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Russian Fugitives

The Allan Liner *Ionian* on her recent trip from Liverpool, G. B., to Halifax is reported to have had among her passengers more than 200 Russian soldiers, most of them army reserve men, who had fled to this western world to escape being sent to fight the Czar's battles in Manchuria. These fugitives, upon the calling out of the reserves, deserted from their homes in towns and villages of Poland and Russia proper and crossed the line into Germany, whence they made their way to England. Some of the men when they left their country were clad in military uniforms, and they told an interpreter that they got across the frontier concealed in loads of hay and by other means. The Poles say they would not mind fighting to defend their native country, but they do not want to fight in a foreign land battles of conquest. These men left wives and families behind, and are now waiting for money from relatives in Canada and the United States. One of them has located a brother at Pittsburg and has received from him \$25 to continue his journey to that place. Some of the men passed through exciting experiences in effecting their escape. The following story is told of one of them: This soldier was ordered to report at the depot of his regiment and had bade his wife and family good-bys. As he was leaving his wife whispered to him that it was better to leave her behind to struggle to keep the family alive than that he should go to the far east, where so many had gone never to return, and advised him to make an effort to pass the guards and get across the frontier into an alien land, where with the small sum of money he had in his possession he might make his way to America. Acting upon this suggestion, he concealed himself until night and then went to the banks of the river that formed the boundary line between Russia and Germany and sought to cross in the darkness. He was disappointed in the hope of finding a boat upon the shore and unfortunately attracted the attention of the guard at an outpost, who gave the alarm. He was pursued and took to the river. Being a powerful swimmer he managed, notwithstanding the shots fired at him by the sentinels, to escape in safety after a long swim to the other side, there, he was safe from pursuit.

Bogus Ballot Boxes.

The charge that there was a scheme (which however failed) to introduce bogus ballot boxes in the recent Dominion election in West Hastings, Ontario, and in the interests of Mr. B. O. Lott, the Liberal candidate in that constituency, is being investigated and is exciting much more than a local interest. The evidence so far available in this matter has been given in connection with a suit for criminal libel preferred by Mr. E. Gus Porter, M. P. for West Hastings, against Mr. T. S. Carman, publisher of *The Belleville Ontario*, and Mr. O'Flynn, a prominent barrister of Belleville. These gentlemen, the one through his newspaper, the other, it is charged, by the distribution of a dodger, had cast discredit on Mr. Porter's announcement on election day that bogus ballot boxes had been brought into West Hastings on behalf of Mr. Lott, the Liberal candidate, with the object of stealing the election. What defence Mr. Lott may be able to make against these charges is yet to appear, but the evidence against him is of so damaging a character that he has been placed under arrest by action of the Dominion authorities, and warrants have been issued for others who are alleged to have been united with him in a conspiracy to defraud the electorate. Everyone who stands for honesty and purity in politics will earnestly desire that the facts in connection with this alleged conspiracy shall be clearly brought out and the guilty parties, whoever they may be, punished to the full extent of the law. Certainly no political party in this country can afford for a moment to shield or to palliate so iniquitous a scheme as Mr. Lott and others—his helpers—are accused of having undertaken. And in the interests of the country at large it is not to be thought of that such a conspiracy as that with which Mr. Lott and his coadjutors are charged should go unpunished. The position taken by the *Toronto Globe* in reference to this matter will command general approval. The *Globe* says: "The crown representatives are taking the absolutely right course in effecting the immediate arrest of men implicated in the alleged importation and use of the bogus ballot-boxes. There may be objections to the manner in which the investigation is being conducted, and [unwarrantable

attempts will doubtless be made to convert the affair into political capital. Those are minor considerations. The supreme consideration for the Crown authorities is the complete exposure of everybody connected with so dastardly and foully criminal an undertaking. There must be no standing on technicalities. There must be no false sentiment, and no guilty shielding of any party. If it is, on the one side, a case of conspiracy against Liberal candidates and the Liberal party, that fact ought to be made plain, and every one of the conspirators given full meed of punishment. If, on the other side, it is a conspiracy against the electors and an interference with the machinery of government, every candidate and every official implicated should be brought to the swiftest and sternest justice."

A Notable Meeting.

The meeting of representatives of the Zemstvos in St. Petersburg on Nov. 19 is regarded, under all the circumstances of the meeting, as an event of very considerable importance. The Zemstvos are provincial and district elective bodies, the electors being the peasantry, the householders in the towns, the clergy and the landed proprietors. The members of the Zemstvos, however, generally if not always, belong to the gentry or nobility. These elective assemblies form part of the machinery by which the democratic life of Russia is striving to come to a full realization of its rights and powers. Within certain limits they have accomplished a good deal for the public welfare, but have been much hampered by the officialdom connected with the bureaucracy. The meeting of the 19th had been arranged for under official auspices, but at the last moment the Government withdrew its sanction because the representatives declined to adhere to the original purpose of the Conference. It is regarded, however, as a matter of much significance that, considering the nature of the discussions and the resolutions adopted, the representatives were permitted to sit in conference without Government interference and without being subject to arrest for their utterances. A hundred earnest men, included among whom were some of the most prominent figures in Russia, therefore met and discussed a carefully prepared memorandum, practically embodying a recommendation for a national representative body to have a share in the government. This memorandum will be presented to Emperor Nicholas. The memorandum condemned the bureaucratic system of government; demanded that no one be subjected to punishment or to the restriction of rights without the decision of independent legal authorities, demanded freedom of conscience, speech, press, meeting and association; asked for the peasants that the Government (a) equalize the political and civil rights of peasants with the other classes, (b) release rural self-government from administrative tutelage, (c) safeguard peasants by proper courts of justice, and declared that in order to assure the correct development of the nation it is unquestionably necessary for national representation in the form of a specially elective body to participate in legislation. Not a single word about the meeting has been printed in the newspapers in St. Petersburg and yet the news has spread everywhere and created a tremendous stir.

Political.

It is announced that the Dominion Parliament will meet on January 11. This is an earlier date than that at which Parliament has assembled for several years and the earlier meeting will doubtless be agreeable to the wishes of members generally since a late meeting and a session prolonged into the summer is not only attended with much discomfort on account of the hot weather then prevailing at the capital but also keeps the members in attendance upon their parliamentary duties at a time of year when the interests of their private business especially demand their attention. The session of 1905 is expected to be a short one. It is understood that the Government will not introduce much new business of importance and it is believed that Parliament will have concluded its labors by the first week in May. Four months should certainly give ample time for Parliament to get through with all its legitimate business. Premier Laurier has gone to Southern California, where he will rest and recuperate for the approaching session. Earl Minto having completed his term as Governor-General of Canada his lordship and Lady Minto have taken their departure for their

home in the mother land. Nothing but good has been said of the Mintos during the term of their official residence at Ottawa, and they carry with them the good-will of the people of Canada. The next Parliament will be opened by Earl Grey who succeeds Earl Minto as Governor-General. On the 22nd inst. a farewell banquet was given in London to Earl Grey, in which Lord Strathcona presided, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Aberdeen and other eminent persons being among the guests. In responding to the toast "The Dominion of Canada" Earl Grey spoke of the interest with which he looked forward to five years' residence in Canada whose population, he said, there was every reason to expect "in the lifetime of our sons and perhaps of some of us here tonight" would equal that of the United Kingdom.

Wintry Weather in Britain

While November, up to present writing, has been in Canada unusually mild and generally pleasant for the season, Great Britain has been visited of late by remarkably stormy and wintry weather. A London despatch of Nov. 22, reported keen frost and heavy snow squalls in all parts of the United Kingdom. A gale raged over the coasts, driving vessels to shelter and seriously dislocating the telegraph wires, especially in the north of England and Scotland. Blinding snowstorms had caused deep drifts and rendered traffic difficult in the country districts. In some districts the drifts were so deep that railway trains were stopped. Land lines in Ireland were effected causing delay in communication with the United States and Canada. At Chatham the snow was so deep that the King of Portugal, then on a visit to England, and others of the house party there, had been prevented from shooting. In London little snow had fallen but a sharp frost had accentuated the distress among the poor. The wintry wave seems to have extended over Europe, frost being reported as far south as Naples.

Wireless

Telegraphy

An Ottawa despatch says there is reason to believe that the Imperial authorities are in communication with the Government of Canada, as well as with the Governments of the other self-governing colonies, touching the assumption by the State of the wireless telegraphic systems. It is thought that the home government will take the first step by assuming control of the Marconi system in the United Kingdom, which would involve similar action in this country. It is felt that in time of war wireless telegraphy would be a serious menace to the State and would seriously endanger its welfare if left under private control.

The War.

The war news for the past week has been of a very meagre character. Nothing more significant than skirmishes is reported in the district occupied by the two hostile armies, and the general situation appears to remain unchanged. The same may be said in reference to Pert Arthur. It is however reported, and generally credited, that the Japanese are concentrating their energies for a desperate assault upon the fortress in view of the approach of the Baltic squadron. The advanced detachment of that squadron is passing through the Suez Canal. Japan has called the attention of Great Britain to the fact that coal has been furnished to the Russian war vessels from British ports.

To Test the

Ice-Breaker.

It is stated that an arrangement has been made between the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and Mr. F. L. Wanklyn, Manager of the Dominion Coal Company, in accordance with which an experiment will be made about the first week of December in keeping the River St. Lawrence open for navigation after the end of the usual season by means of the Government ice-breaker Champlain. A loaded collier will leave Sydney in time to reach Quebec during the first week of December. The intention is to have the ice-breaker meet her about twenty five miles below Quebec and accompany her up the river to Montreal. After discharging the coal there the collier will clear on the return trip for Sydney, and the ice-breaker will accompany her down the river and remain until her captain is satisfied of no further danger from ice. It may happen that no ice will be encountered, but the object is to show that by means of ice-breakers, whether ice is present or not, the season of navigation between Montreal and Quebec can be kept open for from three weeks to a month later than usual. Up to the present time the shipping men of Montreal have never felt safe about a vessel clearing from that port after the third week in November.