

The Standard

Published by The Standard Limited, 82 Prince William Street, St. John, N. B., Canada.

SUBSCRIPTION:
Daily Edition, by Carrier, per year.....\$5.00
Daily Edition, by Mail, per year.....3.00
Semi-Weekly Edition, by Mail, per year.....1.00
Single Copies Two Cents.

TELEPHONE CALLS:
Business Office.....Main 1722
Editorial and News.....Main 1746

ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1912.

THE PANAMA CANAL TOLLS.

The proclamation issued by President Taft fixing the tolls for the Panama Canal, again brings into prominence the question of discrimination against foreign coastwise shipping which was a feature of the Bill passed by Congress and signed by Mr. Taft last August. By this breach of faith, which has been the subject of widespread criticism, it now appears that the United States will be compelled to incur financial loss for many years for the reason that the canal will not be self-supporting.

The tolls, which are based upon the report of Professor Emory R. Johnson, a special commissioner, who has been working on the solution of the toll question under the Secretary of War, are placed at \$120 per net ton on loaded merchant vessels, with a reduction of 40 per cent. on vessels in ballast, and 50 cents for every ton of a warship's displacement. From these charges war vessels and coastwise ships of the United States are exempt. The exemption of war vessels is immaterial, as the charges would be equivalent to taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another, but the exemption of coastwise ships of the United States will have a very material effect. Professor Johnson states in his report:

"It will hardly be possible to secure from foreign shipping enough revenue during the first decade of the Panama Canal's use to meet all operation, depreciation, interest, annuity, zone government and sanitation charges.

"On the other hand if Panama tolls are charged both upon American and upon foreign ships at the rate of tolls that may be expected to prevail at Suez it will apparently be possible to secure revenues from the Panama Canal that will make it commercially self-supporting during the first decade."

In a review of this feature of Professor Johnson's report the New York Sun gives an instructive summary of the situation which has developed. The fixed charges, the Sun points out, will be about \$15,500,000. Professor Johnson calculates that with American coastwise shipping exempt the receipts during the first few years will be between ten and eleven million dollars per annum, rising to between sixteen and seventeen millions at the end of ten years. Thus it appears there would be a deficiency of more than \$4,500,000 during the earlier years of canal operation. But if American coastwise shipping were not exempt the receipts, he asserts, would be between twelve and thirteen million dollars from the beginning, and at the end of ten years they would be \$20,000,000, with the result that in the first decade the canal would be self-supporting. But it must be understood that if the rate per ton is reduced the assurance cannot be given that fixed charges will be met. Professor Johnson thinks that the original rates will be reduced, as it "will probably be unwise for the United States to maintain higher tolls at Panama than are charged at Suez."

The reason for this statement is obvious when it is recalled that the Panama Canal will be a rival of the Suez route. "No arbitrary tolls for foreign shipping," says the Sun, "can be promulgated to meet the fixed charges for maintenance, interest, etc. That way would be the failure of the canal, which has cost \$375,000,000 to build, including \$40,000,000 paid to the French company and \$10,000,000 to the Republic of Panama. Competition with the Suez Canal must regulate charges. As the Suez rates are lowered so must the Panama rates be reduced."

On the question of exemption of United States coastwise shipping from tolls established for foreign shipping, the Sun expresses the opinion that it is now apparent that "the canal for some time, and perhaps for a long time, will be operated at a loss." On the main question—the violation of the contract with Great Britain—the Sun presents a strong case for the repeal of this section of the Panama Canal Law. The discrimination against Canadian shipping, particular reference being made to the port of St. John, is the basis of the argument. As a protest by one of the leading journals in the United States the Sun's article is worth quoting. It says:

"There is no duty before the Congress more urgent than the repeal of the Act of August 24, 1912, so far as it specifically exempts American shipping engaged in the coastwise trade from the payment of tolls at the Panama Canal.

"As the law stands, a vessel sailing from Eastport in Maine to Port Townsend in Washington would merely smile and bow to the toll gatherer at Colon. Another vessel sailing under the British flag from St. John in New Brunswick to Victoria in British Columbia would stop and pay the tolls demanded for the privilege of not having to circumnavigate South America by way of the Strait of Magellan.

"This discrimination is fixed by law. In his proclamation of toll rates the President was obliged to take it into account. In ciphering out the rate of tolls warranted by the probable receipts and expenditures, the President's expert, Professor Johnson, was compelled to recognize this factor of exemption.

"No tolls shall be levied upon vessels engaged in the coastwise trade of the United States."

"Now, the question is not one of patriotism. It is not one of legislative power to favor our own coastwise trade as against that of the Dominion or as against foreign transoceanic commerce. It is not one of maritime economics and expediency. The question is simply whether the discrimination at the canal gate violates our contract with Great Britain that Power released us from the obligations of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty as to the joint control of any canal between the oceans.

"Great Britain released us from the preceding compact and in return the United States Government formally and solemnly adopted and applied to Panama the principle of Suez Rules, as follows:

"The canal shall be free and open to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations observing these Rules, on terms of entire equality, so that there shall be no discrimination against any such nation, or its citizens or subjects, in respect of the conditions and charges of traffic, or otherwise. Such conditions and charges of traffic shall be just and equitable."

"You may split hairs and argue over this plain provision of an international contract until you become blind through eyestrain and speechless through paralysis of the throat muscles. The fact remains that if the rate charged to British subjects in order to provide a just revenue for maintenance, interest and amortization is higher on account of the exemption of the American coastwise

carriers than it would have been without such exemption, there is discrimination against the subjects of Great Britain; and the treaty contract is violated. The case is not affected by the circumstance that another American ship, engaged not in the coastwise but in the foreign trade, pays as high a rate as any British vessel.

"On the other hand, if the unfortunate legislation of last August had not been undertaken, and if the rate of charges were now based upon all canal traffic, including our own coastwise trade, the Sun holds that there would be nothing either in the letter or in the spirit of the Hay-Pauncefote contract to prevent this Government from paying back to its coastwise trade, or for that matter to its foreign coastwise trade, every dollar received from that source. There is no inequity or discrimination there; for the obvious reason that Great Britain would have exactly the same right to reimburse her ship owners for canal tolls paid at Panama.

"No nation can question or interfere with another's right to take money from its treasury for the benefit of its own subjects or citizens. It was not one of the purposes of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty to prevent international competition in the fostering of commerce.

"Subsidy is now an unpopular word. 'Rebate' is a word which has come to have an unpleasant significance. But is either word as ugly as 'Rebaptism'—repudiation of an international compact deliberately completed?

"We believe that the best thing this nation can do for its own honorable standing in the eyes of the world—not to speak of its self-respect—is to bring to bear upon Congress the force of a public opinion which will compel the repeal of the discrimination enacted, and then to take care of the coastwise trade, if that is advisable, in some manner equally open to Great Britain or to any other nation using the Panama Canal under the Suez Rules."

THE HIGHWAYS BILL.

Throughout the Dominion the announcement will be welcomed that the Government intend to reintroduce the Canada Highways Improvement Act which was killed by the Liberal majority in the Senate at the close of the last session. It is a clear intimation that the Borden Government do not intend to be prevented by factious opposition from carrying into effect their pre-election promise. The amounts provided in the estimates last year on a population basis and lost to the nine Provinces were as follows:

Alberta	\$52,189.50
British Columbia	64,669.52
Manitoba	63,460.10
New Brunswick	49,018.86
Nova Scotia	68,574.90
Ontario	251,466.64
Prince Edward Island	13,059.70
Quebec	278,964.80
Saskatchewan	68,592.58

The policy of Federal aid to highways was an important feature of Mr. Borden's platform which the people of Canada approved at the last general election in placing the present Ministry in power. The bill introduced by Mr. Cochrane last session was intended to make good the promise made to the people. The Liberal party in Parliament, by means of the Liberal majority in the Senate, succeeded in the dying hours of the session in preventing the passage of the Highways Bill, thereby depriving the Provinces of one million dollars which would have been expended during the past year on the highways and on construction of roads.

CANADIAN NATIONAL REVENUE.

A statement issued by the Finance Department shows that the public debt of the Dominion was reduced by \$122,000 during the fiscal year. This means that all capital expenditure during the year was paid out of current revenue. The capital expenditure, including that on the Transcontinental Railway, was close on \$40,000,000.

In other words, the normal ordinary revenue of Canada last year was \$40,000,000 more than ordinary normal current expenditure. The revenue so far this year has been much greater, and the ordinary current expenditure but little more than before. The appearance is that this year there may prove to be a surplus of not less than fifty millions over current expenditure.

Commenting upon this evidence of prosperity, the Regina Province asks the pertinent question: "Does Canada need to economize as regards her share in the defensive force of the British peoples?"

Current Comment

China Wants All the Talents.
(Pekin Daily News.)

Vice-president Li Yuan-hung has sent a strong personal appeal to the following men: Messrs. Li Chen, Li Kai-shan, Lju Shin, Chang Chao, Yu Chin-fang, soliciting their services for the Hupeh Government. He said in part: "The universe is not propped up by a single pillar. In our most important duties of reconstruction now we need all the talents we can find in the country."

Returning Home.

(Edmonton Spectator.)

It is interesting to hear the Canadian puzzling term, "Canadian immigrants," as applied to those coming into this country. It is explained by the fact that during the past year nearly 20,000 of those entering Canada from the United States were returning Canadians. This homeward flow is one of the most encouraging features of national development today.

More Sense.

(Vancouver News-Advertiser.)

Miss Wylie, the militant suffragette, has observed that her comrades in Canada have not so much courage as those who break things in England and set fire to buildings in Ireland. The lady does not understand. Canadian women have plenty of courage, as the pioneer records of this country tell. But they also have political sense.

Leap Year Reflections.

(Edmonton Journal.)

The vital statistics of London, Ont., show that leap year really means something in that city. Up to November last, there were eighty more marriages celebrated than during the whole of last year. Our Western girls have no need of the institution, but their sisters in the East would many of them be in a bad way without it.

A Patriotic Movement.

(Victoria Colonist.)

A Canadian company is preparing a set of films illustrative of Canadian history. It is about time. Young Canada is being brought up to think that the only things worth mentioning, that have ever happened in America, took place in the United States.

Moving Picture Censors.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

New Brunswick is to have a board of moving picture censors, and Quebec is thinking of having one. The success of Ontario's experiment in controlling the "movies" ought to commend similar action in every Province of the Dominion.

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NEWS IN SHORT METRE

LOCAL

More Girls Last Week.
There were 125 babies reported to Registrar J. B. Jones last week, and 16 births, 12 girls and 4 boys.

Fatality at Sand Point.
John F. Nagle, of Chesley street, an employee of the Metcalf Construction Co., at Blue Rock, was run over by a flat car on Saturday morning and instantly killed.

Committed for Theft.
Arthur C. Morton, the Montreal commercial man recently arrested in this city on a charge of theft, has been committed by Judge Lafontaine, of Montreal, for trial before the King's court bench.

Rescued from Drowning.
Edward Linton, an employee of J. Holly and Sons, had a narrow escape from death at Indian town last Friday afternoon when he fell from the tugboat James Holly. He was finally rescued by some of his fellow workmen in a boat, who succeeded in pulling him up with a pile pole.

Auto Jammed by Cars.
The delivery motor car owned by W. and K. Pedersen, the Charlotte street florist, was badly damaged on Dock street last Saturday afternoon, when it was jammed between two other cars. The accident occurred when the driver of the delivery car attempted to pass between the two cars, both of which were approaching at a rapid rate.

An Attempted Hold Up.
Two men attempted to hold up a young man named Knorr while he was driving a "Fleming" car, grocery team on the Manawagonish Road about 7 o'clock last Friday evening. When the men jumped from the bushes at the side of the road and shouted for Knorr to stop, he struck the horse with the whip and succeeded in getting away. The police were informed, but did not succeed in capturing the would-be robbers.

Police Court.
Mooy Kraska, aged 16, was arraigned in the police court Saturday morning on a charge of stealing clothing valued at \$25 from Carl Hunt, of the steamer Westport, lying at Thorne's wharf. When questioned, the prisoner said he took the clothing as a joke. He, however, was remanded for trial. One prisoner charged with drunkenness was fined \$5 or two months in jail, while another arraigned on the same charge, got off with a fine of \$4 or ten days' jail. Otto Reay and Henry Murphy who were arrested several days ago on a vagrancy charge, were again brought before the court and fined \$10 or three months in jail. Two other prisoners who were in jail on remand were brought before the court and fined \$15 or two months in jail.

PROVINCIAL

River Glade Sanitarium.
Moncton, Nov. 16.—Plans for the coming spring were discussed at a meeting of the Jordan Sanitarium Commission yesterday at the office of Hon. C. W. Robinson. These plans include a bridge across the river besides a new road and a dam at the lake.

H. F. McLeod Better.
Fredericton, Nov. 16.—Hon. H. F. McLeod, M. P. P., provincial secretary, who has been suffering for some time with an attack of nervous indigestion is reported to be improving. Hon. Mr. McLeod has been confined to his house for some time with this illness but is now able to go out.

GENERAL

Autopsy Showed Degeneration.
Madrid, Nov. 15.—An autopsy performed yesterday revealed numerous signs of intellectual degeneration in the case of the assassin of Premier Canalejas, Manuel Fandinos. The weight of the brain was considerably below normal.

Boys Arrested for Murder.
Toronto, Nov. 16.—Benjamin Gilbert and William Cook, aged fifteen and twelve years, were arrested yesterday on the charge of murdering Tale Boshoff, a Macedonian. The boys informed the police they were looking for adventure.

Socialist Editor a Suicide.
Girard, Kan., Nov. 16.—J. A. Wayland, the founder and owner of the Appeal to Reason, a weekly socialist paper published here, shot and killed himself this morning. The act is attributed to despondency over the death of his wife.

HOTEL ARRIVALS.

Royal.

M. Lafontaine, K. C., Nelson, Mont-real; Jas. H. Crockett, Fredericton; H. E. James, St. Catherine; H. S. Burke, and wife, F. E. Wilson, W. R. McKay, Wm. Thompson, Montreal; C. H. Linn, Toronto; W. A. Stewart, Courtenay Bay; A. S. Burgess, Canning; Capt. W. H. Wetherby, Col. Humphrey, A. King, W. M. King, Halifax; G. S. Hickman, Dorchester; G. E. Stafford, Hamilton; M. G. McLeod, River John; N. Mark Mills, St. Stephen; R. A. Chisholm, Montreal; John Underwood, New Glasgow; E. F. Giles and wife, Winnipeg; Man; L. B. Wilcox, C. Clunas, Wm. Bishinsky, Montreal; S. G. Whycorn, Walsh, Eng.; P. A. Landry, Dorchester; Jas. J. Taylor, Fredericton; C. C. Lamb, London; B. W. Potter, Chicago, Ill.; J. N. Hastings, New York; G. S. Lovell, Boston; W. R. Rathvon, Denver; Fred Magee and wife, Miss McLeod, Fort Elgin; C. G. Davison, Moncton.

Victoria.

Geo. A. Treedy, Toronto; I. M. Tompkins, Florenceville; Mrs. F. S. Clinch, Clinch's Mills; Chas. Clinch, Clinch's Mills; G. A. Lee, Fredericton; Fred W. Tyson, Plaster Rock; A. P. Mitchell, Moncton; Geo. L. Fleming, Halifax; J. Tobin, Ottawa; Mr. and Mrs. Lincham, Boston; C. G. Burgess, Amherst; S. H. Cooney, Bangor; W. J. Cooney, Megantic.

Dufferin.

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