The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1918.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H. M. The King.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

THE GREAT DRIVE.

Although the Germans yesterday succeeded in capturing the town of Soissons, fifty-one miles northeast of Paris, and have almost surrounded the city of Rheims, they have not yet broken the Allied lines or inflicted upon our troops casualties anything like as heavy as those sustained in their own ranks.

The capture of Soissons is of little value, for the town has a population of less than 12,000 and is not a particularly important railway junction. Nor will it be an irreparable loss if the Huns should enter Rheims as now seems probable. That city, for months, has been subjected to such a gruelling bombardment from enemy artillery and from the air that it is practically deserted and its capture would bring to the enemy no great number of prisoners and no valuable stores.

It is the opinion of London and Paris that the great battle in the west is now entering upon its crucial stage, but coupled with this view is a general expression of confidence that the ultimate result will be satisfactory. The German advance is now spreading over the ground fought on in 1914, when the Kaiser's hosts were stopped in the Battle of the Marne. It is not impossible that history may repeat.

That the Allied troops are in splendid spirits is the opinion of all who have had opportunity of gathering information on that point. An American writer, in a New York publication, tells of the splendid form shown by the men of four British divisions who, although war-torn and weary, fought so stubbornly that for two days they held their ground in the face of the heaviest German attacks until a retirement by French troops exposed them to annihilation and they withdrew to prepared positions. This seems to be the story all along the line. The Allied soldiers are maintaining their ground until they inflict heavy casualties and then, by timely retirement, leave the enemy in the position of having to do it all over again. This was the plan during the former drive and it was successful. There is no reason to think it will not repeat the success this time and there is little doubt that when General Foch decides the hour has arrived for a counter-attack, that stroke will be carried out in a way that will bring disaster to the enemy. The situation is serious but, as yet, there is no cause for alarm.

THE PROPOSED NEW TAX.

While there may be no real objection to the new proposal of Mayor Hayes that automobiles and other vehicles shall pay a special tax, it may be pointed out that owners of these articles are already taxed on them as personal property. The owner of a car, for instance, already pays practically to the limit of its value, while the same can be said of the owner of a team or other vehicle. The only justification for the new tax would be that all the money derived from it should be spent on the city streets, although we understand this is not the idea held by His Worship. His suggestion has been that the revenue from automobiles might be so disposed of but that from other vehicles should go to general revenue. This will not appeal to the mass of taxpayers, and the council will be well advised if it decides that if the new tax is authorized at all, all the returns from it shall be devoted to the streets.

It may also be said that with the variety of taxes made necessary by the war, and the extent to which the people are asked to contribute to war charities, this is rather a poor time for the City Fathers to attempt to introduce a special levy of any character. The taxes in St. John are sufficiently high now without any additions, even though the latest proposal will affect but comparatively few people. Economy of the most rigid character should be the slogan at City Hall.

THE RAILWAY SITUATION.

Although the arbitrators appointed to value the Canadian Northern Railway in connection with its taking over by the Dominion Government fixed a price $800,000 in excess of the sum voted by Parliament for the purpose, it would appear that the Government has a good bargain, even at the higher figure. What may be a slight evidence of this is that Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, former owners of the C.N.R., express deep disgust at the finding of the arbitrators, saying that they should have awarded more like $50,000,000 than $10,000,000.

It is well to remember that, as the result of the arbitration, the people of Canada will secure stock, the par value of which is nearly $60,000,000, for $10,300,000. That stock is not worth par today and may not reach that point in the near future, but, when the potential wealth of the western country is considered, there is no question but that in time the wisdom of the investment will be established.

The Canadian Northern Railway has favorable low grades and, with the C. P. R. in mind, there is warrant for the conclusion that the most recent addition to the Government railway system should develop into a highly remunerative property.

But the Government's programme does not end with the acquisition of the Mackenzie and Mann system. The Grand Trunk and Grand Trunk Pacific are to be included and the private lines thus taken over are to be consolidated with the National Transcontinental and the Intercolonial. When this is done the people of Canada will have a great public owned and public operated transportation system, embracing two main lines from the Atlantic to the Pacific, together with numerous profitable branch roads serving all the provinces.

We all believe that, after the war, Canada will embark upon a period of prosperity greater than any in her history. There will be a development in which every province will share as a result of which the earnings of Canadian railways are likely to be considerably increased. In such a situation the Government owned roads will not only become profitable but will also play a most important part in opening up the country. In this way they will provide an indirect return for the money expended in their purchase, even though their earnings may not speedily pay dividends.

GREAT WAR FINANCING.

In many ways the third Liberty Loan in the United States will go on record as the most remarkable piece of financing ever known. Official figures of the sum realized are not yet available but, from the returns received, there is little doubt that at least 17,000,000 persons became subscribers to the issue. Estimating the population of the United States at 100,000,000, the loan returns indicate that one person in every six bought at least one bond and, as far as known, this constitutes a record for popular war financing.

In the fourth Canadian Victory Loan it is estimated that one person in every ten bought a bond, while the best English record is one in thirteen, which was made on the occasion of the third loan. The second Liberty Loan floated in the United States reached a record of one buyer for every [illegible] persons. It is estimated that in the three loans already floated in the United States bonds of $50 or $100 each were purchased by 25,000,000 people. The United States has made a splendid record in its war financing, but, when the difference in population and wealth of the two countries is considered, Canada has no reason to feel that she has not done well. There will probably be another loan during the coming autumn which will give opportunity for our people to respond still more generously than in the past. The sale of thrift stamps, if undertaken here, would also add materially to the total sum raised by Canadians for war purposes.

Senator Dennis of Halifax, a newspaper man of many years' standing, proposes to abolish the Senate Hansard and thus save the country thousands of dollars every year. If the suggestion could be enlarged to embody the Hansard of the House of Commons the saving would embrace, not only money, but a lot of talk. With no Hansard Mr. Copp of Westmorland would be as dumb as the proverbial oyster.

A Brooklyn woman, whose husband would not get out of bed to go to work, thought she solved the problem when she soaked the bedclothes with kerosene and touched a match to them. As a consequence she is now in prison awaiting trial on a charge of assault and attempted arson, while her husband as far as known, merely extinguished the blaze—and went back to sleep.

After studying the coal situation in New York and other American points, Mr. F. P. Starr advises citizens to buy their next winter's coal now. But he does not say how to find the money with which to get it which, after all, is the really important question now or six months hence.

UNION GOVERNMENT PROVED ITS VALUE

(Maritime Baptist)

The session which came to a close last week was one of the shortest and most notable in tthe history of CCanada's parliaments. As an experiment in coalition government it must be reckoned as an unqualified success. It was happily free from much of the party manoeuvring and political debating which in other years has wasted the major part of the time that parliament has been in session. It was expected that the diverse views on many subjects entertained by the various groups supporting the coalition ministry would make it very difficult to maintain the usual party discipline, and might even endanger the government's programme. There was indeed manifiest an unusual spirit of independence in regard to non-essentials, which is by no means a matter to be regretted. But when matters of importance were under discussion the lines of cleavage were no longer visible and all matters of lesser importance were subordinated to the supreme issue—the winning of the war. In regard to the fulfilling of pre-election promises also the session should be set down to the credit of the union government. As a rule promises are regarded as useful things in the winning of an election but somewhat embarrassing after the election has been won, and therefore to be quietly forgotten as soon as possible. The session just closed proved a notable exception to the general rule. Among the beneficent acts placed upon the statute books we would put first the prohibition law. It is true that this reform had been effected by Order-in Council, but this had to be ratified by legislative action and great pressure was brought to bear upon the government to modify the provisions of the original order. The failure of these efforts must be regarded as a victory for temperance almost equivalent to the one gained when the order-in-council was decided on. Perhaps the most revolutionaary measure passed was that which established women suffrage throughout the Dominion. The effect of this measure upon the future life of the nation can scarcely be overestimated. Another important measure, and one which should receive the hearty support of every true patriot, was that by which the spoils system was abolished and Canadian political life relieved of the incubus and curse of patronage. Of course it would be difficult indeed to prevent wholly the entrance of this insidious evil, but the law passed will go far toward curbing it and finally destroying it. Other noteworthy events of the session were the voting of the stupendous sums required for the carrying on of the war, the resolution in respect to hereditary titles in Canada and the drastic changes made in the Military Service Act. It was indeeed an historic session, and may well be regarded as epochal.

HOARDING PUNISHED

(Northwestern Miller, Minneapolis.)

Those Canadians, or rather, those people resident in Canada—the country would be ashamed to own them as Canadians—who took advantage of the situation that existed a few months ago to hoard flour are having the folly of their unpatriotic course brought home to them now. They are being compelled to disgorge their stores. The Canadian food board has made quiet investigation of a great number of cases, and has notified the parties that all surplus flour, over fifteen days' needs, must be returned to the source from whence it was received.

A typical case of this sort was given newspaper publicity in Ontario this week. This householder had bought and taken possession of two hundred bags of flour, enough to last his household a very long time. The purchase price was six dollars and fifty cents per bag. Now the buyer is being compelled to return the flour to his dealer at today's price, which is considerably under what he paid, and pocket the loss himself. Needless to say, no sympathy is felt anywhere for this food hog. If anything, his punishment is too light.

Many such cases are known to the authorities, and will be similarly dealt with. This practice will certainly be stopped, and wherever possible existing stocks of surplus flour will be recovered. Canada is determined that no one within her borders will be allowed to place himself in a position of advantage with respect to flour supplies. Canadians must take their chances with the rest of the allied peoples in this matter. If there is to be a shortage, it will be shared here equally with those who are not so fortunately placed.

CLOTTED NONSENSE

(Toronto News.)

There is good reason for saying that despite the single-mindedness of most Unionists in this Parliament more "clotted nonsense" has been talked than was to be expected of men impressed with the gravity of the terrible crisis which confronts the world today. One subscriber to the Daily News who resides in Western Ontario declares that the men who weaken the cause by running amuck over minor issues "should be pilloried or at least shot." They certainly would have a hard time if they were placed in the stocks where the public could get at them. It is hard to understand how members of Parliament find time in these dread days to revive their old partisanship or to play the role of cheap demagogues. The better elements in the House of Commons resent the unseemly sniping persisted in by the worst offenders. The Prime Minister did not threaten his resignation any too soon. The time had come to recall the reckless members of his following to the great task which the Government, the country, and civilization have in hand. Once the Germans are defeated the independents can be independent to their hearts' content. In the meantime the people of Canada want no cheap flaunting of individualism to interfere with the rapid prosecution of the war or with the reinforcement and safety of the Canadian troops on the firing line.

Little Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE.

I went to the grocery store for ma yestidday, being 2 sents change left over, and on the way home I passed a candy store window full of jelly beens, me thinking, G, ma will be sure to give me the 2 sents change if I ask hef, so I mite as well buy jelly beens awile and it will save me a exter trip. And then I thawt, Gosh, wat if she ony gives me a sent, maybe I better jest buy a sents worth.

Wich I went in the store and did, getting 16 for a sent, and I ate 4 of them on the way home, and ma was in the kitchin mixing a cake with a spoon, and I put the groceries on the kitchin table, saying, There was 2 sents change, ma.

Im not serprized at that, sed ma.

And she kepp on mixing the cake and I kepp on watching her doing it, and pritty soon I sed, I wasent serprized either. Wich she dident say enything, and I sed, Can I keep them, ma?

No, youve got to get out of the habit of ixpeckting to keep the change every time there is eny, sed ma.

Well let me keep this and Ill get out of the habit next time, I sed.

Hand it over, sed ma.

Well can I jest keep one, then? I sed.

You herd wat I sed, sed ma, and I thawt, G. And pritty soon I sed, Do you like jelly beens, ma?

Never mind trying to change the subjeck, sed ma.

I aint, ma, its the same subjeck, I sed. And I slow took the sent out of my pants pockit and the rest of the jelly beens out of my coat pockit and put them on the corner of the kitchin table.

Wats all this rubbish, wares the other sent? sed ma.

The candy store ladys got it, I dident know you wasent going to give it to me, now I owe you 4 jelly beens, I sed. Meening the ones I had ate and ma made me stay in after suppir and sed I coodent have another sent for 3 days.

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

(Kansas City Star.)

Of tremendous significance to the Jews of the world is the announcement that Italy has joined with France and England in the indorsement of the Zionist movement and of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. The Zionist movement has not the approval of all the leaders among Jews of America or of the world. Many of them very vigorously oppose it. Yet the movement has gained, even in America, such a strong following among the Jews as to make it one of world-wide interest. With England and France and Italy giving consent and encouragement to the movement, the dream of the Jews for their old land, a national identity, a national language and a national life may be near to realization.

A BIT OF VERSE

THE LAND WHERE I WAS BORN.

(Canadian Gazette, London.)

I have walked in crowded cities
With their glamor and their glare,
Where the hearts of men are hidden
And an hopest smile is rare;
I have made the rounds of pleasure,
Glorious night and drowsy morn,
Yet my heart cries out within me
For the land where I was born.

I have worshipped at the churches
With their peaceful, kindly rest,
I have wandered o'er the hillsides
When Old England's at her best.
Yet I weary for the prairies
Where the steadfast daylight shines,
For the grandeur of the Rockies
And the perfume of the pines.

I have roamed in English valleys
'Mid the charm of many flowers,
I have spent in joy and gladness
Golden days in leafy bowers,
I have loved the sylvan beauty
In the first sweet flush of morn;
But I missed the little wild flower
Of the land where I was born.

I am sick for creek and muskeg,
I just long for home today,
And the charm of England's glories
Cannot chase the ache away.
Oh! the dear old apple blossoms
And the maples that adorn
Are calling from the homestead
Of the land where I was born.

You can have your dear old "Blighty,"
Though it's very nice, I know;
And its men were heroes always
From the days of long ago.
But when this war is over
I'll go back to wheat and corn,
To the glist'ning snow and sunshine
Of the land where I was born.

J. McLETCHIE.
Canadian Camp, Seaford, Sussex.

A BIT OF FUN

Impersonal.

What would you say if I turned you down? she asked shyly, as they sat on the parlor sofa.

The young man looked ahead, but said nothing. After a few moments of silence she nudged him with her elbow and said: Didn't you hear my question?

He looked around apprehensively. I beg your pardon, he replied. I thought you were addressing the gas.

Mean Thing!

Young Wife (enthusiastically)—I've just made a pudding, dear, and it's a poem.

Hubby—And I suppose I'm to be the waste basket.

Very Much So.

"The discipline in the navy is very strict, isn't it?"

"Sure, it is. They even dock a vessel for failing to keep up with the rest."

Will Outgrow It.

"I know something I won't tell," sang a little girl, as little girls do.

"Never mind, child," said the Savage Bachelor; "you'll get over that habit when you are a little older."

It's a Toss-Up.

"My wife never says 'I told you so' when my plans go wrong."

"By Jove, she's a treasure! I wish—"

"She merely remarks, 'Didn't I say so?'"

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