

The St. John Standard

Published by The Standard Limited, 31 Prince William Street,
St. John, N. B., Canada.

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Yearly Subscriptions: \$5.00 Do not enclose cash in an unregistered letter. Send postal notes, money order, or check.
Semi-Weekly, by Mail: 2.00 orders, or express orders when required.
Semi-Weekly to United States: 2.00 afloat.

ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 1917.

"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.

A GLORIOUS CANADIAN VICTORY.

Once more Canadians have written their names in letters of blood and gold across the page of Empire's achievement. The capture of Vimy Ridge, told of in this morning's cables from the war fronts, will stand as an everlasting memorial to the bravery and the fighting quality of the men from the Dominion. Censorship regulations forbid the publication of information tending to show which Canadian units participated in the fighting, but it is known, unofficially of course, that New Brunswick troops were in that neighborhood and that, in all likelihood, the men from this province had opportunity to distinguish themselves in the course of the stirring events which, when their detailed history is told, will bring added lustre to our arms.

Vimy Ridge is one of the strongest positions on the whole western front. Its importance may be gauged by the statement in the cables that the French troops originally lost 100,000 men in the attempt to hold it against the Germans when the enemy was in the full flush of his advance through France. Subsequently, the British troops held the position for a brief time but were obliged to retire from it in the face of very heavy attacks by superior numbers of Germans. To Canada comes the supreme honor of again capturing it.

The Standard was informed last evening by an officer who had fought over the ground, and who, though familiar with the locality, that the position carried by the Canadians was regarded as one of the pivotal points on the whole German line. With it in the possession of the Entente forces it will be possible to bring such a maximum of pressure against a retreating enemy that the progress of the British advance from now on should be more rapid.

The fighting for the possession of the coveted height must have been very severe, but there is hope that the casualty list will not be as large as the magnitude of the operation may suggest. Despatches state that the attack was prepared for by almost incessant big-gun fire, and that the German trenches commanding the crest of the position were literally "pulverized" by the hail of steel poured upon them. More than 5,000 prisoners were taken in the action, of which the battle of Vimy Ridge formed the most important part, and as a large proportion of these were Bavarians, known to have been opposing the Canadians, it is hoped that our boys came through with comparatively small losses.

However, should it prove that the price of victory was rounded paid in the blood of our heroes, Canadians will bear the sacrifice bravely, knowing that it was made in the best of all causes and that those who fell in that struggle died the death of every true soldier's choice—with face to the foe and fighting for the right.

THE PERRY POINT BRIDGE.

Elsewhere in this morning's issue of The Standard a resident of the Parish of Kingston, Kings county, voices the regret of the people of that district over the decision of the Foster-Carter government to cancel the contract made by their predecessors for the erection of the Perry Point bridge and to postpone the provision of this much needed facility, if not to abandon the project altogether.

The contract for the Perry Point bridge was awarded by the Murray government to the lowest tenderer who complied with the specifications and conditions. Tenders were called for before the opening of the election campaign and the people of Kings county were definitely promised that the work would be commenced at once, and rushed through to completion.

These people are not interested in the fortunes of any contractor, or in the political complexion of the men who, temporarily, hold the power of awarding contracts. But they are interested, and vitally interested, in the construction of the Perry Point bridge and, if The Standard's correspondent speaks with authority, will not be disposed to accept Mr. Carter's suggested substitute of a "free ferry."

The people of Kings county in the last election voted for the candidates of the Murray government. Those candidates were elected but, unfortunately, in northern counties where the Acadian vote was a determining factor for the followers of Mr. Foster and Mr. Carter, by untrue and disloyal canvasses, managed to secure the election of enough members to give

them a majority in the house and overthrow the government. For their loyalty to the Murray administration the people of Kings must now apparently pay the penalty in the decision not to build a much needed utility. It is a poor beginning for a party which, before election day repeatedly told the people that it stood for business administration and, if successful, would not be actuated by a desire for political vengeance. As time passes, the people of New Brunswick are likely to become well aware of the full extent of their error on February 24th.

WAR COMMENT.

The progress made by the Allied troops yesterday indicates that the great drive by the British in France, which was expected as soon as the spring weather set in, may already have been started. It was evident a few days ago that the scope of operations there had been widened and that, in addition to the movements toward Cambrai from Bapaume, and to St. Quentin from Peronne, the British, located further north, were about to strike a heavy blow at the German lines. The capture of Vimy Ridge and a general advance of the line from three to five miles on a front of twelve is the result of the first stage of that onward swing which is likely to develop even more momentum now that opposing positions of great natural strength have been wrested from the enemy.

It should be remembered, however, that the ground now being fought over, and which must be the scene of most of the fighting for a goodly number of weeks, was taken by the Germans in the course of the advance from Mons to the Marne and has been in the possession of the enemy practically ever since that memorable battle. Beyond doubt it has been carefully prepared and the Germans will probably defend it to the limit.

As it stands at present the so-called Hindenburg line of German defense has been pierced in many places and the Allies, after consolidating the positions won, will continue to press the retreating enemy back to the line of the Meuse and the Belgian frontier. Once that far the Allies will have attained a very important part of their task of driving the Hun back to his own land. France will have been practically cleared and Belgian soil will again become the centre of attention.

Recent victories, while most gratifying, do not indicate that the end of the war is in sight or anywhere near it, always assuming that the end will not come until the enemy has been vanquished by fighting. Other circumstances, food shortage, the tightening of the blockade on Germany and her really desperate economic situation may combine to bring about a collapse of Teutonic effort and an early peace. This, however, cannot be counted upon sufficiently to discount the probability of months of hard fighting still ahead and a desperate need for every man who can be mustered to the colors. The need for men and still more men if the successes won are to be pressed home, and the soldiers who have borne the brunt of the effort necessary to the attainment of such successes are to be given rest and respite from their arduous labors, is the real fact to be most strongly impressed by recent events on the western war front.

MEASURES TO GET MEN.

Advocates of military conscription have had two pieces of news during the past few days on which they can base renewed arguments. The New York Times reports the British Embassy at Washington has announced that Great Britain will compel her citizens throughout the world to place themselves in readiness for compulsory military service to be put into effect at a date to be made public later, and the United States government authorities, on the entrance of that nation into war, openly announce that they propose to raise their armies to the required standard by selective conscription.

In regard to the British statement, which has not yet come officially from London, it may be that the predicted compulsion will apply only to citizens of Great Britain and Ireland, residing in the United Kingdom or abroad. It is not yet apparent that it includes Canadians and Australians, although if it does there will be few to say that it is not justified by the urgency of the case.

To date Canada has got along very

well without conscription. True, there are, in this country, whole districts far short of their quota of men in uniform, while other portions of the Dominion have sent practically every physically fit man to the battle lines. Under a conscription system there would be an equal division of the men taken. Such a sorry spectacle as exists in the extremely French-Canadian sections of Quebec would not be possible. It is likely, however, that the number of men required from this Dominion can still be secured by the voluntary system, and, if so, that will be by far the better and more honorable course.

In the case of the United States the situation is different. That nation is entering the war when trained men are required in the shortest possible time if they are to be effective. They must be trained and equipped, and it is doubtful if this can be done under a voluntary system of enlistment as expeditiously or as well as under some measure of compulsion. With selective conscription the domestic requirements of the country will be fully considered and the men taken for war service will be those who can best be spared and who, at the same time, will be of the greatest value. In any event the fact that the United States is to resort to a measure of conscription at once to fill her armies and Great Britain may put a modified system into effect in the future should be sufficient to the young men of this country flocking to the colors.

PERRY POINT BRIDGE IS A REAL NECESSITY

Kingston Parish Man Urges Completion of Work for Which Foster-Carter Government Cancelled Contract.

Editor of The Standard,

I am and have been a resident of Kingston parish and I feel the want of Perry Point bridge as much as anyone and certainly more than W. E. Foster or E. S. Carter. I have yet to talk to any of those loyal friends of Mr. Foster or Mr. Carter who are so overburdened with loyalty that they are bordering on insanity; for that must be the only possible explanation of the fact that they are in the west bank of the Kennebecas at this time of year and who say, "There is no need of a bridge; all that is required is a free ferry for the local friends of Mr. Foster or Mr. Carter who are so overburdened with loyalty that they are bordering on insanity; for that must be the only possible explanation of the fact that they are in the west bank of the Kennebecas at this time of year and who say, 'There is no need of a bridge; all that is required is a free ferry for the local friends of Mr. Foster or Mr. Carter who are so overburdened with loyalty that they are bordering on insanity; for that must be the only possible explanation of the fact that they are in the west bank of the Kennebecas at this time of year and who say, 'There is no need of a bridge; all that is required is a free ferry for the local friends of Mr. Foster or Mr. Carter who are so overburdened with loyalty that they are bordering on insanity; 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