

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N. B., JULY 11, 1900.

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH.
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Semi-Weekly Telegraph

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THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM.

The principal plank in the platform of the Democratic party as adopted in Kansas City is a protest against the imperialistic policy of the Republican party. The silver question which has been kept somewhat in the background, the object of this being to conciliate the eastern Democrats, who are not very much enamored of the free coinage of silver.

Looking at the matter from the point of view of true statesmanship there is no doubt that the Democratic protest against imperialism is wise and timely. Whether it will commend itself to the voters is another question. Statesmenlike views are not always prevalent with the voters who are sometimes apt to be drawn aside by considerations which are of small account when they come to be examined. The policy of imperialism upon which the United States has embarked is one which in the course of time will wholly change the character of that nation and profoundly affect its destiny. It is impossible for the United States to acquire possessions beyond the limits of America and to develop interest in the four quarters of the globe without assuming a new attitude towards national affairs and becoming involved in responsibilities which will involve heavy responsibilities. True politics and statesmanship would avoid such entanglements and be content with such growths as may be obtained on this continent.

Certainly the eastern possessions of the United States, the Philippine Islands, are likely to cost the country a great deal more than ever will be received from them. Yet we doubt very much whether the Democrats will succeed in winning the election on the platform that they have adopted. Even such stalwart opponents of imperialism as Senator Hoar of Massachusetts, have ceased their opposition to the policy of the Republican party and agreed to assist in the reelection of Mr. McKinley, not because they are reconciled to imperialism, but because they prefer their own party to any other. Much, however, will depend on the operations of the present summer in the Philippine Islands. If they should prove disastrous and costly it might assist the Democrats very considerably. In the meantime people of other countries will be able to watch with curious interest the progress of the new policy of the United States and the attitude of the people towards it.

ASSERTION OF BARBARISM.

There has been no such unique tragedy in the history of the world as that which is being enacted at Peking and other parts of northern China during the past few weeks. Other calamities of a similar nature have fallen upon other nations and the grief which was occasioned has been confined to the people of one country, but here we have every great nation represented through its ministers, consuls, missionaries and merchants and the whole world looking on at a tragedy in which every individual feels that he has an interest. Advice which comes from Shanghai warns the people of Europe and America to prepare for the worst, which means

that all the European residents of Peking have been murdered. They were still holding out bravely a day or two ago, but there is a limit to human endurance and the stoutest defence must fail when the defenders are without food and ammunition. What would then happen when the crisis came and they had to yield to the superior numbers of the enemy? Can only be conjectured, but judging from the past not one of the Europeans now in Peking would be allowed to leave to tell the tale.

There is something impressive and remarkable in this wonderful tragedy because it shows that even the great nations at times are called to face a crisis which it is beyond their power to meet. No one would ever have suspected that the time would ever come when China would defy all the civilized nations of the world and allow the barbarian instincts of her people to overcome legal authority and to revel in the bloodshed of strangers who ought to have received the protection of the government. Yet so it is and the problem which will come up later when these Europeans in Peking have perished or have been rescued is one of such vast importance that it will require the best thoughts of the greatest minds to solve it in a satisfactory manner. What is to be done with China?

Shall this great country be allowed to relapse into barbarism or shall the nations of the world make an effort to obtain for it a better government than it has had in the past? It is evident that the Chinese government as at present constituted is altogether effete and powerless; it cannot grapple with a crisis like that of the present; it cannot command the respect of its own people or the obedience of the provinces which are remote from the capital yet it exists as a nation or should be partitioned up among grasping European powers who are effecting with land hunger. It would be far better to assist China to maintain her own nationality so that she might gradually be brought to a better condition and become the equal of the Japanese, their neighbors, who a few years ago were quite as barbarian as the Chinese are now. The future of these eastern peoples must depend on the degree of civilization they are willing to assume. Barbarism cannot exist in the world any longer except in remote regions, which cannot be reached by European influence. Nations which have commercial ports and other means of communicating with other nations must yield to the spirit of civilization and awaken from their sleep of barbarism.

HAS TAXATION BEEN INCREASED?
There is no charge made against the government by the opposition so unfair and so unwarranted as that taxation has been increased. It is unfair because in one view it is true. It is true in the sense that the volume of taxes collected last year was larger than in 1899, but the men who make the charge know very well that the volume of taxation is not the true nor the proper test of the matter. It leads to a conclusion which is unwise and unjust. The rate of taxation is the only true test, and when that test is applied the government stands acquitted in the judgment of every reasonable man in the land.

It is not denied by the most rabid opponent of the government, that when the Liberals came into office they reduced the tariff. There is some dispute as to how much they reduced it, but the statement in the official returns has never been questioned. That statement, as applied to the whole imports of the dominion, deductible and free, fixes the rate at 17.13 in 1896, and 15.81 in 1899. In 1899 the rate had stood as high as 20.00, so that an appreciable reduction must have been made by the Liberals in order to bring the figures down to 15.81. Whatever may have been the precise reduction, there is no one who denies the fact that the scale of duties has actually been lowered. Mr. Fielding reckons the reduction at something like four per cent., which is very considerable when applied to a large import business.

Mr. Foster contends that the reduction did not quite reach two per cent. Mr. Foster may be trusted to make it as small as his hair-splitting process of logic could make it, and the conclusion is therefore irresistible that the reduction was at least two per cent.

It is not worth while arguing at length on the point as to whether the reduction in the rate of duty was equivalent to four per cent. or two per cent. Once the fact is conceded that there has been a reduction at all, the ground that at that point the Tory casuist gets in his work. He says: "The Conservatives collected \$20,219,037 in customs duties in 1896, and last year the collections from the same source reached \$25,724,223; therefore the Liberals have increased taxation by \$5,505,000." No more specious or misleading argument could be used, and the men who are using it know quite well that they are deliberately seeking to deceive those to whom they address such a statement of the case.

Any man who stops to think will see that a government may reduce the rate of taxation and yet have a larger income from taxation. The two things are not at all inconsistent. The government cannot possibly control the volume of taxation. All they can do is to fix the rate, and the people themselves settle how much they will pay as a total. The reason why the people of Canada paid \$5,505,000 more in customs duties in 1899 than in 1896 is simply that they chose in the latter year to import an enormously greater volume of dutiable goods. The imports of the dominion in 1896 amounted to only \$110,587,480, whereas in 1899 they amounted to

\$154,051,593. They did this voluntarily, and, notwithstanding the lowered scale of duties, they, of course, paid a larger volume of taxes.

An illustration from everyday life will make this plain to even the dullest or most prejudiced mind. The Street Railway Company of St. John gives six tickets for twenty-five cents. Suppose it should decide to give eight tickets for the same amount, no one could say in reason that a substantial reduction had not taken place. But, at the end of the year some one comes along and says: "I paid only \$3 last year in street car fares; this year I have paid \$4. Street car travelling is becoming dearer." Would it not be a complete and satisfactory answer to such a complaint to say: "Last year you rode on the cars but 72 times, while this year you rode 128 times. That is why you paid more." This fits the case of taxation in reference to Dominion affairs. The taxes have been reduced, but the people have chosen to buy a much greater volume of taxable goods. And they have done so because they have been prosperous.

There is a further test, although of a negative character, which may properly be applied to this question. We have said that the net reduction in the general scale of duties effected by the revision of 1897 was probably four per cent. To this must be added the 25 per cent. under the preferential tariff of last year as applied to all goods coming from England. How does that work out? Had there been no reduction in these two ways it is clear as noonday that the people of Canada instead of paying \$25,724,228 in 1899 as customs duties would have paid \$1,300,000 more under the general tariff, and \$2,440,000 more on English goods. The actual sum collected on imports from Great Britain last year was \$7,328,191 on a business of \$37,660,123, as compared with \$7,338,514 on a business of \$32,970,742 in 1896. Men who are able to do a simple sum in addition and division do not need any further proof. But that is not all. This year, there has been a further reduction in the duties on British goods, so that it becomes a severe tax on patience to read the statistics, so persistently made in the Tory press that the present government has increased taxation. As we said at the outset, the charge is utterly unfair and unsustainable.

HAS THERE BEEN EXTRAVAGANCE?
At this juncture, when the estimates are being put through parliament, the opposition press expend much time and energy upon the task of showing that the present government have violated their distinct pledge to administer the financial affairs of the country with economy. The matter is one which no friend of the government need for a moment shrink from discussing; for when fairly looked at the hollowness of the Tory charge is made apparent. There is absolutely nothing in it. The charge, briefly stated, is that whereas the Laurier government took office under a promise of retrenchment, they have increased the charges against revenue from \$37,000,000 to \$41,000,000. That is the bold way the matter is always put, because those who complain could not go any further without unsevering their own contention. We propose, however, to state the case a little more fully, and with absolute fairness.

In the first place, it is not at all correct to place the expenditure for the last year of the Conservative rule at \$37,000,000. It will be remembered that they did not get their estimates passed in the session of 1896, nor did they even reach the stage of having them all before parliament. The figures, however, are in the possession of the government, and they show that something like \$38,200,000 was the sum which would have been required to pay the accounts for the fiscal year 1896 if the Conservatives had continued in office. That was the measure of the obligations at all events, which faced the incoming administration, and they had to provide accordingly. But so strong is the case for the government that we are not in the least concerned as to the case for the purposes of this analysis, going to us on \$38,200,000 being accepted as the expenditure for the year 1896. We will take the figure of \$37,000,000 as given uniformly by the Tory press, so that it may not be said their charge has been unfairly met.

We will also acknowledge, although only for the purposes of argument, that the expenditure has been increased by the Liberals to \$41,000,000, or by the sum of \$4,000,000. Correctly stated, the increase is not more than \$2,600,000, but we want to answer the case as put by the opponents of the government. How has this \$4,000,000 been made up? If Tory journals desired to be quite candid, they would inform their readers that \$3,000,000 of this is a mere matter of book-keeping, and that, too, in relation to matters distinctly encouraging. Take the case of the Intercolonial Railway. Under the last parliament most appropriate every dollar spent on the government railway, precisely as if there were not a cent of revenue from that source. Since the business has increased on the road the annual appropriation is now something like \$1,200,000 larger than in 1896. But every dollar of it comes back to the treasury, and this year there is a surplus of \$120,000. The Yukon accounts for about \$1,200,000 more with a surplus over outgo of \$150,000. The post office makes up a further \$500,000; so that in these three items alone \$3,000,000 of the \$4,000,000 is wiped out.

If we carried the analysis further, the remaining \$1,000,000 could be quite easily made up; but we wish to digress for a moment in order to make one or two fair and relevant comparisons, which touch the germ of the whole matter. When the Tories came into office in 1878 they found the expenditure \$23,000,000 per annum. They were distinctly pledged to reduce

it to \$21,000,000; but they ended in 1880 by bringing it up to \$37,000,000—as they admit. There was an increase of \$16,000,000, or equal to 60 per cent. The Liberals have not added anything to the outlay in the sense involved in the \$14,000,000 of increase during the Tory regime; but assuming that the whole \$4,000,000 is of the same class, it means but 10 per cent. of added expenditure. The Tories during 18 long years increased the expenditure at the rate of 3.3 per cent. per annum; while the Liberals, during four years of unparalleled expansion and growth, have increased the expenditure by only 2.5 per cent. on the \$4,000,000 basis. It is quite clear from these comparisons that it does not lie in the mouths of the Tories to say that the Liberals have not practiced economy.

No sensible or fair minded man needs to be told that economy is essentially a relative thing; that an expenditure of \$5,000,000 is justifiable under another set of circumstances and expenditure of \$1,000,000 would be criminal waste. In other words the annual expenditure of the dominion must have relation to something. It will be conceded, for example, that it must bear a close relation to income. The man who lives within what he earns and lays a little by for a rainy day cannot be charged with imprudence. How does the case stand as between parties when the income test is applied? While the Tories went on adding to the outlay year by year, they did so in the face of a declining revenue; so that many millions in deficits were charged up permanently against the public debt. With the Liberals the case is quite different. Notwithstanding the fact that they reduced taxation, so great has been the prosperity of the country since 1896 that the revenue has gone many millions ahead of the figures of 1896. There have been enormous surpluses over the outgo. They have cut their coat according to their cloth, and laid enough aside to make another coat. Could prudence go further?

Then again the public expenditure must bear a proportion to something else. No one will dispute the proposition, for example, that there ought fairly to be some relation between the annual outgo and the trade and population of the dominion. How does this test work out when applied between political parties? Here it is, for convenience, in tabulated form:

Increase of trade 1878-96.....38 p. c.
Increase of expenditure 1878-96.....60
Increase of trade 1896-1900.....45
Increase of expenditure 1896-1900.....10

This result does not afford much room for the carping of political opponents who deal only in totals, and who seem afraid to state the case fully and frankly. The same thing applies to the population test. For obvious reasons we cannot draw a comparison based on actual data as to population; but the statement will scarcely be disputed that Canada has made great progress in this regard within the past four years. So that, we repeat what we said at the outset, there is nothing in relation to the public expenditure from which friends of the government need shrink. Conversely and candidly stated the complaints of the Tories in that regard are but an indirect means of calling attention to a set of facts highly creditable to the administration of the day.

RUSSIA AND JAPAN.
The announcement of the Russian government that it intends to give Japan a free hand with respect to military operations in China is a confession of weakness on the part of the great colossus of the north which few people expected to see. Nothing but the inability of Russia herself to send sufficient troops to China to put down the present rebellion, or whatever it may be termed, would have induced Russia to allow the forces of Japan to advance into that country. It will be remembered that at the end of the war between Japan and China, and after the terms of peace were made, Russia interposed to prevent the Japanese from obtaining the proper fruit of their victories. Ever since then Japan has been on ill terms with Russia and eager to have revenge for the slight and injury then cast upon her. Now that Japan has a free hand in China and will be allowed to send as many troops there as she pleases, it is to be hoped that she will not again be robbed of the fruits of her victory. Since Japan was prevented from taking possession of Korea by Russia the latter has seized the Manchuria and fortified it strongly apparently being determined to hold on to it permanently. Japan ought now to be allowed to take possession of Korea, for if the Japanese would be able to interpose an inviolable barrier against any future Russian aggression, Japan has been badly treated by Russia and the great powers should now see that she receives justice.

THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION.
The judicial commission appointed by the government for the purpose of inquiring into the alleged election frauds is now ready for business, and has issued a notification through its registrar that all persons who desire to bring under its notice any matters respecting the general elections of 1896, as well as any elections prior and subsequent thereto, and the conduct of the officials thereof, should make application to the officials of the commission at Toronto by letter or otherwise. It will now be possible to investigate not only into the alleged frauds of which the Conservatives pretend to complain, but also those frauds by which they profited at the general elec-

STRIVING TO DO BETTER!

OUR BOYS' CLOTHING business is a constant source of gratification to us. Yet we are not satisfied, and in spite of our wide reputation and numerous friends we are striving constantly, to provide more generously and serve them better than ever before. This great store, with its superb stock, which is unsurpassed in quality, quality and desirability, and affords the widest opportunity for selection, is a convincing proof of our intention to look after the "men-to-be."

Boys' Vestee Suits—Splendid quality in Serges, Cheviots and Fancy mixtures; goods that will stand the severest kind of wear. Plenty to pick and choose from, ages 3 to 9, \$2.50 to \$6.00.

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Wash Suits and Blouses—For a full description of Styles and Fabrics see Daily papers. Suits, \$1.50 to \$3.35. Blouses 50c. to \$1.35.

Two lines of wash suits selling at greatly reduced prices, as follows:—
One line, former price 80c. - - - now selling at 50c.
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ST. JOHN, N. B.

tion of 1896 and the elections prior to that date. It is also desirable that the elections of 1882 and 1887 should be inquired into, so that Mr. Birmingham, the Conservative organizer for Ontario, may have an opportunity of proving the falsities of those statements made by his own party in that regard which he is now making. It is not to be denied that Canada has made great progress in this regard within the past four years. So that, we repeat what we said at the outset, there is nothing in relation to the public expenditure from which friends of the government need shrink. Conversely and candidly stated the complaints of the Tories in that regard are but an indirect means of calling attention to a set of facts highly creditable to the administration of the day.

PROSPEROUS CANADA.
The returns which we published on Saturday of the revenue of Canada for the past fiscal year are in the highest degree satisfactory and are the best indication that can be given of the great prosperity of the country under Liberal rule. A revenue of \$49,000,000 in a single year is something unparalleled in Canadian history, for it exceeds by upwards of four millions the extraordinary revenue of last year. The surplus when all the accounts are in, is expected to reach \$8,000,000, which will be something far beyond anything that we have had in Canada before. These figures are the best evidence of the manner in which the country has prospered under Liberal rule, and they contradict in the most emphatic manner the statements made by the opposition, when they were in power, that if the Liberals were allowed to govern Canada the country would be ruined. The Liberals have been governing Canada for four years and each year has been more prosperous than the last. There is no doubt that they will go on governing Canada for many years to come, for the people of this country are not likely to change the government while the country is prospering under its hands.

THE ALDERMEN AT LOCH LOMOND.
The trip of the St. John aldermen and other city officials to Loch Lomond on Friday, we suppose must be accepted as a sort of exploring expedition. Possibly none of the aldermen had ever been to Loch Lomond before, and they may have had no idea of the character of the three lakes which bear that name. That at all events would be the inference that a stranger would draw from the visit and the elaborate preparations connected with it. Now that they have seen Loch Lomond for the first time, we trust that they have made up their minds that it would be an act of extreme folly for the city of St. John to extend its water pipes to that lake. They will have observed that the shores of Loch Lomond are all settled, and that to make its water available for drinking purposes the entire shore would have to be purchased by the city, unless our citizens would wish to run the risk of being poisoned by the manure and sewage from the barns which flows into it, and which would be the best possible means of propagating typhoid fever and kindred diseases. The aldermen will probably have observed that Loch Lomond has no extensive water-sheds, and in fact that it is incapable of supplying a very large amount of water daily to the city. We fancy that about two million gallons a day, which is

about one-third of the amount which the city requires, would be all that Loch Lomond could give us, even if there were no pulp mill at Mispic to take that amount of water from the lake daily.

There may be some people who have an interest in making the city go to Loch Lomond for a supply of water, but that is not the interest of our citizens generally, who do not desire to have another million dollars expended on the water works, unless it is shown that there is an absolute necessity for such an expenditure and that the safety of the city would be compromised without it. We are glad, however, that the aldermen went to Loch Lomond because now they will have no reasonable excuse for any action in the common council looking towards the proposed extension of our mains to that lake. They have seen Loch Lomond, they have enjoyed its hospitality, and now they can return from their arduous labors for a season, firm in the conviction that the proposed extension has no merits to recommend it, and that so many things may be urged against it that it is not to be thought of as a practical scheme for the improvement of the water supply of the city.

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.
The war in South Africa has been heard of very little of late in view of the more exciting news which is coming daily from China. It is felt that the war is practically ended and that no very startling news is to be looked for from that quarter until we hear of the surrender of Mr. Kruger. That person still professes to believe in the efficacy of his prayers to save him from the consequences of his folly, but we doubt whether any one else in the Transvaal is of the same opinion. Kruger declares that he will not surrender so long as he has 500 men in the field, which is a pretty bold statement, as 500 men do not go very far in a war. Still if Mr. Kruger desires to fight until the bitter end he will no doubt be accommodated with all the fighting he wants. His present resistance to the British advance is absurd and futile because in a few days his men will be compelled to surrender or be driven into the mountains and then the Transvaal will be in the hands of the British and it will be proper to proclaim the former South African republic to be British territory and to declare that any person found in arms against the government from a certain day to be named will be regarded as a traitor and subject to the penalties of high treason. In the face of such a proclamation we doubt whether Mr. Kruger can keep together even so small a force as 500 men, provided the British were aware of the intention of the government.

The arrival of General Buller at Pretoria may be regarded as a material guarantee