

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1919

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THE BOND SELLERS' THREAT.

The New Brunswick Power Company has brought down some American gentlemen to say to the legislature that if it does not give the power company what it wants they will want to know it; also to intimate to the legislature that if it dares to think of the public first and American bond buyers second there will be no American money for the development of New Brunswick resources.

This is a rather bold proceeding, to put it in the mildest form. What would the legislature of Massachusetts say to a couple of gentlemen from New Brunswick—Mr. Fred R. Taylor and Mr. J. M. Robinson for example—if they seized a club and waved it before the eyes of the members of that house?

Mr. Baxter put the case of the power company in a nutshell when he pictured a man putting a \$25,000 mortgage on a \$5,000 house, and then taking the tenant to pay rent on \$25,000, although, as the Telegraph points out this morning, the tenant in that case could move out, while the people of St. John have no choice but to pay the exorbitant rent. Their only appeal is to the legislature.

The facts are plain. On an investment of \$1,800,000 the company wants a rate base of \$2,800,000. It is giving no better service, has increased its rates, and wants to make its patrons pay dividends on watered stock.

If issuers of watered stock can be assured by legislative approval that it is a safe proceeding there will be a prompt and rapid growth of the industry. The legislature is asked by the people to put up a barrier, and to do it now.

GOVERNMENTS AND HIGH PRICES.

All over the country complaints are made about the failure of prices of food and other necessities to come down. Because these are individual complaints, with no such organization behind them as that which keeps prices up, the people must go on paying. Only the government can act effectively in their interest, and it is not doing so. The Toronto Globe, taking better as an example, has clearly pointed out what the government can do, but it is not being done. The Christian Science Monitor has a striking article on the situation in the United States, which is equally applicable to Canada, and which will be read with deep interest by Canadian sufferers from high prices. It says:—

"Once upon a time, when all that the tradesmen knew was competition, a man would bid for trade by making prices low enough to attract purchasers, and his rivals would cut their own prices to meet his. Prices were leveled down. Nowadays, at least in the handling of food and fuel, the rule is that prices shall be fixed at the highest that can be charged successfully, and every tradesman joins in. Prices are leveled up."

"The government should be the safeguard of the public in this connection. It is the only practicable agency that can serve the public in the matter. But government has so far failed to live up to its opportunity in the matter. It hears the public call for relief as some far-off cry, or else, what is more likely, the government personnel is not equal to the task. The government device for solving a problem as to high prices is, as everybody knows, to have an investigation. But, again, as everybody knows, investigation following an investigation, sensational and convincingly unsavory disclosures are made, a report is prepared—perhaps it is even published—yet action, often mysteriously, is delayed, and delayed, and delayed, until it can safely be assumed that the public has forgotten."

"It is not that the government is powerless. The government has this situation in the hollow of its hand. Under proper leadership, or with a more obvious mandate from the people, the grip of the food monopolists could be made to relax. To admit for one moment that the government is powerless in any matter of this sort is to assert that a part of the nation is the ruler of the rest of the nation, an assertion which throws away the whole theory of the American form of government. Does it mean nothing at all that hog prices advance to within a dollar of the highest war-time figure on the very day when the meat packers are released from supervision of the Food Administration and the government restrictions on margins of profit are done away with? And is it not significant that, with pork prices correspondingly high, the United States official records show the greatest amount ever known in this country of pork and lard in cold storage? Cold storage warehouses in the United States, since January, have been almost literally filled to overflowing with meats, and no prospect of any great depletion of the supply. And the amounts on hand have been in many cases almost double what they were in the previous year. It is the same story for sea food. The fish reported in storage March 15 of this year amounted to more than twice as much as the same warehouses had on hand a year ago. In the face of such figures as to supply, is it likely that anything is responsible for holding food prices at their present high level if not some form of control?"

"Government should find a way to take corrective note of such things as total amounts of food in cold storage and the wholesale and retail price movements. It should make comparison also of the stock

issues and dividends of the food purveyors for equivalent periods. All these items are usually published at one time or another, but they can provide only scanty illumination as to whether food prices are or are not reasonable until they are brought together and compared. If a single set of figures shows that cold storage warehouses are stuffed with food, that prices are higher than they have ever been before, and yet that food purveyors are declaring stock dividends and increased profits beyond the record of any previous period, there may be ground for a deduction that the public, in its process of getting necessary food, is being made to pay too much."

THE QUEBEC VERDICT.

Prohibition has received a set-back in the province of Quebec. It is true the days of what is termed hard liquor are numbered, but the use of light wines and beers will have an injurious effect. The reaction was greater than had been anticipated, and the light must go on. The most serious rumor is that of proposed action at Ottawa along the line of concessions to the liquor interests. Temperance people, however, will not be greatly discouraged. The gains made in the last few years were so far beyond their hopes of five years ago that a reaction is perhaps not unnatural. It does not follow that any other province will follow the example of Quebec, and the result there should have the effect of stimulating the friends of prohibition, greatly increased in number in this province at least, to put up a harder fight against the introduction of light wines and beers. Quebec should be shown that in this respect she has isolated herself from the rest of Canada. Even the distillers agree that the old-time saloon should never be restored. The rest of the people should say the same about the sale of light wines and beers. Quebec has set the rest of the country a very bad example.

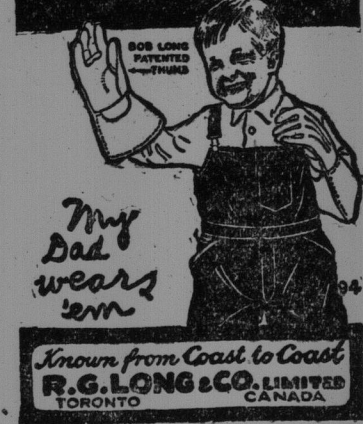
The house of commons last night decided that it would adopt daylight time for itself. It should have adopted it for the whole country, since much of the country is already on daylight time. Let us hope the St. John city council will now take action. The railways, the banks, the business houses are all on daylight time. The railway commission has decided that it has no power to fix the time of the railways and throws it back to parliament. What will parliament do about it? Is this farce to be continued all summer? Hon. Mr. McGeen says it is now a matter for provincial legislation. What next?

In Toronto new school buildings are built for public use. Plans for two new buildings, each to cost about \$100,000, have been approved by the board of education. There will be no basement except for storage purposes and the heating equipment will be built outside. While the class rooms will be contained on two floors, there will be a third floor which will be set out as an auditorium to seat over 400 people, and which may be used as a gymnasium. Of course this auditorium and gymnasium will be for public use outside of school hours.

The plea of the New Brunswick Power Company is that whenever a company chooses to issue more stock somebody must provide dividends. That is excellent for the stockholders—but there are others.

SMOKE MACDONALD'S INDEX

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"A previous indictment of manslaughter against the owner of the car had failed."

The above despatch appearing in yesterday's papers is a strong reason why car owners should protect themselves with automobile liability insurance, as issued by the Railway Passengers' Assurance Co.

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PLANNING FOR HOMECOMING OF 26TH BATTALION

At a meeting of officers of the various patriotic societies and of the citizens' welcoming committee in the city hall last night plans were considered for the welcoming of the 26th.

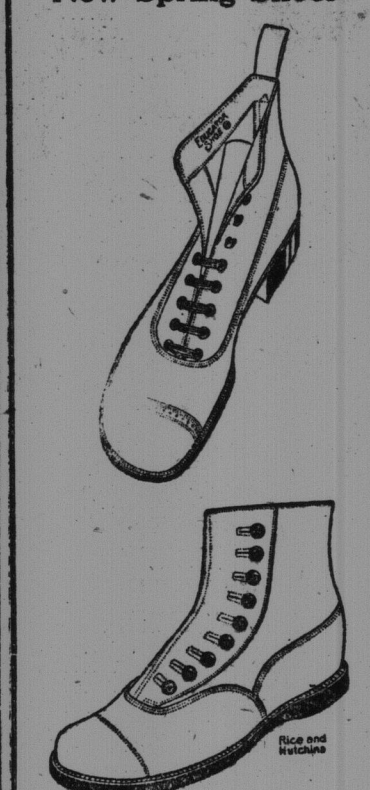
S. Herbert Mayes presided. The time of the return of the 26th is indefinite. The supposition is that the battalion will land in St. John but there is no assurance of this.

Col. E. T. Sturdee, T. P. Regan and Chairman Mayes were designated a committee to communicate with Ottawa in the hope of obtaining some definite information and to endeavor to induce the

military authorities to have the men landed directly at St. John. As the situation exists at this time it is possible for the 26th to land at Halifax or Que-

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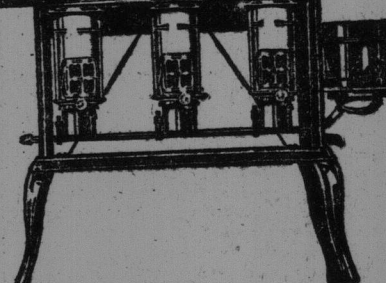
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bec, in which case St. John would be the last place in Canada to get the boys, and would be placed in the same position as far western cities, whose soldiers are welcomed and greeted at many places en route. However, one definite decision can be made, and that was resolved on last evening, namely, to give the boys a rousing welcome and make them feel that their gallant efforts are appreciated by those at home.

After the subject of welcoming the 26th had been exhausted the general work of welcoming all soldiers was informally discussed by Chairman Mayes, Mr. Rising, A. O. Skinner, Capt. Mulcahy and others. Some of the speakers told

of the difficulty of inducing the people of St. John to cheer lustily or to get plants with steam whistles to use them. The committee appointed to communicate with Ottawa, Colonel Sturdee, Mr. Regan and Chairman Mayes, sent strong telegrams to Messrs. Wignmore and Elkin, M. P.s, and Hon. Frank B. Carvell, urging them to request the minister of militia to have the 26th Battalion and the two siege batteries from New Brunswick sent to this port and on the same steamer.

The committee later in the evening got into communication with General Macdonell. He was entirely in sympathy with the project and promised his hearty support.

COTTON COMPANY'S APPLICATION GOES TO JOINT COMMISSION.

Ottawa, April 12—The government of the United States has transmitted to the International Joint Commission the application of the Canadian Cottons, Ltd., for approval of the diversion of the waters of the St. Croix River and the construction of a power house on the United States side of the river opposite Milltown, N. B.

SMOKE MACDONALD'S INDEX

Our Hand, or Our Fist, For Lenine?

General Foch's first thought in the face of Hungary's surrender to Lenine seems to have been to meet the challenge with the sword, build an allied barrier against Bolshevism from the Baltic to the Black Sea and, in the words of Gen. Malleterre "finish the job by a thunder-stroke." President Wilson and Lloyd George, on the other hand, seem to have taken the position that military measures, however effective against the Bolshevik armies, would prove worse than useless against Bolshevism itself which might break out with increased strength in the rear of an allied military cordon.

There is much divergent opinion on the proposal to recognize Lenine which the Washington Post characterizes as "one of the most sinister developments of these strange times" adding that the American people "are at war with Bolshevism and will not compromise with the enemy for any reason whatever."

Do not miss reading THE LITERARY DIGEST this week and especially this very searching article showing all phases of the menace. Other striking articles are:

What There Is In Germany's Threat to Go Bolshevik

Translations From German Papers Which Throw Light Upon Present Conditions

The Rival Claims to Danzig
The Fear of Article X
A Chinese Charge Against Japan
Wireless Direction-Finders
Our Food Resources
Trees That Engulf Rocks
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Pageantry for Returning Heroes
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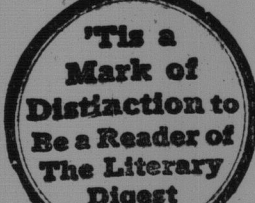
SPECIAL—A Full Page Picture of America's Famous Cartoonists Who Helped Win the War, Caricatured by Themselves. Other Striking Illustrations Including Maps and Half-tone Reproductions

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The Literary Digest

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