

THE ALBERTAN

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MR. BORDEN AND THE SENATE.

If the Dominion Senate defeats the Borden Navy bill, the Senate will surely get its' is the attitude of Premier Borden to that august second chamber, as expressed in his speech in Toronto on Monday night. All of which seems to show that Mr. Borden is inclined at times to bluff and even to bully.

If the Dominion Senate has powers which are dangerous to the well being of a democratic country like Canada, the powers of the Senate should be curbed. The Senate is not only a useless affair as a rule, but it is a dangerous body as well. The time will come some day when the Senate will be the bulwark of corporation defence. Upon the question of Senate reform, The Albertan would be inclined to follow Mr. Borden some considerable distance. If Mr. Borden should favor the abolition of the Senate, he would secure many western supporters.

But that is not the Borden policy. If the Senate is good and gentle and does not do its duty—that is, to curb, check or oppose. But if it should do any of these things, then Mr. Borden says that he will clip its claws. If the Senate ever had an excuse for acting, it has that excuse at the present time. It is supposed to be able to step in to prevent hasty legislation which should be submitted directly or indirectly to the people before any action is taken. Whatever Mr. Borden may say, no person seriously contends that the public has expressed any opinion upon the matter. It was never heard of in the last election. The mandate is about as striking as the emergency. Both are fictions which do not go down even with the public.

The duty of the Senate, whether the members favor the Borden policy or not, is to send it back to the Commons with the instructions that this question is one for the people of Canada to decide. If the Senate does not do that, the Senate really has no part in the administration of the country, and the continuation of that body would be a jest.

ABOLISH THE WARDS

An evening paper which seems disposed to oppose the suggested change of the ward system believes that while party politics may be kept out of municipal affairs when the city is divided into wards it cannot be kept out when the citizens vote as a whole. That is an assertion which cannot be supported either by reason or by example. In Calgary we have a mayor and two commissioners who are elected from the city at large. But they have been elected without the influence of party politics. There is no reason at all why partyism can be kept out of a city divided up into wards and cannot be kept out when the city is not divided into wards.

The same paper says that it would be difficult for an undesirable man to get to office when the area was wider, but that it would also be

difficult for the same man to be put out of office. That is only partly correct. It would be difficult for such a man to get to office under the wider area, but it would be quite as difficult for a poor man to continue in office under that system. Under the ward system the undesirable man, by a system of log rolling, can get special favors for a particular ward or particular section, and secure the support of that ward regardless of his other qualifications and get re-elected.

It would be different if he were elected for the entire city. Then the sectional bias is eliminated.

The city council should eliminate the ward divisions. But whether they do or not they must change the divisions. At present an elector in Ward III, has about as much representation as three representatives in any other ward in the city, which is most unjust. The best way would be to abolish the ward divisions entirely. That is what most progressive cities have done.

AUSTRALIA'S LAND TAX.

In 1905 the local government system of the State of New South Wales, Australia, was reconstituted and it was made mandatory that a rate of one penny in the pound on capital unimproved value should be imposed. All the shires of the state now raise their revenues from land values, and since 1906 the municipalities of the state have also been compelled to levy the same assessment and have the additional power of rating on land values for all requirements. As a result the 189 municipalities, with trifling exceptions, now rate on land values only. The most striking developments happened in the forty suburban municipalities of Sydney, the capital of the state, which had in 1909 land value assessment of \$17,000,000, where the average rate needed to meet their requirement was 3 1-2 pence in the pound on capital unimproved value, rising to 5d. When this rating was imposed protest was immediately made that it would ruin the poor market gardeners and other small holders.

The reform, however, has been fully justified by results, as given in a statement signed by ninety suburban mayors and aldermen, recently made public. It says:

In response to a request for an expression of opinion, we wish to say that the system of rating on unimproved values, which came into force under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1905, is working remarkably well. It has reduced the rates of a very large proportion of the ratepayers, although we are raising a larger revenue. It has stimulated business enterprise and is a more constant and regular source of revenue. It has induced a number of ratepayers to build or dispose of land which they are not willing or able to use themselves, and has promoted the subdivision of land hitherto withheld from use for speculative purposes. It is fair to all ratepayers, as it simply requires from each his due proportion of the rates. It specially benefits those ratepayers whose use of land is most effective and creditable to the municipality, while it has put effective pressure upon a number of owners of idle or partly used land to change their tactics. As far as we can judge, the new system has the emphatic support of the bulk of the people. There is no public demand for a change. It is fair to admit that rating on unimproved values is working as well as its advocates claimed that it would be if it was adopted.

From an official statement issued in December last, it appears that the city of Sydney is growing at a rapid pace, and the building done in 1911 constituted a record. Excluding public buildings 6,503 were completed, at a cost of \$28,000,000, while in the past few years 22,214 were erected costing over \$60,000,000. Passing from New South Wales, the State of Queensland has raised all its income from land values since 1891, and in South Australia the land values tax is one halfpenny in the pound up to £5,000 of capital value, plus one penny over that amount. The Commonwealth has also a land value tax, carried in 1910 by the present government. Its avowed object was to break up great estates. Within seven months from the passing of the act the first annual contribution of \$6,800,000 was received by the treasury, and the first report of the land tax commissioner, just presented in parliament, shows that taxpayers in the nine months from October, 1910, to June, 1911, sold land of the value of \$90,000,000, in 18,283 separate transactions. This liberation of the land has largely contributed to promote the extraordinary boom in Australian immigration. This year the number of emigrants from the United Kingdom is expected to reach 100,000, all the steamship accommodation being booked till December.

Editorial Notes

The weather prophet predicts floods for Calgary before many weeks. It may be added that there never was a flood, near flood, or anything that looked like a flood in this part of the country in any year that the crops were watered and everything was very satisfactory from that end of it.

Mr. Cookbutt, the high priest of the tariff party, refers to the luxury of some heads of the household in a family of five, who are getting \$450 a year. To him doubtless that seems like a pretty lofty price. In Canada there are 1,500,000 employees in the woolen industry at an average wage of \$325, which seems to show that the average manufacturer finds that it is much more profitable to receive from the people in the form of tariff protection, than to pay decent wages.

If the streets of the New Jerusalem should be transferred to Calgary, from some mysterious quarter, the evening papers would at once rise up to announce that it was R. B. Bennett who had done it. But if the Dominion parliament should take away the name, site, and all the existing glory from Calgary and no protest be raised on the floor of the house, the evening newspapers would declare that it was the error of the city council or the board of trade. Unlike the rest of the people of Alberta, the evening newspapers seem to be engaged in a joyous contest as to which can say most politely that R. B. Bennett can do no wrong.

Let us all close up shop and have a holiday and take the whole family with us. In Ontario, philosophers say, that more realists than are created from boys who were forced to stay at home on the 24th and hoe potatoes than from any other quarter. Let us make no such common error in western Canada. Think of the terrors of the poor old

invite the young man out to the back yard and arbitrate the matter there and let the business of the city proceed in the regular way.

The cut worm has cut loose in the southern country and is filling his stomach at the expense of the Alberta farmer. The southern newspaper is authority for the report that the old fashioned beetle that wanders aimlessly and slowly about the earth has come to the rescue and is busy eating the cut worm that is eating the grain of the southern farmer.

Mayor Sinnott now says that he was only joking when he spoke lightly of the serious charges against certain city officials. Until a public official gets some reputation for humor, it would be safer for all concerned if he would label his jests.

And now it seems that while R. B. Bennett was bonfiring in Ottawa, and making our southern citizens out as many kinds of disloyal people, that Calgary was missing a chance that was worth much more than locating a terminal elevator in this city.

The spectacle of free men walking with banners behind torches to celebrate the hanging or of a family and its members to the people, to millionaire capitalists, as happened in Medicine Hat on Thursday night, was the most humiliating sight since Nero fiddled while Rome was burning.

The clearing returns show a decrease compared with last year, and the reason is that the Bank of Montreal is holding money tight and the results in the bank while its sollicitors armed with million power magnifying glasses of extortion and shot guns of unquated style are attempting to shoot holes in city council resolutions, so that the bank may have an excuse for not handing over the money. Without money the city cannot proceed with the municipal works, the city cannot employ or pay men, the men cannot pay the contractor, the contractor cannot pay the wholesaler, the wholesaler cannot pay the contractor, the contractor cannot pay the artist, etc. etc. The bank is at the bottom of it all.

If there are any serious objections to the passing of the by-law to be submitted next week for manufacturers' building, now is the time to state them. As far as we can see, the scheme is a very good one and should receive the sanction of the public.

The net effect of the Wilson tariff is to reduce the cost of living across the line and increase it on this side of the line. That will mean that our manufacturers will be at a great disadvantage in the market. That means that our manufacturers must charge more for the goods they produce and that will be added to the other charges. Calgary will be a very expensive place in which to live and in most ways we shall be at a disadvantage compared with other cities.

There was a time when no self respecting weather man would let Victoria day pass without shouting it with some of the weather men, but we hope is better behaved in this country.

The Conservative politician cannot get it through his head that reciprocity would result in increased prices for the producer and cheaper prices for the consumer. The designer made a demonstration about it in the house Thursday. But it is true. At the very time last winter that George Leung was paying high freight rates and very excessive duty charges on cattle going from Seattle to Calgary, the restaurant men were bringing in meat from Seattle, paying the duty and the press rates and saving money by the transaction.

Of course every public man has his own ideas about humor and pathos, and that sort of thing. They are matters of opinion. But for ourselves we do not believe that the proposed introduction of Tamanyism in its worst form is just the best kind of stuff to place at the foundation of high-class humor, particularly by the mayor of a city.

Vest Pocket Essays

By George Fitch

MODERN INVENTIONS

The oriental rug is not strictly a modern invention, but the prices now obtained for them are.

The oriental rug was originally woven by hand in some far-off corner of the desert by a family and its descendants. It was woven out of camels' hair or silk in fantastic oriental designs, which the designer carried in his head and altered whenever he had a lapse of memory.

The oriental rug was the most useful thing about the oriental family. Whenever a family set up housekeeping it began by weaving a rug. This took from six months to ten years, according to the rug and the family. When the rug was finished it was used for carpet, a bed, a saddle, a windbreak, a table, a wall, what you will, and for many other useful purposes. After an oriental rug has been followed by several generations for such use it becomes soft and beautiful and can be mended for several rods on a damp, soggy day.

Some years ago people began to import these rugs to America. They are now very popular. If a rug is valued kindly it will last forever, and a number of centuries the importance of an American family will be determined by the number of oriental rugs its ancestors have bequeathed to it.

Oriental rugs are now sold in such vast numbers that if all the oriental rug weavers worked day and night they would still be several years behind orders. They are also so valuable that a small rug of good family and polished descent will often sell for 100 a square foot. Rich Americans now collect oriental rugs instead of postage stamps and enlarge their collections year by year to accommodate their collections.

Oriental rugs are divided into two kinds, like money and counter- money. Many a man has paid \$500 for a single oriental brought from the desert by camel and has found, the first time he turned the hose on it that it was made in England. It is a little out of Georgia cotton and that a colors would make the Marathon runners look like children.

RESIDENT'S WIFE IN AID OF BLIND BABIES. New York, May 22.—Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, wife of the president, has been elected by the International Sunshine Society, which is holding its fifteenth annual convention here, to design a special fund for the blind, which she will do to help support a newspaper advisory and to get rid of about to business, which is very wise. The next time Commissioner Sam gets a trouble with an unscrupulous and unreasonable reporter, he should

Letters to The Editor

Editor Albertan:—

Without any desire for controversy, I feel the second editorial in your issue of May 19 cannot, in fairness to all concerned, be allowed to pass without comment.

First I would like to say, the viewpoint of the editorial of May 19 is very different from that of May 14. Those reading the two would feel convinced either different minds dictated them or a change of mind had been experienced in the interim between the two articles. In the first, the statements re the utter blindness or ignorance of indifference of the church to the opportunity of social service were so sweeping that all who knew the facts, felt they were unfair. We feel moreover that there was no reason why a report should be sent to find out the details of every blow given, and every incident connected with some crime committed, or raid on vice, and these being graphically told in the columns of your paper, and yet some facts which prove an attempt is being made by several churches in our city to grapple with the task of meeting the rightful social needs of the young people, be entirely overlooked. If articles were not known they could easily have been found out before such wholesale generalizations were made as the following: "The one million dollars recently spent in the city in church buildings, which have been designed for use for only about five hours each week, except for a small little suburban church year." "These huge, expensive buildings... stand with locked doors for six days out of every seven, again with a million dollars in cash to spend.... the churches have found no larger use for their money and energy than to erect unnecessarily expensive auditoriums, designed especially for use for four hours of each week, and Sunday school, class rooms for but one hour each week. Beyond that the church has no ambition to develop."

These are but some of the untrue statements in the editorial and we did, and do, resent them. We are making an honest effort to draw those who have been simply indifferent or long to a higher, better and nobler life, and such statements help to drive them away rather than attract them to the place where we are doing our best to meet the need which is so apparent.

Moreover we feel the editor and staff of our press have as much right to the responsibility of the work of the church as any other class of citizens. If we ask, "Who form the citizens," men and women who are as busy in their sphere of work as those engaged in newspaper work. Some of the best workers in my church are as busy men and women as are to be found in the city, some of them engaged until midnight Saturday, and again at their offices or business at 8 or 9 o'clock Monday morning. They are all giving voluntary service for the helplessness, in most cases, of those who have no other claim upon them than they have on all the citizens who have the good of their fellowmen at heart. Why should they be expected to do this work more than others?

The founder of the church, Jesus Christ, men and women who are as busy in their sphere of work as those engaged in newspaper work. Some of the best workers in my church are as busy men and women as are to be found in the city, some of them engaged until midnight Saturday, and again at their offices or business at 8 or 9 o'clock Monday morning. They are all giving voluntary service for the helplessness, in most cases, of those who have no other claim upon them than they have on all the citizens who have the good of their fellowmen at heart. Why should they be expected to do this work more than others?

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The Poet Philosopher

By Walt Mason

BLESSED DAMOZELS.

Full soon the sweet girl graduates in white attire will rise, and tell, in forty-seven states, where Hesperus lies. The besutuous maidens of the land, the bold, aspiring youths, on platforms flower-bedecked will stand and hand us vital truths. Life seems to them an easy thing; a banner's all they need, a motto in the air to fling, so he who runs may read. A watchword couched in aptest Greek will smooth his road to fame; ah me, when roses tint the cheek, life seems an easy game! But mark these women, old and worn, who at commencement time, gaze at the festival and mourn—their faces wear to rear to a crown. They found this life a harder road than e'er they dreamed it was, with more of whip and spur and goad than the world's applause. There is a shadow on each brow, stilled is their buoyant song; their eyes are weak and faded now, for they have wept so long. They're bent from bearing heavy weights from tolling day and night, they once were sweet girl graduates, serene in snowy white "beyond the rainbow" we heard them say, high purpose in their eyes, upon a bygone happy day, "the land of the living." Life leads them through tangled wilderness, and not through beaky dells, but who'd discourage or distress the Blessed Damozels!

Patriotic Service. A special patriotic service will be held in Central Methodist church on Sunday evening, when the Rev. Rev. S. E. Marshall will preach Victoria Day sermon on "Our Imperial Citizenship." Special patriotic music must be rendered by the choir under Prof. W. V. Oaten of Mount Royal college.

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Victoria Day

May 24th

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