

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B. TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1922.

PUBLICLY OWNED VS. PRIVATELY OWNED UTILITIES.

We have received a copy of the report issued by the National Electric Light Association of the investigation which has been carried on for six months by Mr. W. S. Murray, one of the most prominent electrical experts in the United States in conjunction with Mr. Henry Flood, formerly Engineering Secretary of the United States Government Super-Power Survey Organization. The conclusion these gentlemen came to is that privately owned utilities in the United States and Quebec furnish a cheaper and more reliable service to consumers than the publicly owned systems controlled by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

We are not of course suggesting for a moment that either Mr. Murray or Mr. Flood are hydro engineers of such eminence as to stand as Messrs. Foss and Phillips, or even as Mr. Holgate's son-in-law, Mr. Mitchell, or that their opinions are deserving of the respect that those of either of these three gentlemen must naturally carry; but they are at least sufficient expert to be employed by the United States Government, which does not usually call in the services of second or third rate men.

The report is rather voluminous, and consists of some 230 quarto pages and is fully supplied with maps and diagrams. We propose to publish some extracts from it during the next few days when we have had time to digest it properly, but in the meantime we present one extract "to go on with."

"The building of new power plant facilities under the auspices of governmental or municipal ownership, both in respect to policy and cost, is not to the economic interest of the people."

"The advocates of government or municipal ownership of electric utilities claim reduction in the cost of power in virtue of:

- (a) Elimination of taxes.
- (b) Elimination of dividends.
- (c) Elimination of high-salaried executives.
- (d) More economical wage and higher efficiency in labor scale.

"With regard to (a), taxes are not eliminated. Just as much money is paid in taxes. The difference is in their distribution. In the case of private ownership only the owners of service pay the tax bill, while in the case of government or municipally owned utilities all the people pay the bill."

"With regard to (b), (c) and (d), notwithstanding dividends, high-salaried executives, and the wage and labor claim, the answer is, when the total operations are summed up, the public receive their power at less cost through private ownership under regulation."

"The investment of capital in electric utilities under private ownership control is far better protected from extravagance than when that capital is governmentally owned, for the reason that plans and estimates for such capital expenditure not only must gain the approval of a trained engineering and management staff, and an experienced board of directors of the companies, but it must also have the critical review of the bankers, and the private financial investor. In the case of government or municipally owned utilities, the directing heads are seldom specially trained in the business under their jurisdiction, and the value of securities is not based upon the value of the property or the efficiency of the management, but upon the taxing power of the government or municipality."

"Arms, legs and body are useless without the head. A high-salaried executive usually saves many times (his salary included) the losses incurred by the cheaper and less efficient executive, as accomplished by individuals in control of private enterprise is under keener observation than is the case when those in charge are governmental or municipal officers."

"Governmental ownership eliminates all incentive for gain and throttles initiative. This is evidenced by the far greater growth of privately owned utilities."

"The Hydro-Electric Power Commission is the judge of its own acts. A commission cannot fairly be the judge of its own, and others, rights in controversy."

Further in support of the conclusions drawn, the report calls attention to the fact that "consistency of purpose does not necessarily reduce the power bill, but that so far as price is concerned, the structure under which it is administered is what really counts."

We hope tomorrow to present to our readers and citizens of St. John generally some more extracts from this report, which goes to show beyond all doubt that publicly-owned and operated electric light and power utilities are not a success, from the public point

of either service or low cost, as compared with privately-owned companies. It is unfortunate of course that the conclusions drawn by the report are so at variance with those drawn by Messrs. Foss and Phillips, or even of the hero of the Prince Albert fiasco, Mr. Mitchell. But such is the case nevertheless.

NO CONFISCATION.

The Globe's plea that no attention should be paid to vested rights in property is rather an advanced theory even in these days. If applied to all businesses it would mean chaos in our commercial life. Countries which have tried to have come to a position which equals humanitarism, mild and specially selected brand of it has been tried out in some places with injury largely confined to the victim picked out for the sacrifice. Fair play demands equal rights and equal treatment for every man's dollar. If our good friend, The Globe seriously means what it says, then let us have a show down and really abandon all vested rights. That is unthinkable.

The Globe's editor is one of St. John's most estimable and highest type citizens, and even though his ideas are far counter to The Standard's at times, we must venture in all kindness the suggestion that his real estate and property and those of his relatives and friends be protected from his theories. However, every impartial opinion on the St. John situation shows that the Power Co. can distribute whatever power there is at Musquash to advantage. Just how great this advantage will be remains to be seen from the report of the committee now at work. No confiscation of property, even that of the incalculable Power Co., will be advocated seriously if that company behaves itself, and shows a disposition to meet the public in a fair spirit.

Our light and power rates have been high, due to the company claims, to losses on their street railway and gas. Our opinion is that the company has for years pursued a wrong policy in endeavoring to sell a small quantity of current at a high price rather than a large quantity at a low price. The committee appointed a week ago, seems to have got away to a right start by being instructed to analyze all such factors as that, as well as to make an estimate of the cost of a competing distributing system. The agreement on the part of the Power Co. to assist in solving these problems and the implied promise to work for a satisfactory and fair solution of this question indicates the hope that something will come from this committee's report, beneficial to citizens generally yet not confiscatory to people who have invested money in good faith.

THE NEW RELIGION

Montreal Star:—"There is nothing to equal the faith of an advocate of 'public ownership.' He rejects all evidence and ignores all inconvenient results of public operation of State and municipal enterprises. In Toronto, where 'public ownership' is a religion, street car fares have been increased from five cents to seven cents and a million dollars of civic revenue, which represented the percentage of receipts from the private company, have been sacrificed, but the partisans of public operation are undisturbed. Estimates of the cost of Hydro-Electric enterprises have been enormously exceeded, but there is nothing but sympathy and tolerance for Sir Adam Beck and his allies, where there would have been vehement denunciation if private contractors had done as badly. Legitimate criticism of the results of public operation is treated as malicious 'defamation' and those who have the temerity to demand explanations find their pictures presented in the newspapers as a sort of Rogues' Gallery."

Mr. Herbert Phillips' address before the Commercial Club last night must have been more than usually interesting. He didn't seem to be quite so positive on some of the phases of the situation as he has been on previous occasions. Since he read Mr. Ross' remarks about the cost of a distributing system which that gentleman places at upwards of \$1,000,000, and the Messrs. Mitchell's estimate which is \$650,000, he seems to feel that his own estimate of half a million hardly seems enough.

Mr. Phillips used to say that the fact of another company being already on the ground would not make any difference in the cost of installing another distributing system. Now he seems to have come to the conclusion that it will make all the difference. Mr. Phillips will probably find that it will be necessary for him to modify his views on several phases of the situation before the matter is finally settled.

Judging from all reports Mr. Meighen's speech in the House yesterday seems to have been a masterly effort, so much so that "Ten on the ranks of Tuscany, could scarce forbear to cheer." A speech which draws applause from friends and semi-opponents alike must have been some effort, and it is little wonder that the leader of the Government had little to say in response. There is no other man in Parliament today with the keen, analytical mind of the ex-Premier, nor with the capacity for putting criticism in such destructive language as he. Few possess the power of exciting emotion, or rousing an audience by the beauty of his diction and of stimulating the imagination by stirring appeal to the extent that he does; and he dissects a doubtful case with ruthless and unerring skill. It is more than likely that he will rise to greater heights of brilliancy as leader of the Opposition even than he did as Prime Minister.

An engineer well known in St. John in speaking to us yesterday of the Prince Albert hydro fiasco said: "Why didn't you tell the whole truth about it? That \$1,200,000 was absolutely lost—they never got a spoonful of electric current from it." (This was the impression we got from our correspondent's letter, but as he did not say so in definite terms, we, of course, could not put words into his mouth.) There is food for thought and careful consideration on the part of St. John citizens who read our article on Saturday and who read the above. The question, however, has become a Provincial one, as the Commission is said to have let the contract for a transmission line to Moncton—an undertaking which experienced engineers condemn in the strongest terms.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Near Conference Time.

When a Methodist preacher gets his marching orders, he goes. Like a soldier, he stays at the post assigned to him, and he does not count himself disgraced, perhaps, he swallows hard at the lump that comes to his throat when he is told to pack up and leave his old church for a new field, but he does not complain. He may know that he is being sent from a peaceful, harmonious church to one that is torn with factions and dissensions, where denials for the pastor are as free as the grace which he preaches. But he smiles and takes his medicine.

Shakespeare in Indianapolis. (Indianapolis News.) It is to the school population—teachers and students—that the Shakespearean companies must look for support. The plays are too remote in costume and language to compel the attention of an untutored intellect in these superficial times. Incompetent acting—perhaps attributable to indifferent audiences—may also be partly to blame. It would be well to pick out a Shakespearean town. Something is to be said for the faithful who do attend. They carry away from the performance some of the spirit of the age, and above all, a sense of the community can afford to be without that.

The Benefits of Marx. (London Observer.) Violent revolution is never inevitable so long as indignation at social injustice is aroused before the desperate stage is reached. Hence it is not far wrong to say that if Marx has inspired one revolution he has prevented a dozen, for it is largely due to his denunciation that men have had their eyes opened to the evils of the industrial system and have sought by peaceful means to remedy them. Thus, strangely, Marx's premises serve to prevent his conclusions; what was false as prediction is true and effective as warning; and what Marx loses in the estimation of mankind as a scientist he regains as emancipator.

Educating the Ignorant. (Detroit Free Press.) The best that can be done is to limit the field of swindlers by legal regulation, by eternally vigilant supervision, and above all, by education. There will always be men who can be dazzled by promises of easy gain and they will be found in every walk of life, but their number can be reduced, and the swindler's racket most used against the consequences of their own greed, and instruction in the elementary principles of investment will remove many of the causes of the swindler's success. Men who have faith in financial magic and deal with rascals in their belief that they possess mysterious power to make money easily.

Theatre Prices. (London Morning Post.) The theatre, which is always about fifty years behind other national institutions, is at present in a state of decline. Its patrons are lean purses. Even the profiteers are beginning to find that the stalls are somewhat expensive. And so, one management after another is beginning to announce a reduction in prices. We trust that this awe-inspiring exercise of common sense will bring its reward in the interests not only of the public, which, after all, can look after itself, but of our actors and actresses who are passing through hard times. And if, in addition, the managers can make their seats comfortable as well as cheap, we say, let them. In a short time, a revival of the golden age of the theatre.

What Poincaré Stands For. (Christian Science Monitor.) Since Raymond Poincaré first came into prominence as a political leader he has represented, positively, the Russian Alliance, and negatively, opposition to Germany. His election to the Presidency, in 1913, was an almost direct result of a message from the Tsar to the effect that the alliance required it. To him the alliance with England, though important, was secondary. He has never been known as pro-British. This was one of the points on which he was distinguished

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE
FRED FEERNOT ON THE WAVES.

A Play.
Scene. In the mist of the briny deep. Fearful storm.
Fred Feernot. This is a storm and a half, this. There goes another sailor overboard. O boy look at those waves.
Captin. Thats jest wat Im looking at and I dont like the idee. This ships a good ship but it aint that good. There goes another sailor overboard.
Fred Feernot. Well I want to tell you one thing, Captin. If this boat should decide to sink, the wimmin and children have to be saved first.
Captin. But—
Fred Feernot. But nothing. Wimmin and children first, thats the motto on any ship Im on and I dont care who knows it.
Sailor. Hay Captin, Captin, the ship is sinking fore and aft. We'll all be in the briny deep in 5 minutes and maybe less. Ohoy for the life boats.
Fred Feernot. Wimmin and children first.
Captin. But—
Fred Feernot. Wat did I jest tell you about bust?
Passengers. Me first. Us first. Get out of the way. Who do you think youre shoving? Me first.
Fred Feernot. Halt, stop, stand back, you impolite cowards. Ill shoot the first man puts his foot over that rail. Wimmin and children first.
Captin. But hay, darn it, there aint any wimmin and children. Im a batchelor and I dont take any wimmin and children.
Fred Feernot. Wy didnt you say so? Well in that case Im a man among men and I think Im jump in the first life boat. (Wich he does.)
(The end.)

with the Tiger, who has always been known for his partiality to England. Therefore, when the French public woke up to the fact, after the Treaty of Versailles had been signed, that the British had obtained their "mash objectives"—the German fleet and colonies—while the French had not there was a cry raised against M. Clemenceau and his colleagues that they had "surrendered" to Lloyd George. This charge has since been repeated against each new French Premier since the war, and no one has shouted louder than M. Poincaré.

THE LAUGH LINE

High Alms.
First. Shorty—You ought to be thankful to have a wife with such high alms.
Second. Shorty—I am. She has never hit me yet!—New York Sun.

More Head Than Heart.
Mother—Jessie, the next time you hurt that little, Im going to do the same thing to you. If you slap it I'll slap you. If you pinch it I'll pinch you. (After a moment's thought)—Mamma, I'll pull its tail.—Life.

The Knew Him.
Millner—I know that hat would please your husband.
Customer—Not unless you took \$30 off the price.—Boston Transcript.

Ready To Help.
"Dag pardon, sir, but could you tell me if there is a man living in this city with one eye named John Harding?"
"Maybe I could help you out. Do you know the name of the other eye?"

More Than Enough.
"I don't see why you should kick. You got half a million with your wife—wasn't that enough?"
"Oh, the money was enough, but the wife was too much."—Boston Transcript.

Often Heard Of It.
"Papa, where is Atoms?"
"Atoms?" I don't know, my boy. You mean Athens, probably?"
"No, I mean Atoms—the place where everything is blown to."

End of a Perfect Day.
The barber was finishing lathering customer and was talking volubly as usual.
"Yes, sir," he said, "we have to mind what we're about here. Every time we cut a customer's face we are fined a dime and if we make an ugly gash it costs us a quarter."

Has Tried Them And Found Them Good.
Joseph Siaud Recommends The Dodd's Remedies.

Has no Trouble with his Kidneys, Even When the Weather Changes, Since Using Dodd's Kidney Pills. Duck Lake, Sask., March 13—(Special)—Joseph Siaud, a well-known resident here is a firm believer in the Dodd's Remedies.

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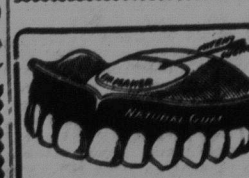
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THE TURKS ISSUE PROPAGANDA TO ATTRACT FAVOR

Big Concessions to Americans in Anatolia—City Letter for Seventy-Five Years.

Roma, March 13.—Concessions obtained by Americans for the exploitation of Anatolia are alleged to be the obstacle to enforcement of the tripartite Anglo-French-Italian agreement on Turkey, according to a dispatch in the Messagero from its Constantinople correspondent.

When brought to the attention of the American embassy it was stated: "After inquiries in Rome the embassy is unable to confirm the story. If the reports have been exaggerated on the eve of the important conference on Near East it is not surprising that to maintain the Italian public and emphasize the future economic cooperation of Italian and American interests in the legitimate field of mutual expansion, American diplomats always have been for the open door."

"The embassy called the American representative in Constantinople for the facts, believing confidently that if American private interests have found an opportunity for investment in the Mediterranean it will result in whole some development and economic restoration not only for private interests but for all, especially for the interests of Italy."

Italy as Jobber for U. S.
The importance of the statement is due to a project, already described in dispatches, for Italy to act as jobber for America in the Mediterranean—a project of which Ambassador Child has been one of the leading exponents in Italy and which Foreign Minister Schanzer discussed with American officials while in Washington. According to the Messagero, the Anglo National Assembly has ratified a most important concession to the Greenland Company of America for the improvement of Messina, the port of Sicily, which the Nationalists claim to make the chief harbor of Anatolia. The concession includes the construction of extensive docks and warehouses, the installation of an electric plant and the building of a modern city. The company has accepted the conditions imposed by the Turkish government which time the custom duties of the port revert to the American company with the exception of a special quota reserved for the Turkish government.

The fact that Messina is on the Bagdad Railway and has Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Persia and the Caucasus, as a hinterland makes the concession extremely valuable. Other Turkish-American agreements about to be signed, according to Messagero, include extensive mineral concessions to a group represented by Robert Macdonald, formerly with the Near East Relief and a hundred-year concession for exploitation of all the hydro-electric power in Anatolia, with the conditions as the Messina agreement.

Fears Control of Electric Power.

The Messagero fears the control of electric power will place the Americans in a position to dominate the economic life of Anatolia, especially as it probably would be followed by concessions for railways, canals, etc. The Turkish preference for American capital was confirmed by a statement given a year ago to the Messagero by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, when he said: "We are specially desirous of obtaining both material and technical aid from America in preference to any other country, for we know the United States has no political ambitions in the Near East."

Nationalist ministers pointed out when their correspondence was in Anatolia that American firms had no more to fear than the Seres Treaty, neither having been ratified by any of the contracting Powers. Moreover, Americans are not bound by either the sword or treaty, never having declared war on Turkey.

Poverty isn't a crime unless it produces one with prison bars.

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