

# The Standard

Published by The Standard Limited, 82 Prince William Street, St. John, N. B., Canada.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**  
Daily Edition, by Carrier, per year.....\$5.00  
Daily Edition, by Mail, per year.....3.00  
Semi-Weekly Edition, by Mail, per year.....1.00  
Single Copies Two Cents.

**TELEPHONE CALLS:**  
Business Office.....Main 1722  
Editorial and News.....Main 1746

ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1912.

## BRITAIN CONDEMNS THE LAURIER AMENDMENT.

Comments of the British press on the speech of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and his amendment to the Naval Aid Bill, are instructive as the expression of Great Britain's Imperial opinion on the situation which has developed in the Dominion Parliament. The position taken by Sir Wilfrid Laurier is strongly criticized, on the ground that his amendment fails to strengthen the British fleet where increased strength is required, and is in opposition to the recommendations of the Admiralty.

Apparently the reasons for the course the Leader of the Opposition has taken are well understood. The belief is plainly expressed that he has resorted to a political expedient by making the question a party issue. The Daily Mail recalls that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is "a consummate politician and a virtuoso in party tactics," and does not hesitate to state that "his object is to suggest an alternative programme to that of the Conservatives rather than to advance a practical proposal." Sir Wilfrid's recent assertion that "when England is at war we are at war but it does not follow we are in the conflict," is strongly condemned by the London Times as "tending to separation and independence."

"If Sir Wilfrid Laurier's argument means anything," says the Times, "it proposes that the Empire may be engaged in a life and death struggle about a cause which Canada disapproves and, if her ships are needed for action, it can only be either on a question nearly affecting herself or else in some broad conflict which may bring the whole Empire down. This semi-detachment is, therefore, not a practical alternative." The Times concludes that the alternative is "independence and nothing else."

It occasions no surprise to learn from a statement in the Evening Standard that Mr. Borden's proposals meet with the Admiralty's support. That was to be expected. They are based on the opinions expressed in the memorandum which was prepared expressly for the Canadian Government. In a review of recent developments the Standard says:

"The Imperial Government remains properly neutral. Mr. Churchill has not presumed to dictate her policy to Canada, but has confined himself to setting forth the position of the navy in relation to its nearest rival, and has left it to the colonies to give aid as they think proper."

"But it is known that the Admiralty strategists favor the course Mr. Borden proposes. One great fleet, under one control, concentrated at the real point of danger, is the most effective instrument for offence and defence. Canada, no less than England, will be best protected in time of war by seeking out the main fleet of her strongest opponent and striking it down."

"If we are to fight an European foe, one battleship in the North Sea is worth half a dozen in the Pacific Concentration and instant readiness to deal an overwhelming blow are the essence of naval strategy. That is what the Admiralty knows. Mr. Borden knows it, too. The other policy will probably not prevail now, but may do so in the future. These Canadian ships are an emergency contribution. When the European menace has passed away, they may be called home. Even before that Canada, like Australia, will begin to build her own local navy."

The Express, which is said to represent the authoritative British opinion, takes the position that Sir Wilfrid's proposal would entail a minimum charge of seven and a half million dollars yearly with absolutely no additional security to the Empire to meet the new and serious situation. "The decisive battle," adds the Express, "which would settle the fate of the whole Empire would most probably be a matter of days, possibly hours, and would certainly be all over long before any ships on the Pacific or other remote seas could be brought into the fighting line in waters near England."

It is clear that the trend of British opinion is strongly in support of Mr. Borden's proposal and of the Admiralty's recommendations. The policy outlined in the Laurier amendment vaguely "contemplating construction as soon as possible in Canada" of two fleet units, which are "best calculated to afford relief to the United Kingdom," is justly ridiculed as ineffective and impracticable at the present time. Apart from the delay which would result, the area of danger does not lie in proximity to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the Dominion but in the North Sea.

In reference to "the remarkable strength and readiness" of the German navy under the new naval law, the Admiralty's memorandum emphasizes this point. It says:

"The great fleet is not dispersed all over the world for duties of commerce protection or in the discharge of colonial responsibilities; nor are its composition and character adapted to these purposes. It is concentrated and kept concentrated in close proximity to the German and British coasts."

If a war should break out all naval authorities agree that the decisive naval battle, as far as the British Empire is concerned, would be fought in the North Sea. New Zealand's battleship is to be commissioned to take her place in the first line of defence in those waters, and it is there that the Dominion's three super-Dreadnoughts are required.

It is clear beyond argument if Canada is prepared to strengthen the British fleet for her own and the Empire's protection her ships should be stationed where the danger exists.

### SIR WILFRID'S DIFFICULTIES.

Neither Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech on the naval question nor his resolutions seem to have created much stir outside of Parliament. The speech was of the usual character delivered by the ex-Premier and Leader of the Opposition, and did not rise to the great heights of oratory prophesied for it. Sir Wilfrid always speaks well, but this time he was handicapped by the knowledge that the large majority of the people of Canada had already made it known that they favored the policy of Premier Borden. Further, he has the knowledge that many in his own party are opposed to making a stand against the proposal of Mr. Borden to hand over to the British Government three super-Dreadnoughts. The people of Canada, while not over sentimental, are loyal to the Empire. They feel that they are a part of it and are not averse to paying the cost of maintaining its solidarity. The sea power of Britain has been the mainstay of the Empire. Had Great Britain not been mistress of the seas and able to move her armies from land to land, there would have been no naval question for the Over-

seas Dominions to settle. Not only has Sir Wilfrid to meet the sentimental side of the question, which he tries to do by making an appeal to Canadian loyalty to stand by a Canadian navy. Unfortunately for Sir Wilfrid his view is too narrow. The majority of Canadians born in Canada are even more attached to the Empire than those whose birthplace was across the seas. There are a few "little Canadians," but the vast majority are Imperialists and hope and realize that some day Canada and the other Overseas Dominions will have a voice in the control of the great affairs of the Empire. That the Parliament which sits at Westminster will represent the whole Empire and will dominate International and Imperial affairs, and that local issues will be decided elsewhere. While such sentiment pervades the whole community. While that it does no one will doubt, an appeal to Canadians to construct a coast defence navy will not have a large following. The navy made the creation of the Empire possible. The navy has been one of the greatest factors in preserving and strengthening the Empire and is responsible for the safety of its great and growing commerce. Canada occupies no mean place among the maritime nations now, and the future is rich in hope. Sir Wilfrid's speech will not appeal to those who wish to increase the maritime importance of Canada. His Canadian navy, independent of British guns, would be a rather laughable institution. The resolution presented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier looks very much as if he felt there must be an opposition to the Government policy. There are occasions where it is well even for an opposition to fall into line with public sentiment. The naval question should never have become involved in party politics. It is the power of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to have pointed it to the power of a national question, but he failed to do his duty and fathers a policy which is an answer to the memorandum submitted to Parliament by the Premier in introducing the Naval Bill.

The resolution offered by Sir Wilfrid Laurier leaves a doubt that he really desires that the strength of the British navy should be maintained in its present proportions. The adoption of the resolution would not relieve the situation in Great Britain—it would not add a single vessel to the British navy or the Canadian navy for at least five years. Discussing this branch of the question the Toronto News puts forth this view: "The present Laurier proposal is a new one. In power he rejected the Admiralty's advice to include battleships in his programme. In Opposition he is driven to call for two super-Dreadnoughts to lead two units, one on the Atlantic and one on the Pacific coast. As for building the vessels in Canada we have not the yards. As for manning them with Canadians how many Canadians did he secure for the Niobe and the Rainbow? In the course of his speech the Opposition leader made the curious statement: 'When England is at war we are at war. It does not follow that because we are at war we are in conflict.' Such balancing of words cannot impress the country favorably. We know that public sentiment forced Sir Wilfrid Laurier into sending troops to South Africa against his will. Consequently Canada was the last of all the Dominions to get to the front. As late as the summer of 1911 he shocked public opinion throughout the Dominion by declaring that Canada would consider itself entitled to remain neutral in the event of other parts of the Empire becoming involved in war. This doctrine was denounced in many quarters and even by the former Boer leader, General Botha, now Prime Minister of South Africa. The fatal policy of sixteen months ago is not forgotten because its author now professes himself ready to go to the defence of the Empire 'in an emergency.' Altogether his position was and is unconvincing as is indicated by the fact that a number of Liberal newspapers have called upon Parliament to unite in adopting the Borden plan by a unanimous vote that will be impressive both inside and outside the Empire."

### MR. FOWLER ON MR. PUGSLEY.

The full text of Mr. Fowler's speech in Parliament, which was published in The Standard on Saturday, shows that the member for Kings made it rather interesting for the ex-Minister of Public Works. The day before Mr. Pugsley had clothed himself with a mantle of righteousness and denounced in very strong language the actions of Conservatives in recent bye-elections. He charged that all sorts of promises had been made to obtain votes for the Government candidates, that election lists had been manipulated and in fact all the tricks of elections resorted to that the Government majority in the House might not be reduced. Mr. Fowler's exposure of Mr. Pugsley's own experience on these very matters was merciless. His reference to the Leary telegram was not pleasing to Mr. Pugsley. He never likes to be twitted about that episode in his career when he was making a desperate effort to keep Mr. Blair in power after the Ritchie appointment. Then when Mr. Fowler reminded him of the course he pursued in the Rothersey list frauds, Mr. Pugsley was visibly agitated, and the nature of the explanations he attempted to make shows that the shots went straight home. It was one of Mr. Pugsley's political blunders that the men responsible for stuffing the Rothersey election lists were never brought to justice and compelled to pay the penalty of their crime. There never was the slightest doubt as to who the offenders were. Their names—all of them were known to the Attorney General from the start, and the part that each played in the game was equally well known to the Attorney General. It was also quite within Mr. Pugsley's knowledge why about 500 names had been added to the list. It was expected by those who framed up this wild scheme that Mr. Fowler would be forced to resign immediately after the lists came into operation and the Liberal candidate would have the advantage of these added names in the bye-election that followed. The decision of the court was the reverse of what the Liberal leaders expected, and there was no bye-election and therefore the lists were valueless from a party standpoint. Still the knowledge possessed by the Attorney General should have been taken advantage of and the guilty men punished. It was the first wholesale attempt of this kind in New Brunswick and had one good effect as it did away with dual voting. There have been no non-resident electors since the attempted Rothersey list fraud. Mr. Fowler has done the public good service in exposing the hypocrisy of Mr. Pugsley. Honesty of statement and honesty of purpose is what is needed in public men.

British politicians, having had time since the last bye-election, that for Bow and Bromley, to figure out the actual situation of the two great parties, are more than ever impressed with the fact that the United Kingdom affords a striking example of the power of minority rule, says the Boston Transcript. As the House of Commons is made up today the party divisions are: Unionists, 282; Liberals, 264; Laborites, 40; Nationalists, 70; Independent Nationalists, 8. The governing coalition is composed of the Liberals, Laborites and Nationalists, with an aggregate of 388 votes. This gives the Asquith ministry a majority of 106 in a full House, or twenty less than it had when the last general election was over. The loss is due to the mishaps which have attended the ministerial candidates at the majority of the bye-elections. The Unionists have at these won nine seats on the balloting, and have been awarded one as the result of judicial investigation. The Unionists are making the most of the peculiar composition of the majority, by playing on the sensibilities of the English electorates. They display calculations which show that 40,000,000 people are governed by 5,000,000, the governing 5,000,000 being directed by one man, the dominating John Redmond.

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## PROVINCIAL PERSONALS.

(Moncton Transcript, Dec. 14.)

P. G. Mahoney, M.P.E., who has been spending the present week in Boston, arrived in Moncton last evening from St. John.

Mrs. Fred Ryan, of Sackville, passed through Moncton on Thursday afternoon for St. John, where she embarked on the Empress of Britain for England. Mrs. Ryan was accompanied by the Misses O'Leary, daughters of Richard O'Leary, of Richibucto, who together with Mrs. Ryan, intend spending about six months touring in England and on the continent.

William Palmer, of Dorchester, was in the city today.

Lou Tingley left this morning for Sackville, where he will spend Sunday visiting friends.

Mrs. Bellevue and little daughter, of Shediac, passed through Moncton on Thursday en route for St. John.

G. A. Taylor, county secretary of Dorchester, was in the city today en route to his home in Salisbury, to spend Sunday.

Mrs. C. T. Purdy and Mrs. P. C. Jones were visitors in St. John yesterday.

Mrs. C. S. McCarthy returned last evening from St. John.

(Chatham Gazette.) Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Lounsbury arrived from St. John yesterday and are the guests of Mrs. H. B. McDonald.

(Woodstock Despatch.) Henry Post, of Grafton, left last week for St. John, to spend the winter.

Mrs. D. Baker, Newport, R. I., is visiting her mother, Mrs. Thomas Neales.

Dr. N. R. Colter, P. O. Inspector, St. John, spent a few days in town last week.

Mrs. Charles Comben entertained a number of ladies at a thimble party on Tuesday evening.

Many young friends of Miss Elva Vanwart spent a delightful evening at her home Wednesday.

The 67th Regiment Band cleared over \$200 from the minstrel performance.

The Rev. Frank Baird went to St. John on Monday to attend a meeting of the Presbytery.

Mrs. George Nevers and Wilber Nevers, of Grafton, who have been visiting her daughter, Mrs. Lewis True, McAdam, returned home last Saturday.

Clarence Ryan has disposed of his moving picture outfit to F. B. Herrick who will conduct the Home theatre in the future. Mr. Ryan will open a picture house in Edmundston.

Mrs. William Curry went to Barony on Saturday to visit her father.

Miss Muriel Kuplek entertained the what club on Wednesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Manzer were visiting friends in Grand Falls last week. Guy Porter made a business trip to Boston last week.

(Sussex Record.) L. A. Drew, of St. John, was a guest of friends here on Friday last.

Frank A. Lunnell, Calgary, has returned to his home in Norton.

Revs. Father Savage, Moncton, and Lochery, Riverview, were here on Tuesday.

James McGivern will leave here shortly for Halifax where he has accepted a position.

(Richibucto Review.) Col. W. C. Good, of Woodstock, was in town this week on military business.

Miss Mary Lawlor was the week end guest of Mrs. Gerald O'Brien, Chatham.

Mrs. Robert Cassidy is spending a few days in Campbellton with Mrs. Joseph Stevens.

Mrs. A. E. Shaw, spent Sunday with her sister, Mrs. J. H. Johnston, Loggieville.

Arnold McLagan, of the Bank of Nova Scotia spent Sunday at his home in Blackville.

L. R. Hetherington went to Moncton Wednesday to attend the N. B. Temperance Federation.

Mrs. D. King Hazen, of St. John, is the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Croughan.

(Newcastle Leader.) Mrs. J. C. Vautour went to St. John this week.

Chas. Atkinson, of Kouchibouguac, was in town today.

George Watt, of the customs department, Chatham, was in town this week.

Mrs. M. F. Keith, of Moncton, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Black.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Baird on the arrival of a little stranger—a baby boy.

Rev. Fr. McLaughlin attended the consecration ceremonies of Bishop LeBlanc at St. John, Tuesday.

Oscar Johnson, who has been confined to the house for some time with pneumonia, is able to be about again as usual.

Miss Margaret Murray returned from New York Friday evening. She was accompanied by her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. O. Murray, who met her in St. John.

(Newcastle Advocate.) Rev. Wm. and Mrs. Aitken and family leave in their private car on the 27th inst. for South Carolina, where they will spend the winter. Mrs. Herbert Sinclair and Miss Aitken were week end guests of Mrs. Robinson, Derby.

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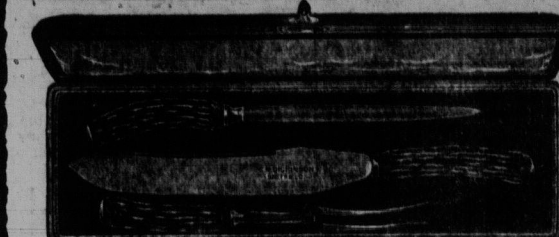
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