

The Evening Times and Star

ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 3, 1913.

The St. John Evening Times is printed at 17 and 19 Jussary Street every evening (Sunday excepted) by the St. John Times Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd., a company incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies Act.

Telephone—Private branch exchange connecting all departments, Main 2117.

Subscription prices—Delivered by carrier \$3.00 per year, by mail \$3.50 per year in advance.

The Times has the largest afternoon circulation in the Maritime Provinces.

Special Representative—Frank B. Hartman, Brunswick Building, New York Advertising Building Chicago.

British and European representatives—The Clougher Publishing Syndicate, Grand Trunk Building, Trafalgar Square, England, whose copies of this journal may be seen and to which subscribers desiring to visit England may have their mail addressed.

Authorized Agents—The following agents are authorized to receive and collect for The Evening Times: Cecil Robinson & Co., K. Smith, Miss Helen W. Hallatt, and J. E. Cogswell.

THE UNHAPPY STANDARD

There is a rumor that the unhappy Standard received another wiggling this morning from some of the leaders of the local Tory party, and was once more implored to exercise at least some small degree of discretion in discussing public questions. Yesterday morning the Standard set forth at great length the contrast between the noble and business-like Borden government and the incompetent and dishonest Laurier administration. The long article on the subject dealt with the attitude of the two governments toward the question of the increase in the cost of living. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his government had done nothing. When in power Sir Wilfrid never "cared a hoot for the cost of living or whether the people lived at all." But behold the noble Mr. Borden and his colleagues. They "will appoint a non-partisan and competent commission to investigate the conditions leading to the rapid increase in the cost of living." This was said "in quite a line with Premier Borden's broad understanding of big questions." To make the assurance of its readers doubly sure, the Standard goes on—

"The government proposes to approach the question in scientific, workmanlike fashion. They will first diagnose the case and then we may be sure the proper remedy will be prescribed. It is too big a matter to be made a political football if the consideration is to be sincere. The government is about to take a wise business-like course. The cost of living will be dealt with by scientific economists well qualified for the undertaking."

This was all right for yesterday, but today the Standard has another story. It says now that the government course in the matter has not yet been decided upon, and quotes its Ottawa correspondent to that effect. There is therefore no evidence whatever that there will be a non-partisan and competent commission, or that the question of the cost of living will be dealt with by scientific economists well qualified for the undertaking. Indeed the Times hears from Ottawa that very strong pressure is being exerted against any enquiry at all, and that leading Conservative journals, the Montreal Gazette, says:

"A commission to study the causes of the high cost of living is one of the suggestions of the day, the result, in a way, it seems, of the approach of certain municipal elections. Canada in its time has borne the expense of quite a number of commissions, the return in value being small or nothing at all. The return for the money spent on a commission to study the causes of the cost of food being greater now than some years ago would probably be as valueless as any."

It will now become the sad duty of the Standard to prove to its readers that the government ought not to appoint a commission, and that nobody but a political scoundrel like Sir Wilfrid Laurier would ever think of such a thing.

Perhaps some of the readers of the Standard are fooled some of the time, but surely all of them cannot be fooled all the time.

WRONG AGAIN

In keeping itself on the rails, and preventing its journalistic neighbors from rushing into collision with cold and brutal facts, the St. John Standard has its hands full. It has a great responsibility. Take, for example, the question of the potato trade between Canada and the United States. The Standard this morning gravely assures its readers that there is an embargo "against European as well as Canadian potatoes." Then the Standard goes on to say that "St. John potato shippers believe that if the embargo is removed they will be able to reap considerable advantage from the shortage of the crop in the United States."

Of course there is no embargo on Canadian potatoes, of which probably a million dollars worth have gone from New Brunswick into the United States this fall, with another million dollars' worth to follow, unless an embargo should be put on as a result of the efforts now being made by American potato raisers to keep out the Canadian as well as the European product. Protectionists in the United States as well as in Canada do not care what the public may have to pay so long as they can reap a large profit, and that is the explanation of the attempt on the part of the American potato raisers to shut out Canadian competition; but they are faced by the facts that the United States crop this year is very short, and that there is no more disease among Canadian potatoes than there is among the potatoes of Aroostook, Maine. There is no charge that Canadian potatoes have a disease known as potato wart. There will be a meeting in Washington on December 18, at which the American potato raisers will be confronted by representatives of the consumers, and will be asked to submit proof such as would justify the exclusion of Canadian potatoes from that market. That they will fail is confidently believed by Canadians, but this country should be represented at the meeting, in order to meet any

charges made against the quality of Canadian potatoes.

Meanwhile the readers of the Standard will continue to look to some other source when they want the facts.

THE PRICE OF LOTS

The question of houses at moderate cost for working people is being discussed in the city of Ottawa. A correspondent of the Journal, admitting that it is difficult to secure suitable land at a low rate in the outskirts of the city, suggests another method of procedure. It is that the municipality give notice that at the end of six months or a year it would take possession of any vacant unimproved piece of land within the city limits, as trustee for the people, paying therefor what it cost the holder, with compound interest, together with all taxes that had been paid. Of course the owners of any such property would protest against this course on the ground that it was sheer confiscation, amounting to robbery. The proposal would naturally shock all persons of conservative leanings, and indeed there is little danger that it will be carried out. This scheme, however, might very properly be done, and ought to be done, in Ottawa and elsewhere. Land within the city that is being held vacant for speculative purposes ought to be so heavily assessed that the owners would feel compelled either to make it productive, or place it on the market at a figure which would be regarded as a reasonable one.

The banquet to Hon. W. S. Fielding in Montreal next week, on the eve of his assumption of the editorship of the Montreal Daily Telegraph, will be a notable Liberal demonstration.

Where was the Hon. J. D. Hazen when the government decided to discriminate against St. John as a mail port, by having the mails of the steamship Tanian sent west over the Intercolonial Railway?

The citizens expect the board of trade to take prompt and vigorous action in the matter of the carriage of the mails between this port and the west. All the city asks is fair play, and a chance to demonstrate the claims of St. John as a mail port.

The end of the Huerta regime in Mexico appears to be at hand. Seven generals of the regular army are said to be ready to surrender to the Constitutionalists, and President Huerta is also greatly embarrassed by the lack of funds. President Wilson was probably justified in believing that the United States would not have long to wait for Huerta's downfall.

The citizens of St. John should not allow the Trans-Atlantic mails to be sent by the Intercolonial Railway from this port to the west without a determined and united protest. It is amazing that the government, two of whose members so lately professed an earnest desire to do justice to St. John, should think for one moment of discriminating against this port in such a manner as would be done if the mails were sent by the longer route to the west. Not only St. John, however, but the people of Western Canada, whose mails will be delayed, have an interest in this matter, and if the crime against the fast St. John route is perpetrated the people of St. John should invite the cities to the west to join in an indignant protest.

The members of the British government have never refused to confer with the leaders of the Unionist party on the question of Home Rule, but the latter have declared over and over again that they will not consider any scheme of Home Rule that includes Ulster. Of course there can be no conference on that basis. Parliament and the country have endorsed Home Rule for Ireland, which means the whole of Ireland. The government is perfectly willing to consider proposals to make the Home Rule bill more acceptable to Ulster, but Sir Edward Carson and his friends declare they will consider nothing less than the exclusion of Ulster from the provisions of the bill. They have even gone the length of threatening rebellion if their views do not prevail. The government, however, will not be deterred by threats from carrying out the declared will of the people of the United Kingdom, twice given at the polls.

FAMOUS SCOUT DEAD

Wiggins Surrenders to Death After a Stirring Career

Denver, Col. Dec. 3.—Oliver P. ("Old Scout") Wiggins, one of Denver's most famous frontiersmen is dead at the age of ninety.

Wiggins was a native of New York state and came across the plains in 1858. For some years he was a member of Kit Carson's famous company of frontiersmen, and served under Carson in the Mexican War, being wounded at the battle of Monterrey.

His cabin was one of the first built in Denver. From 1848 to 1858 he was employed as scout, guide and hunter for immigrants.

BIRTHDAYS OF NOTABILITIES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

This is the natal day of Major-General W. D. Otter, inspector-general of the militia of Canada and one of the foremost military men of the dominion. He was born near Clinton, Ont., seventy years ago today and has had a long career as a soldier, having seen active service in all the campaigns in which Canadians have been engaged since the Fenian Raid.

Hon. W. J. Bowser, attorney-general of British Columbia, and one of its most prominent public men, celebrates his forty-sixth birthday today. He was born in Rexford, N. B., and now practices law in Vancouver.

William Buckingham, of Stratford, Ont., who was for many years engaged in newspaper work in various parts of Canada and who was also for some time in the civil service, is eighty-one years of age today. Mr. Buckingham was private secretary to the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie during his term as premier.

LIGHTER VEIN

Lucky Escape

Pat was relating to a friend how one night on retiring to bed he fancied he saw a ghost, and having a revolver handy he fired at it. Next morning he examined the object he had shot and discovered it to be his shirt.

"What did you do then?" exclaimed the friend.

"Bedad, I just thanked Heaven I wasn't inside of it," replied Pat.

A Long Walk

McFee got on a Broadway street car at the city hall, New York. The car was pretty well crowded and he was unable to find a seat. At each corner, however, the car stopped and took on passengers.

"Move forward!" said the conductor each time. "Plenty of room in the front of the car—Move forward!"

The car had reached Fourteenth street—two miles or thereabouts—before the conductor got through the crowd and up to McFee. "Face!" he demanded.

"Face!" said McFee indignantly. "Do you expect me to pay for the privilege of walking from the city hall to Fourteenth street?"—Judge.

After Many Years

The self-made man stalked into the office of a great financier with whom he had an appointment.

"You probably don't remember me," he began, "but twenty years ago when I was a poor messenger boy you gave me a message to carry."

"Yes, yes!" cried the financier. "Where's the answer?"

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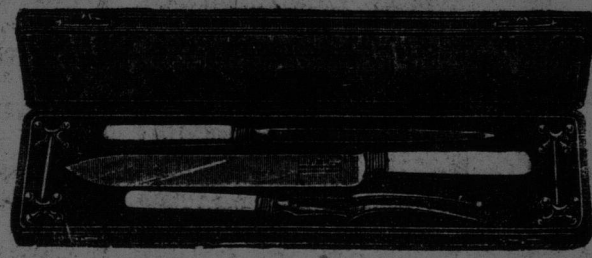
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