

POOR DOCUMENT

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GEORDES THE REAL EMERGENCY MAN IN SITUATION

Has Much to do With the
Labor Crisis

Rhine Rumors as Propaganda
—Affairs in Ireland—Sarah
Bernhardt—News Topics
of a Week in England.

(From our own correspondent.)
London, April 14.—You would imagine, from reading the daily papers, that the two men who were primarily engaged in piloting the ship of state through these perilous days of strikes are Lloyd George and Sir Robert Borden. They are the two on whom the limelight has been turned on the parliamentary stage. But the real emergency man of the occasion is Sir Eric Geddes. He is chairman of the cabinet committee appointed some days ago to deal with the situation which will arise in the event of a general strike. In that capacity he was armed by his colleagues in the cabinet with tremendous powers, for a general strike would create a situation almost tantamount to the establishment of a blockade of our coast. Our food supplies would be immediately menaced and our principal cities might even be plunged in darkness.

It may be said at once that Eric Geddes was just the man to tackle such a task. What he does not know about railways and transport is scarcely worth knowing. And he understands human nature as exemplified in the British working man better than most of us. For one thing he has roughed it himself, as was telling me the other evening of some of his experiences in Canada. He all but worked as a navvy on the line. I forget whether he told me he was a pointman or a shiftman, but I gathered he was earning only a few dollars a week and stood out his modest income by running the village post office at the same time.

Then for a period of forty-two days he went on the stage. I asked him what parts he took, but he explained that he merely sang songs. "I used to have quite a good voice as a youngster," he said, and left me to conclude that he followed the music-hall rather than the legitimate stage.

Rhine Rumors.

There is not the smallest doubt that the rumors about renewed fighting across the Rhine, in which French and British troops were alleged to be heavily engaged with Germans, was spread about London through revolutionary agencies. The report was systematically whispered outside the recruiting stations for the new defence force and soon spread everywhere. The story was that results were being brought into Calais for ninety days, ostensibly for home service, but that the government was going to rush a special set of parliament through, under which all men would be eligible for foreign service, and that, as a matter of fact, the real object was to raise another army for another war on the continent. The most precise details about troop trains, crowded with wounded from the front, being seen in France were given, and the story reached even the most distant suburbs.

Since the great Russian myth of 1914 there has been no such hoax. The whole story is an absolute invention.

The Home Rule Act.

Within the next week the resignation of Lord French as Irish Viceroy, and his suggestion by Lord Edmund Talbot, must presumably take place, because the appointed day for bringing the Home Rule Act into being is next Tuesday. The first elections under the act will probably take place during the first three months of May. The certainty of a Unionist majority is assured in Ulster, and in the south we shall probably have Sinn Féiners sweeping the board on a non-compliance ticket. That is to say, the Sinn Féinists will boycott the southern parliament as they have done the Westminster one. The position of the existing Irish members at St. Stephen's is not affected for the time being, because it is expressly stipulated in the act that they shall continue as members of the imperial parliament until the next general election. The day of the next dissolution of parliament is the earliest day on which they can cease to be British members.

Apparently the hope is still entertained in Ireland, though mainly in official circles, that the tragedy is a part of their own will prove too strong for the southern Irishmen, and that, especially as Ulster will be proceeding to set up its own government, the south may follow suit in good time. Unhappily the present domestic and industrial upset is interfering with such informal pourparlers between the government and representative Sinn Féinists as, so far, proved possible.

The Indomitable Sarah.
The divine Sarah is back amongst us once more, but truth compels me to say she is only a shadow of her old self. The dramatic critics have said all the conventional nice things about her as a tragedienne, but the tragedy is that she should still insist on defying Time and defying the terrible physical disabilities from which she now suffers. Of the stage the only change is that she keeps more to herself than was her wont. It is not majestic caprice—always associated with the great actress who snatched her regal fingers at managerial contracts when it pleased her to break them, and kept leopard and tiger cubs in her bedroom—that denies to Sarah Bernhardt's enormous circle of friends the prolonged talks and neighborly visits that once were their privilege. Despite her indomitable spirit, she has undergone much physical suffering during recent years that has inevitably taken its toll of a life lived ever on the crest of the wave.

When one remembers seeing her in her apartment in Paris, lying recumbent, like the invalid she would be if she were any ordinary woman, the thought of her all flight to the England she confessedly "adores" is scarcely less amazing than the miracle of her continued acting. In her Paris flat she is always, and literally, embowered in flowers—and it is almost the same picture in her rooms at the Savoy. In her own country the lower working classes, to whom she gives special performances, are amongst her ardent worshippers, and the most blasé cynic could scarcely fail to be affected by the sight of gaunt mechanics, with an unmistakable sprinkling of genuine apaches, fighting for the privilege of carrying her to and from her car.

Repeating at Leisure.
The London club gossips have been immensely tickled during the week by well known club men blowing out in sporting wagers quite of the odd-fashions Georgian sort. First of all Captain Buckmaster, quite a popular young chairman even apart from his fame as the husband of Miss Gladys Cooper, challenged, or was challenged by, Major Eric Loder, another popular figure in London, clubland, and famous as a great squash racket champion, to walk to Brighton for a hundred pound wager. The bet was made and taken one night after dinner, when a walk to Brighton proved

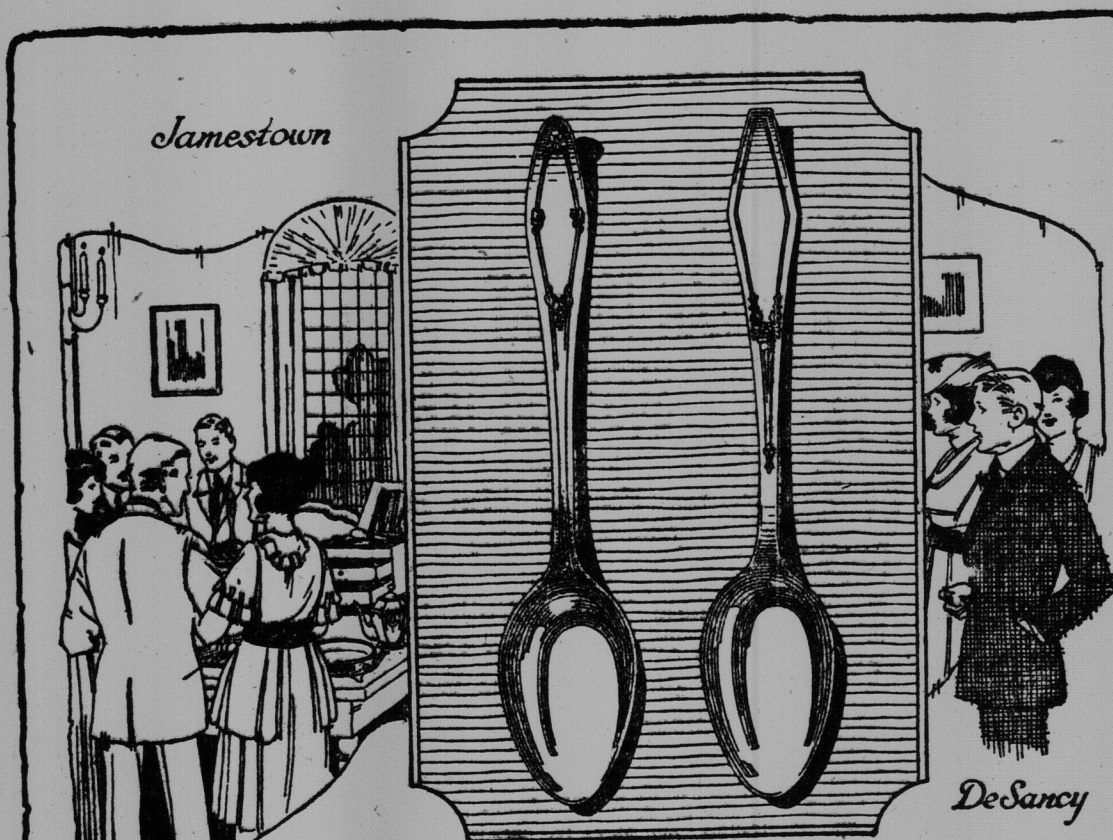


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ably seemed quite a pleasant sort of frolic.

And duly one oppressively hot mid-night the wagers started off from Big Ben at Westminster Bridge, accompanied by cohorts of sporting friends and equally, or even more, sporty canine strangers, on foot, on bicycles, and in cars.

Led by his hall porter of the Bucks Palace, a very sturdy fellow indeed, who valued like a real champion, Captain Buckmaster saved away with his elbows in true London-to-Brighton style, and sixty-five minutes later topped the killing rise to Streatham Hill, looking very much fagged, and regarding cynically his friends and his dress case comfortably toiling beside him in a splendid car.

Major Loder stalked behind, chewing something to keep his wind right, and unlike Captain Buckmaster, who wore proper racing gear, was attired nonchalantly in sweater, ordinary trousers, and a pair of slippers. The two men, who were squashed racket champion passed the actress debonair spouse and won comfortably. The race was over, and the victor swore he wouldn't do it again for a thousand pounds. Probably this is an exaggeration.

What impresses the students of Brighton walks, however, is the excellent time in which both the gentlemen got to Brighton, considering the rather slow pace at which the first five miles to Streatham Hill. Soon after this excursion two well-known city men undertook the same pilgrimage for a more substantial bet, and staggered in, after about fifteen hours mortal agony, "done brown." The loser of the last adventure was one of the Joel family.

Naval Mistakes.
There is one remarkable revelation in Pilon Young's narrative of the Dogger Bank naval engagement. The distinguished musician-author, who served with Admiral Beatty on the Lion as a Lieutenant B. N. V. R., tells us that the usual order was signalled from the flagship that each battle-cruiser was, as she steamed in her place in our line of battle ahead, to engage her enemy vis-à-vis in the German line. Number one in our line took on the German number one, number two took number two, and so on. "It was not until afterwards that we discovered," says Mr. Young, "that the Tiger had continued to fire on the Blücher, thus leaving the Moltke to unintermitted target practice on the Lion." Probably this largely accounted for the terrific mauling the Lion received, and the fact that the flagship had eventually to fall out.

The ominous thing about this gunnery blunder is that precisely the same thing happened at Jutland, where, by a similar mistake, the Derfflinger was left out of the battle, so far as we were concerned, for some time, and calmly settled down to sink two of our best battle-cruisers. Incidentally Mr. Young tells how the Lion, with Admiral Beatty and all hands "came very near her end." She would have gone to glory if a German 11-inch shell, which got into the 4-inch magazine trunk, had exploded instead of proving a "dud." He also thinks that, but for our excessive timidity on the subject of mines and torpedoes after Admiral

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Beatty and the Lion were out of it, the Dogger Bank battle ought to have been much more decisive.

London Champs.
I see that a writer has stated that "never before" has Kensington Gardens been a camp for soldiers, and that "Hyde Park has not been used for this purpose either." But this is not the truth. With regard to Kensington Gardens, apart from the Victory March camps of 1919, during the famous Chartist scare, when a huge army of men was expected to march upon the metropolis and the wildest rumors prevailed, both Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park were used as military encampments. The arrangements were in the energetic hands of the aged Duke of Wellington, and the result was that the demonstration failed out. But, going back further, in 1802, when the fear of invasion by the French was justified by the preparations going on at Boulogne, Hyde Park was turned into a vast camp, where both the regulars and the "Citizen Guard" drilled, to the admiration of the populace. Kensington Gardens were not then enclosed, but a camp was pitched in Kensington Gore, the ground now covered by the Albert Hall.

In Kensington Gardens.
The Brigade of Guards encamped in Kensington Gardens presents a very military figure. The Guards have pitched their tents, dressed absolutely "by the book."

The new judicial commander-in-chief was born in 1848, the son of a well-known surgeon; passed first class in law at Cambridge, where he was a Trinity Hall man, and was called to the bar at the Middle Temple in 1869. He married his first cousin in 1872. At one time he was Recorder of Windsor. He is a keen sportsman, like so many prominent figures on the bench, and was a very much interested figure at the recent bar point-to-point races. Until quite recently he was a confirmed cyclist, and he is the typical Athenaeum clubman. Quite the antithesis of Mr. Justice Lawrence is entirely of a serious man. He is gullible of those judicial flashes which are wont to set the wigs wagging.

KILLED IN RIOT AT GAME.
Philadelphia, May 11.—Patrick Joyce was shot and killed on Sunday by William Drennan, a policeman, after the officer had been badly beaten by a crowd when he tried to break up a baseball game on a vacant lot.

Drennan declared he was lying on the ground when he fired the shot. A dozen men, he said, were upon him, some kicking him and others beating him with baseball bats. Other policemen, who responded to a riot call, rescued Drennan and dispersed the crowd. Several arrests were made.

Bachelor of Arts degrees from McGill University have been conferred upon the following students from his city: Dofris Barnes and Edith L. Barnes.

Complaint against the playing of Sunday baseball games on the lot had been made by the minister of a church directly across the street.

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