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THE EVENING TIMES-STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1923

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TO MAKE IT THOROUGH.

Hon. Mr. Fielding expresses the view that it will not be necessary to appoint a royal commission to delve into the whole question of responsibility for the wrecking of the Home Bank, but evidently his mind is not wholly closed against such a course. Later developments may change his viewpoint, particularly if the authorities charged with the prosecution of the bank now under arrest are content with trying these alone. It has been pointed out that while the first responsibility lies with the bank's officials and directors, there is also the matter of the representations made by gentlemen who secured tremendous loans on security which now turns out to be illusory or worthless. The depositors and shareholders are asking whether there was deception or collusion, or both.

The public was by no means satisfied with the outcome of the Merchants' Bank case, and the Ottawa Citizen suggests that as one reason why in the Home Bank matter the responsible authorities will be expected to dig deep. It seems a stiff public demand for a most rigorous prosecution in the present case. "At the present time," it says, "the Government of the province of Ontario, as well as the Federal Government, would seem to be bent upon a real prosecution to the utmost limits. But as the trial develops, it is possible that so many interlocking interests will be threatened, fear may begin to operate in high places to moderate the enforcement of justice. It will be too late for policy to shield patrons on this occasion, however. The inspirers of Government policy in Montreal and Toronto, who as the Government itself has admitted, need to observe well the signs of the times. Some deep furrows are being ploughed in this Home Bank affair."

As there are some 60,000 people who lost money in the bank smash it goes without saying that every step in the legal proceedings will be watched with grim vigilance. If the Ontario authorities do not go to the bottom of the case there will be a storm in the Ontario Legislature and in Parliament. Much depends upon the Attorney General of Ontario, who, fortunately, has some reputation for courage and public spirit. If his list of material witnesses is made to include all whom the curator's report and the bank's own papers indicate as necessary, the evidence given is likely to render other prosecutions unavoidable.

There was action in the House of Commons last session over the Merchants' Bank, and a parliamentary inquiry might well have been ordered. It would be difficult to prevent such an inquiry if the Ontario prosecution in the Home Bank matter should fail to satisfy public opinion. The 60,000 who suffered, and who do not yet know the extent of their losses, are to be reckoned with—a formidable army.

CONDITIONS IN HALIFAX.

The formation of a Citizens' League in Halifax for the avowed purpose of helping Mayor Murphy to clean up civic affairs follows recent news of the placing on trial of one or two minor civic employees on charges of dishonesty. The Echo defends the city's credit, which can scarcely be in question, but speaks darkly of civic affairs having come "to the present lamentable pass." What is the situation? The Echo offers these suggestive remarks on the subject:

"The present situation in which the city finds itself, while bad enough, is not nearly so bad as the scandal mongers and sensation hunters would have us believe. It is, however, sufficiently bad to warrant the interest of every citizen in an attempt to remedy it and place the city once more upon a firm financial foundation. The publication of sensational rumors concerning the financial position of the city has already done untold harm, and no doubt will have its reflex action the next time the city requires to borrow money. What is needed now is calm, deliberate and wise thought-out action, with an eye single to the interest of the future welfare of the city. Party politics must be eschewed and policies must be worked out from the point of view of the city's best interests and not in the interest of partisans or sensation mongers."

The people of Halifax are too courageous and resourceful to be daunted by rumors about the city's financial position. There is no reason for thinking there is anything fundamentally wrong with the sister city. Its credit has never been in doubt. If for a time loose methods have crept into civic circles, that is no doubt due to the neglect of a busy citizenship to display sufficient interest and vigilance in connection with civic affairs. What ever remedy the conditions call for, we may be sure the public spirited people of Halifax will not be long in applying it.

PREFERENCES AND POLITICS.

The Canadian in London just now is witnessing some very lively politics on the part of a group of advanced Imperialists, who would like to beat the Baldwin Government by representing that it is falling both the people of Great Britain and those of the Dominions in refusing to dictate European policy on the one hand and go in for an out and out protection policy on the other. Mr. John W. Dufco, editor of the Manitoba Free Press, who is in England to cover the Conference for his newspaper, gives a picture of the extraordinary devices resorted to by the men who are in a hurry to reform the Empire along lines of their own choosing, and whose favorite scheme is to attribute to Dominion representatives views and desires which are everything but authentic. The ultra-Imperialists are still dreaming of Imperial Federation as they were thirty-five years ago. There would be no great harm in that if they would not keep insisting, in the face of the facts, that the people of Great Britain and of the Dominions are with them.

Mr. Dufco finds Londoners reading daily assurances, wholly unfounded, that the Dominions want all sorts of radical changes and propose to drag the Old Country into them. "A Canadian reading in the London papers about what Canada believes and wants is likely to suffer from vertigo," he says. "He cannot recognize his own country from the description. One finds among the ultra-Imperialists a certain firmly held belief acquired no doubt from a too faithful acceptance of the assurances which they constantly find in their favorite newspapers. Thus if you are from the Dominions it follows inevitably that you are an ardent believer in all round Imperial preference and are so disgusted and impatient at reluctance of the Englishman to clap on protective duties that you are ready to resort to strong measures to educate him to a due sense of his Imperial opportunities and obligations." Those from the Dominions who would welcome an extension of preferences have been doing their best to keep clear of domestic political entanglements in England. They do not intend to be used as a club to beat down the Baldwin Government or as a means of supporting it against attack. Premier Smuts went on record clearly as to this at the opening of the Conference, when he said: "There is no intention to launch an attack upon your fiscal policy. We respect your freedom of action, and in return we also claim complete freedom of action in fiscal matters." That has been Canada's position at previous conferences. We long ago introduced a preference on British goods, and it has been maintained and increased. If the people of the Old Country wish to tax foreign food products for the purpose of increasing Empire trade, that is their right, but that they will do so to any considerable degree is not at present likely. Certainly Canada is not trying to drive Britain into that policy, while very representations may be made by London newspapers speaking for the ultra-Imperialists. The common desire to use every practicable means to increase the volume of Imperial trade is, of course, not to be questioned. Canada has led the way in that respect through the British preference, and undoubtedly British thought turns strongly toward securing larger markets in the Dominions, and taking in turn more of their goods. The preferential proposals already made will be enlarged as circumstances permit.

LOYD GEORGE AND THE CHURCHES.

Lloyd George's new book, about to be issued, contains a strong and moving appeal to the churches of civilization, urging a combined movement for the spiritual regeneration of Europe, the abolition of old racial hatreds and the furtherance of world harmony. The volume is entitled "Where Are We Going?" and at the close of its first chapter comes the call to the churches, reminding them of their power and their responsibility.

What can the churches do? The former Prime Minister suggests that they can foster the spirit of brotherhood and world righteousness without which there will be no sound and enduring foundation for international concord. "There ought to be," he says, "an international movement of all the churches, Catholic and Protestant. I know it is difficult to compass. The divisions in Christendom are too often fatal to common action for the attainment of common aims. They ought to be overcome. They must be overcome. In the days of Puritanism and in the days of the covenant the partnership between religion and politics won for us the two great boons of parliamentary liberty and liberty of conscience. When Methodism spurred the conscience of England its influence was felt in the

political movement that emancipated the slaves throughout the British Empire."

Lloyd George, of course, is not appealing to the churches alone. His eloquent reference to them is but a part of his call to the men and women of all the civilized peoples to rise above selfishness and unite in creating the good will that can give the world enduring peace, security and justice. His conception of the wonderful part the churches can play in meeting the needs of mankind in this troubled period of history is a challenge to religious leadership and to the people everywhere—the people without whose response to the call of moral responsibility the church mechanism would be paralyzed.

Mr. Edison makes another of those predictions which are welcome as winter approaches. Within a very few years, he thinks, coal will not be carried from the mines at all but converted into electrical current wherever it is found, and the "juice" transmitted through the country over high power lines, saving time and labor and greatly increasing efficiency. He has been discussing this problem with a group of Nova Scotia power men, who may be ready to throw more light on the matter presently. The idea is by no means new, but it is noteworthy that Edison now thinks the plan is reaching the practical stage. The waste of energy in most of the present methods of burning coal have long been denounced by scientific authorities, and transportation costs go steadily up.

Reckless driving and excessive speed on the Quebec roads have caused the Government to pass an order-in-council requiring the equipment of all motor cars with speedometers. The official statement sets forth that "a certain number of motor vehicles driven over the public roads of this province are not provided with the appliances for registering the speed made per hour when in motion, and that, in consequence, their drivers or chauffeurs cannot ascertain if the speed made exceeds that allowed by law. The Government has found it necessary to pass this order because of the persistent and reckless disregard of speed limits shown by the drivers and owners of automobiles, particularly of high-powered cars, and the consequent danger to life and property."

Premier Ferguson serves notice on those sometimes malicious and sometimes irresponsible persons who whisper about the credit of perfectly sound financial institutions. He points out that there is a provision in the penal code covering such cases, and says his government will not hesitate to set on foot prosecutions where there is evidence to warrant such a course. Whispers of the sort referred to are one of the country's pests. They are not confined to Ontario. The publicity given Hon. Mr. Ferguson's statement will remind the whispering fraternity all over the country that their activities are not a safe line of endeavor.

Canadian exports jumped up by \$200,000,000 in the last twelve months, and imports show almost as great a gain. The duty collected is greater by some ten millions than that of the preceding year. The gain in exports is a particularly encouraging sign.

THE SONG.

(Minnia Irving in N. Y. Herald.)
To old Calcutta's gates of yore
The merchants came with wares,
Bright shawls and rugs and shinning silks,
And brasses of Benares;
But there was one who had no goods
To tempt the passing throng,
But sat apart in gaudy rags
And sang a haunting song.

"Why do you sit beside the gates
With empty hands?" they cried,
"Have you pearls, no sugar cakes,
No date fruit fresh or dried,
No ivory, no amulet,
No attars sweet and strong,
No charms for lovers?" Na," he said,
"I only have a song."

The burnished brasses of Benares,
The silks of rainbow dye,
The necklaces of amber beads
Or lapis lazuli,
The gorgeous shawls, the carpets gay
To common dust belong,
But all the world is dancing now
To India's haunting song.

IN LIGHTER VEIN.

Speeding the Parting.
Canadian paper—An electrical storm struck Kenora Sunday night. The guests reached a velocity of sixty miles an hour.

None Better.
The melancholy days have come
For him who's naturally gloom;
But for the man who's liver's right
These autumn days are pure delight.

Grim Law In Our Farthest North

In a jail yard on Herschel Island, northernmost police post on the American continent, a gallows tree of new-sawn lumber testifies once more that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police always get their man. "Thou shalt not kill," says the New York Herald-Tribune, dated December 7, will be enacted the last grim scene of a conflict of love and passion, hatred and revenge, as cruelly elemental as any drama known to the sombre pages of the ancient Greek tragic stage. It began three years ago and a thousand miles to the eastward of Herschel Island in the Coronation Gulf district, where the tribesmen of the Copper Eskimo live on the dreary rim of the Canadian Arctic north of the Barren Land. It started with the quarrel of a white trader and a tribesman over the possession of an Eskimo woman.

The white man was one Otto Binder, who for twenty years had trapped and traded along the Arctic trails. His rival was one Ahkshak, a noted "bad Eskimo" and Binder got the girl. Whereupon Ahkshak shifted the eyes of his desire to Pugnana, a married woman, whom he translated into a marriageable widow by spearing her husband to death. This started a blood feud between the relatives of Ahkshak and Pugnana. A tribal council was held and primitive Arctic justice ruled that the bad man should be taken prisoner and killed. An aged sorcerer, Ekootuk, was the prime mover in this action, and two men, Amotuk and Uljel, were his aids. The three seized Ahkshak, who pleaded with the avengers not to stab him to death with their knives, because he dreaded the evil spirits who would send his dismembered body to the very material hell of Eskimo theology. He begged that he might instead be strangled with his own rawhide line, and they accordingly did so. The trader, however, had also paid the penalty for his violation of the North's unwritten law, his rival being a sixteen-year-old lad named Aik Omak, who with an Eskimo man, Tetamagana, had also, on nomination by the chiefs, killed still another tribesman.

With the first news of the outbreak of the vendetta and its trail of deaths, the Royal Mounted Police had been hurrying their dog teams over the ice-bound streams and lakes from their nearest post, Tree River on Coronation Gulf, three hundred miles to the westward. They arrived on the scene at this stage and rounded up the principals in the chain of killings. But when the tribesmen learned that the boy Omak was to be taken to Tree River post and there be put to death, they threw the weapon with him, he returned to his tribe and then fled to strange tribes far to the eastward. A year of relentless pursuit resulted in the full story of the eventual capture of Omak would make a tale in itself, so fraught is it with the adventures that make police work along the rim of the Arctic the most hazardous of duties.

A year ago this autumn, Amik, Tetamagana and the other accused Eskimos were taken to the police post at Herschel Island, and held there through the long winter night, while the aurora flickered and rustled, until a judge and court could be brought from Edmonton, 1,600 miles to the south, to

conduct their trials. As early last summer as travel became possible Judge Dubuc of the Alberta Court and also a stipendiary magistrate for the great Northwest Territory, Irving R. Mowatt, an Edmonton barrister, a police guard and Special Constable Gill, the official executioner, set out on the long trek, over the endless waterways of the Northland, by way of Athabasca River and lake, Slave River, Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River. With them they carried lumber sawed to dimensions for the building of a scaffold and gallows, and close behind the judicial party traveled another headed by T. L. Cory of Winnipeg, who had been selected to act as counsel for the defence. The post of Herschel, 69 degrees 35 seconds north latitude, is rudely built of logs. There in the big barrack room, a jury of steamboat captains, trappers, traders and whalers was impounded and an Eskimo interpreter well versed in English was appointed to translate the evidence to them.

Half a dozen Eskimos, who only before them, were the only spectators, but they attended faithfully throughout the trials, at which every formality of an established court of justice was observed. A remarkable feature was

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the frank and honest evidence given by the Eskimo witnesses. All the accused became at one stage or another principal witnesses for the Crown, and as the roles changed each unhesitatingly gave evidence against the other and quite as directly admitted his own share in the bloodshed. The evidence was strong and unshaken, and Mr. Cory, their counsel, made no attempt to deny the facts, but insisted only that the time is not yet ripe for the just trial of Eskimo offenders in the courts of the white man's law. The jury found young Omak, slayer of Corporal Doak, and the trader, Binder, guilty of murder, and reached the same verdict in the case of Tetamagana. Judge Dubuc, assuming the historic black cap of English criminal justice, sentenced them to be hanged on December 7. They heard their fate announced without a change of expression. The old

medicine woman, Ekootuk, was found guilty of instigating and carrying out the strangulation of the lad man, Ahkshak, but, in view of her advanced age, was sentenced only to a year's imprisonment.

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