. At present they are belaboring him for his imaginary statement that all those who are opposed to his government are nation-wreckers. Of course Mr. Meighen never said anything so silly. It is an invention of the Toronto Globe.

## Grenville Election Trial.

(Montreal Herald, Lib.) The first election protest trial in Canada has had for many years has come to an end at Prescott by the withdrawal of bribery made against the sitting member, Hon. Howard Ferguson, the Conservative leader in the Ontario Legislature. Scores of charges were preferred in the petition and two High Court judges were sent from Toronto to investigate them. After several days' inquiry none was sustained and the petition was withdrawn. The trial shows that much of the loose charges so frequently made of corruption in the election methods of political parties is mostly moonshine.

## A Hot Shot.

(Regina Post, Ind.) "In stating that the Liberal policy is tariff reform, not free trade, Mr. King gets after one of the calculated deceptions of the new Tories," says the Toronto Globe. "In stating that the Liberal policy is tariff reform, a good many people believe that Mr. King is advancing another calculated deception."

## One Marriage Law.

(Guelph Herald.) There ought to be but one marriage law for the whole Dominion, and the legality of the marriage ceremony should be placed on such a basis that no common court judge in Quebec or any other province should dare usurp the right to pronounce a marriage invalid that has been performed by a properly ordained minister of the gospel.

## A BIT OF VERSE

"IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING." In the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers waken, While the laborers turn them homeward, and the weary have their will, When the conspers of the roses o'er the forest aisles are shaken. Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander through the Heather, Rustle all the meadow grass and bend the dewy fern; They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer together, And fill the shaken pods with fire along the shadowy burn.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He loveth, They have veiled His lovely feature with the darkness of a name! Through His Garden, through His Garden, it is but the wind that moveth, No more! But O the miracle, the miracle is the same.

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story, Slowly dying, but remembered, aye, and loved with passion still, Hush! . . . in the fringe of His garment in the fading golden glory Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill. —Alfred Noyes.

## THE LAUGH LINE

The "lady in the case" is usually a good-looking. A man is never so easily deceived as when he is trying to deceive others.

A woman doesn't make up her mind to go any place any more. She makes up her mind to go anywhere.

Had Experience. Elderly—Ah, my boy, it is the little things of life that tell. Young—(sighing)—Yes, I know. My girl has a little brother.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Both Needed Attention. Emily—Did you notice how dreadfully that piano needed tuning? Selina—Why, no, dear. I thought it harmonized perfectly with your voice.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Would Too Tight? Bore—Yes, I don't know how it is, but I feel thoroughly wound up to-night. Hostess—How very strange! And yet you don't seem to go.—London Tit-Bits.

Up To Date. Rough Customer—I want me picture book. Photographer—Certainly, sir. Would you like a carte or a cabinet? Rough Customer—Cart or cab in it? Nayther. O'll have an automobile in it or nawthin.—Boston Transcript.

## Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAZ

Me and Sid Hunt don't speak to each other on account of being mad at each other, me being mad at him on account of him calling me a old woman and him being mad at me on account of me being mad at him, and this afternoon us fellows was standing around the ham post and Sid Hunt came up, everybody saying hello to him except me, and him saying hello to everybody except me, and Pats Simkins sed, G, aint you 2 made up yet?

No we aint, and Sid Hunt, and wats more theres a certain person in this crowd and bleeve me if I wasent mad at him id tell him wats I think of him and bleeve me it wouldent take long, ehter, because bleeve me it aint much.

Holey smoke, Benny, G wiza, did you hear that, are you going to stand for that Benny, jimmmy crickets, O boy, the fellows all sed, and I sed, Well theres a certain party standing around hear that I dont speak to, but bleeve me if I did id soon let him know I dont consider hes anything but a big lemmis, bleeve me.

O boy, are you going to stand for that, Sid, did you hear that, Sid, holey Krimasas thats fierce, wats you going to do about that, Sid? all the fellows sed, and Sid sed, Its a good thing for somebody hear that I dont speak to him, because otherwise if I did bleeve me id punch his face in.

O Benny, did you hear that, thats a direct insult, O boy, holey cata, holey smoke, the fellows sed, and I sed, Its a darn lucky thing that Im mad at somebody in this crowd or elts for 2 pims nothing couldent prevent me from nocking his block off. Proving it was a lucky thing we didnt speak to each other or we probably would of had a fierce fita.

## The Corn Borer.

So long as the corn-borer dooznt get into Essex all will be well. Its presence and operation there might mean heavy loss of corn juice.

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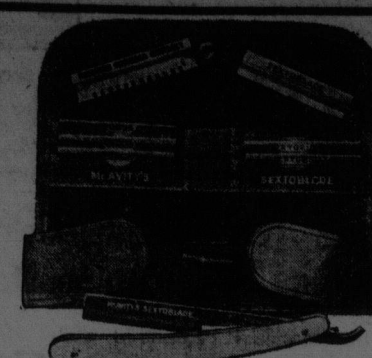
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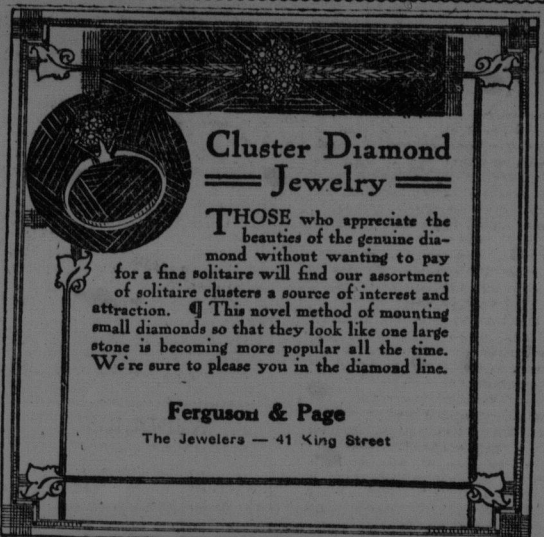
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W. F. Burdett Meeting De Trade Passi

Toronto, Sept. 22.—The resolution of the Imperial Chamber of Commerce, passed at its meeting on the 22nd inst., was that the Chamber should maintain a list of all the ships passing through the harbor, and that it should also maintain a list of all the ships passing through the harbor, and that it should also maintain a list of all the ships passing through the harbor.

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