

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1919

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THE PREMIER'S SPEECH

Premier Foster's speech in the legislature yesterday was in marked contrast to that of the leader of the opposition. He could speak with the consciousness of public duty well performed; of valuable legislation already secured by his government; and of other measures of great importance to be dealt with at this session.

As was fitting, the premier at the outset made reference to great work done by the province during the war period, not only by her sons at the front, but by the men and women who remained at home. His reference to the work of the farmers, the Red Cross and all patriotic organizations, the farmers, who made new records in production, and the people at large who subscribed so wonderfully to Victory Loans and all patriotic causes was a fitting tribute.

The premier made a clear statement regarding the Valley Railway, the action of the government in regard to having it taken over by the federal government and the reasons therefor; and he did not forget to point out that assurances given by the Borden government in 1914 had not been made good. However, although the Valley Railway ends at Westfield instead of as originally planned, Premier Foster pointed out that through the efforts of Hon. Mr. Carvell it will be linked up with the Transcontinental at McElroy Junction and so bring through traffic to St. John.

With regard to the claims of New Brunswick in connection with the proposed transfer of natural resources to the western provinces, Premier Foster explained the situation and assured the house that these claims would be pressed until a fair adjustment is made. If necessary, he said, the government would go to the foot of the throne to present its case.

In connection with visits to Ottawa the premier very properly pointed out the handicap the government of this province had to suffer because of the unavailing record of its predecessor. He added that action is being taken by his government to recover large sums of lumber and Valley Railway graft, the actions being now pending in the courts of the province.

The premier touched but lightly upon coming legislation, but mentioned measures such as those dealing with soldiers' settlement, wound sufferings, and the development of the oil and coal and oil areas, showing that the government has prepared much progressive legislation for the consideration of the house. Hon. Mr. Foster is fortunate not only that he can look forward to useful work for the session, but that he can look backward upon great work already accomplished since he became premier, and upon a clean political record. Following his speech the criticism of Mr. Peck and Mr. Tilley were so mild and ineffective as to be a source of satisfaction rather than worry to the members on the government side of the house.

All who are concerned in the development of the work of the Y. W. C. A. in St. John will be interested in the following paragraph from the Bangor Commercial: "Much enthusiasm is being shown by the public in regard to Association Week of the Young Women's Christian Association. The annual budget for the institution is \$35,000 and the institution itself earns all but \$3,000 and that is now being asked of the public. This splendid home for women and girls is a great convenience to the public and as all but self-supporting. The solicitors are meeting with splendid success."

Owing to the prevalence of influenza the Woodstock board of health has decided to close schools and movies and other assemblies except Sunday services for a time. The St. John Standard's Woodstock correspondent makes this comment: "The decision has fallen flat. The scare does not work like it did a few months ago. Local government officials must do something for their salary." Thus does a great journal uphold the law of the land.

In Birmingham, Alabama, the Americanization of the immigrant is being approached through the public school system. In two night schools for aliens, attached to high schools, there is a registration of more than one hundred. Imagine a hundred foreigners in a sacred school house. In St. John we would let these people stew in their own juice of ignorance and Bolshevism. But our sacred school houses would be unimpaired.

The London Express states the case of the Canadian soldier in England with clearness and force, and does not spare the British shipping controller for upsetting the plans of the Canadian military authorities in regard to transportation. One result of recent disturbance will probably be the provision of more ships for this service.

We are told that the peace treaty is now rapidly assuming form in Paris and will soon be ready to submit to the Germans. The German press is in a very bad humor over the proposed terms, but can see no alternative to acceptance.

WHY ST. JOHN LAGS BEHIND.

If a titled gentleman from Timbuctoo came to St. John with a reputation and what is termed "a good line of talk" on a subject as remote as possible from the life interests of the people, there would not be seats enough at Bond's to hold the eager members of the Canadian Club who would flock there to drink in his discourse.

Last week, when Mr. Fletcher Peacock addressed the Club on vocational training, a matter vital to the future of over ninety per cent of the youth of this city, he spoke to nineteen people. The Canadian Club has over five hundred members. Nearly five hundred of them said in their hearts: "Vocational training may go hang." And they stayed away. The Times extends its sympathy to the president and secretary of the Club. They do their best to get interesting speakers and make the Canadian Club worth while. They cannot always get a gentleman from Timbuctoo.

Mr. Peacock is a clear, fluent and convincing speaker. He made some converts among the nineteen. He knows his subject, and knows how vital it is to the progress of St. John, of New Brunswick, of Canada. The figures he is able to quote speak for themselves. The Canadian parliament will this year act on the long neglected Robertson report and grant aid to vocational training. The New Brunswick legislature last year adopted a more advanced measure for advancing this training than exists in any other province. Under that act St. John should this winter have had evening vocational classes. It is pitiable to hear anybody describe the little group of students in mechanical drawing in one evening school as an evidence that St. John is doing something. Note this extract from the Fredericton Clarifier of what Quebec towns are doing—Quebec, the alleged slow province:

"Technical education is making strides in the province of Quebec, where the government, the legislature and the people are this year giving a great deal of attention to development and to practical business requirements. A bill has already been read a third time in the assembly establishing a technical school at St. Hyacinthe—a comparatively small city in Quebec—the city being authorized to borrow \$150,000 for its erection, and the city and the provincial government each undertaking to subscribe \$10,000 per annum for its maintenance. A bill making somewhat similar provisions for the city of Hull has been read a first time. It would be pleasant to see other provinces and other cities forging rapidly ahead of us, establishing institutions and creating facilities that will ultimately, because of the lead in our own province, take our boys and girls who can afford it from home that they may be fitted and equipped for the requirements of practical business life elsewhere. We cannot successfully develop under such conditions as these."

The St. John school board has been asked to appoint a vocational board for this city. Why is it not done? The new chairman will no doubt ask that question. The city council has been asked to support the project. The council and school board have the matter before them and it is for them to act. Why the delay? Is it because the example of nearly five hundred members of the Canadian Club convinces them that nobody wants action? If so the board of trade, the trades and labor council and citizens generally who want vocational training introduced should say so in plain and unmistakable language. There is a reactionary influence in school board circles which has a tendency to stop the wheels of progress. Everybody knows what it is.

The chief superintendent of education has the right idea. He would have in the schools of this province provision for three courses—classical, commercial and industrial. The sooner that plan is adopted the better for our boys and girls, and for the welfare of the province. We have been making time—or worse. The age for entrance into the teaching profession has been reduced a year in order to get enough graduate teachers—young and inexperienced girls—and yet we expect results. There must be a complete change or this province will go backward instead of forward in the matter of education.

Hon. Robert Rogers wants "a progressive national policy," controlled by the Conservatives. He will probably have to remain for some time on the waiting list.

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SUFFERINGS OF THE SYRIANS

Horrors of War, Starvation And Turkish Savagery

Saint John Association Receives News From Mt. Lebanon—Committee to Take up Matter of Aid

The horrors of war, the agonies of starvation, a once peaceful town converted into a desolate region wherein the inhabitants were about mad devouring babies, are some of the appalling bits of news that are being received in the city by members of the Syrian Protective Association. The place referred to is Mt. Lebanon, Syria, which prior to the outbreak of the war had upwards of a thousand population, but today has only 125 alive to describe the suffering during the four years of carnage and brutality at the hands of the Turks.

Letters describing the conditions were read Monday night at a meeting of the St. John branch of the association, at which Vice-President Thomas Hatty presided. Following routine business members read letters they had received from their former home in Mt. Lebanon, telling how the country had suffered as a result of the recently ended conflict. Suggestions were offered regarding the forwarding of some details from these letters to the press in order to make the people at large realize the awful suffering this country endured as a result of throwing in her lot with the Allies, the hardships and suffering the people had to bear up with from the Turks. To add to these calamities the country was overrun by a pest in the form of the locust, which ruined the crops and killed every form of vegetation.

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One of the letters read at the meeting was from a Syrian who had been captured by the Turks and prior to the signing of the armistice with England he escaped from a prison camp and worked his way back home. In the letter he told of the devastated state of his home town, swept barren by the pest, the inhabitants murdered by the invading Turks, and the terrible havoc wrought by hunger. People were running about almost naked crying piteously for food, while others who had endeavored to walk to distant habitations were lying dead along the road sides. He told of the disease which was sweeping through the country due to lack of food and the weakened condition of the people and in a most piteous way begged for help.

The letter further told of the first year of the war. The men picked up arms and went to battle while the women and the young and infirm remained at home. That year the people were able to live in comparatively good circumstances, but the following year the pest swept over the country in the form of millions of flying locusts, which ruined vegetation of every kind. The inhabitants fought the locusts with the seeds of the insects brought forth millions more and the result was that there was nothing left to feed cattle and they had to be killed off. At this time meat was plentiful and could be purchased very cheap, but after that it was an impossibility to procure it for any price. As the months went by hunger began to be apparent and then came the Turks. The faithful Christians were put to the test of everything of value and the majority of them were butchered and others hanged on trunks up excises that they were spies of the Allies. Christians were especially badly dealt with and it was not an uncommon thing to find numbers of heads in the wells about the town and outskirts. After the Turks had wrought their vengeance on the suffering and terror-stricken people, the awful ravages of starvation began to become a menace and during that year about a third of the entire population were wiped out. The rest lived on supplies occasionally sent them, but day after day saw women and children running wildly about the streets clamoring for food until their strength ebbed away and they fell on the roadside and expired. These were some of the horrors the writer pointed out the people had gone through and they were still in dire straits.

REFUSED JOB; SHOOT FOREMAN

Italian Fires Five Shots at A. J. Roberts of Grand Trunk Road House

Montreal, March 12—"Go away Spagetti, you couldn't hold the last job I gave you," said Alfred J. Roberts, engine foreman of the Grand Trunk road house at Turcot yesterday afternoon to a discharged Italian laborer, who had been pestering him all day for a job. As Roberts swung on his heel, a large automatic revolver spit five bullets and



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the foreman pitched to the ground, killed by a bullet which drilled the last evening in his heart. The Italian made his escape.

MEN'S RETREAT BROUGHT TO CLOSE

Reception of Several Hundred Into Holy Name Society Feature of Last Evening

The exercises of the retreat for the men of the Cathedral parish were brought to a impressive close last evening by Rev. John Cox, S. J., and the earnest words of the preacher and the encouraging remarks of Bishop LeBlanc, who spoke to the men, were such as would be calculated to have a lasting effect. A feature of the closing exercises was the solemn reception of some hundreds of men into the Holy Name Society. The sight was inspiring as the men formed in the two centre aisles of the main church and in front of the altar, the clerics in the sanctuary, all with lighted candles. At the moment the solemn pledge was taken the lights throughout the church were extinguished, leaving the lighted candles, to stand out brilliantly as a great glowing cross.

Rev. John Cox, in excellent form and his final farewell to the men, urging them to be faithful to the lessons of the retreat, was an eloquent appeal touched in beautiful diction and given with compelling force. His Lordship Bishop LeBlanc referred to the many of the seal of Father Cox. He emphasized the latter's words that while his work for them was ended their for themselves was but begun. His Lordship urged counsel attendance at mass on week days as well as Sundays, and frequent reception of Holy Communion; in fact the really proper way to assist at mass was to receive Communion at that mass. His Lordship referred with marked pleasure to the great number who received Holy Communion frequently during the retreat.

Father Cox in a very pleasing manner thanked the bishop, the priests of the Cathedral, the Sisters who had looked after the altar, the altar boys and the entire male congregation for the assistance rendered him during the retreat. The exercises were closed with the celebration of Benediction by Bishop LeBlanc, with Father Cox as deacon and Rev. William Duke, sub-deacon. Both the Bishop and Father Cox gave a beautiful address to the congregation.

Father Cox now goes to Nelson to conduct a retreat there. He will likely be in St. John again in October.

Australia Has Deluge

Melbourne, March 12—Large sections of the city have been flooded by the heaviest rains in fifty years. Hundreds of houses were damaged and streets were torn up by the fury of the down-pour.

Heavy rains have been reported in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and other parts of the commonwealth, breaking the recent drought.

At a combined mothers' and daughters' meeting held by the Excelsior Club in the Sunday school room of St. Andrew's church last evening there were choruses by the girls and numbers by Miss Frances Murdoch, Miss Sylvia Ferguson, Miss Bessie Forbes and Miss Alice Murdoch. Miss Nina Yelman of Toronto, Y. W. C. A. secretary for girls' work in the eastern provinces, gave an address.

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EARLY FREEMASONRY.

La Tribune of St. Hyacinthe publishes a study on Freemasonry in Quebec provinces, claiming that lodges were formed following the arrival of Wolfe's army, and adding that St. John's Day was celebrated in Quebec on the 27th of December, 1766, some French-Canadian taking part. The article claims that Claude Denechaud was one of the first of the race to become a Freemason, and, in fact, he became grand master of the province, his brother being the well known parish priest of Deschambault. A very novel thing happened, however, in January, 1771, when Pierre Gamelin, a rich merchant of Montreal, and a leading Freemason, was elected a warden of the Church of Notre Dame. The article in question says, however, that as soon as the then cure of Notre Dame learned that his new warden was a Freemason the reverend gentleman secured the promise from Gamelin that he would no longer take part in Masonic gatherings. Gamelin, however, was somewhat weak in his promise, as he was seen soon after in a procession of Masons with apron and other symbols of office, bringing scandal to the faithful, as Gamelin was father of a well known Sublime priest at the Montreal College. Abbe Gosselin, in his work, refers to this episode, adding that Mgr. Briand, Bishop of Quebec, wrote a paternal letter to Gamelin as follows:

"You were wrong in taking part in Masonic ceremonies after promising Cure Jolivet to the contrary. It was a fault which you could have easily dispensed with. I will forget it, however," added his lordship, "but I ask you no longer to take part at the lodge meetings while you hold the office of warden. Remember that you are a Catholic before being a Freemason, and that the oaths you have taken to the church are more sacred than those of the lodges."

A meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was held yesterday. Mrs. David Hipwell presiding. Reports from committees were received favorably.

The Furness liner Appennine, driven ashore in Witley Bay, Newfoundland, recently by the ice, is reported abandoned.

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