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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR ST. JOHN N. B., THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1914

The Evening Times and Star

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TIME FOR ACTION

The facts brought out at the inquiry by Coroner Roberts last evening should prompt the citizens to demand action in several directions in the interests of the safety of life and property. It was stated that the coroner and jury visited a lodging house in which should fire break out the lives of a hundred men would be endangered and might be sacrificed. It was also stated that there is a house in one section of the city where thirteen people are living in three rooms. There is no reason to assume that these are the only instances which could be cited if a careful survey of the city were made.

A more serious matter, however, is the publication of the fact that the building inspector and the hotel and factory inspector do not know which of them, if either, is responsible for the condition of affairs in hotels and boarding houses. Both are in doubt about the matter, and it certainly is not one concerning which there should be any doubt whatever. It should be possible to fix the responsibility upon some one man, so that he would know if a disaster occurred through any failure on his part to do his duty he must accept the consequences. If additional legislation is needed it should be secured at once.

There is another matter which the jury in this case might fairly consider. The man whose duty it is to inspect buildings, and perhaps order changes which would involve expense, should not be at the mercy of politicians. It should not be possible, for example, for a man who was told by an inspector that he must do certain things to reply by threatening to have that officer's official head cut off. A public official in such an important position as that of an inspector of buildings should be free to act without fear or favor.

THE CUSTOMARY "THRILL"

It is stated that the Social Service Congress at Ottawa was astounded yesterday by statements made by a lady who is superintendent of redemptive work for girls in the Presbyterian Church of Canada. If they were as astounding they must have been up to this time very blind or very indifferent to the conditions which exist in every Canadian, as well as every American and old world city. Society has long had the habit of being "thrilled" by revelations concerning the social evil, and then settling comfortably down again to an easy tolerance of that which, when presented by an impassioned speaker or by articles in the daily or periodical press, is regarded as altogether shocking, and extremely dangerous to the welfare of the social fabric. Possibly a demand is made for more legislation and the enactment of laws which somebody is expected to enforce.

Until society does more than submit itself to an occasional thrill or clamor for more law, the conditions, which when described yesterday are said to have shocked the Social Service Congress at Ottawa, will continue to exist. That which should really be the astounding fact is not the prevalence of great evils in society, but the fact that society in the mass goes gaily about its business, paying very little attention to the evils which are threatening its very existence. When will people learn the wisdom of sinking religious prejudice and class prejudice, and get together in a concerted movement for the promotion of social reform?

THE GUTELIUS REPORT.

Some further information of an interesting character concerning the activities of Mr. Gutelius and his friend Mr. Lynch-Stanton was brought out in parliament yesterday. These two gentlemen, whose report on the National Transcontinental Railway has been exploited so vigorously by the Tory press, were not sworn to be faithful and impartial in the performance of their duties, nor did they take evidence in public. One statement which they made, to the effect that the former National Transcontinental commissioners had paid over to M. P. and J. T. Davis a clear rake-off amounting to \$740,000 is shown to have been entirely incorrect. If any such payment was made it was a matter between the contractors and sub-contractors. The National Transcontinental Commission had nothing whatever to do with it. For preparing a report filled with mis-statements of this sort Mr. Gutelius and Mr. Lynch-Stanton received sixty-five dollars per day. It also appears that Mr. Gutelius did not sign this report until last month, or a very considerable time after he had become general manager of the Intercolonial Railway at a salary of \$20,000 a year. He was naturalized as a Brit-

ish subject shortly after he had been appointed a member of the National Transcontinental Commission.

The Borden government may have made a great find when they discovered this valuable Canadian Pacific Railway official, but there will be more than one opinion in that regard. The more the Gutelius report is examined the more obvious it becomes that it is a partisan document, and will do the Borden government more harm than good.

RAILWAY PROJECTS.

Railway legislation in Fredericton will be watched with a great deal of interest and some anxiety. There is a rumour said to be well founded that the Quebec and St. John Railway Company is seeking an additional bond guarantee of \$10,000 per mile for the St. John Valley Railway. The company already has a bond guarantee of \$25,000 per mile, the double subsidy of \$6,400 per mile and can raise another \$10,000 per mile by second mortgage. It will certainly be surprising if an additional bond guarantee of \$10,000 is asked for. It is alleged that the road above Fredericton has been cheapened in construction, and is not up to the standard which was naturally expected by the people. There is still no information about the Gagetown-St. John section, or when this work will be begun.

Another railway project which will bear close scrutiny is the request for a bond guarantee of \$25,000 per mile for a railway from Fredericton to L'Etang and thence to St. Stephen. The hope of success for such a railway would be based upon getting through business to be handled by ocean steamship lines at L'Etang. The present prospect for such business will hardly be considered bright enough to warrant a large bond guarantee by the province. We are assured that with the development of western Canada all available maritime province ports will get their share of business, but there is not enough in sight at present to warrant an enormous expenditure for railway construction and terminal facilities for such traffic at the port of L'Etang. The promoters of the proposed railway will probably have considerable difficulty in convincing the members of the legislature that there is sufficient traffic in sight to warrant the immediate construction of a line from Fredericton to L'Etang.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Mr. Woodrow Wilson completed his first year in the presidency of the United States yesterday. During that period he has more than fulfilled the expectations of his friends and is regarded by very many as the ablest president since Lincoln. Measures which he pledged himself to promote have been adopted by congress, and his personal influence was a strong factor in securing their early adoption. The tariff law, the banking and currency act and the recent ratification of foreign treaties are mentioned as the "direct result of the intimate contact established between the executive and legislative departments of the government." President Wilson has disregarded precedent, and went in person before the assembled congress to urge prompt action in regard to administration measures. On five different occasions he has personally addressed congress. He has shown himself to be a strong man, of cool judgment, and one whose views in the end justify themselves to the members of his party.

It is worthy of note that at last week's issue of the Saturday Evening Post Ex-President Taft, in a very interesting article on "Personal Aspects of the Presidency," pays a high tribute to President Wilson. We quote a paragraph—

"Never before, in its recent history certainly, has the Democratic party exercised such self-control. It is due to the circumstances and to Mr. Wilson's masterful personality and attitude. First, he knows what he wishes; second, he is determined to get it, and his party associates are convinced of both facts. The people, or at least the rank and file of his party, sympathize with the president. They are pleased with his success in putting his measures through. The members of the opposite party may, and generally do, disapprove his economic and financial policies; but they do not ask or welcome obstruction to them. It is a real satisfaction to one who knows the atmosphere of Washington to note the success of a strong character in the White House, in dealing with the situation and improving the opportunity it offers."

This tribute from the late republican president shows how strongly Mr. Wilson has impressed himself upon the country, and how wise was the choice of the Democratic party when they selected him as their leader. Canadians are gratified to know that under President Wilson harmonious relations exist between the United States and the mother country, and that on the day when he completed his first year in office the president made an appeal for the British interpretation of the question of Panama Canal tolls. Whether in national or international affairs, as shown also in the affairs of Mexico, President Wilson has proved himself to be a man of broad and sane views, with nothing whatever of the fling in his character.

BIRTHDAYS OF NOTABILITIES

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

The Hon. L. A. Taschereau, minister of public works for Quebec, is forty-seven years of age today. He is the most distinguished living representative of one of the greatest French-Canadian families that ever lived in this country. A nephew of the late Cardinal Taschereau, he was also related closely to the late Chief Justice Taschereau. His father, grandfather and great grandfather, were all judges and took a prominent part in the administration of the law in Lower Canada. He himself is a lawyer of high reputation, enjoying probably the most extensive practice in Quebec City, and will doubtless himself occupy a seat on the bench in due time. Meanwhile he works hard at his dual task of administering an important state department and carrying on a big legal practice.

LIGHTER VEIN.

"Father," said the son home from college. "I must have better rooms at college. Why, in the place I room now there isn't even hot water to shave with in the morning."

"Son, when I was your age I never had hot water to shave with. Did it when the weather wasn't too blooming cold out in front of the woodshed and made lather out of any old soap I could find."

"But, father," expostulated the son, "didn't you say you sent me to college that I might have the advantages you didn't have?"

During recesses in New York William Collier went to a nearby quick lunch place for a bite to eat. He called for an order of fried eggs. Across the table sat another man, and the waiter asked him for his order.

"Give me the same—but fresh ones, mind you."

"Two orders of fried eggs—one of 'em fresh!"

The next day Collier sought out a new place to appease his midday hunger.

"So you got your poem printed?"

"Yes," replied the determined author. "I sent the first stanza to Uncle Know-It-All's column with the inquiry: 'Can any one give me the rest of this poem?' Then I sent in the complete poem over another name."

Underdone Cutlets, proprietor of the Speedy Cafe, was notoriously hard-hearted. The most weeping widow who ever grieved a death-drama couldn't have wept a slice of state bread out of his restaurant without the price. So, when a pale and timorous hum approached the desk and made a faltering appeal, it was no surprise to the lunch fiends to hear a cold "Nothing doing, Best!"

"I'm not a beggar," retorted the hungry man. "I'm willing to scrub floors, or wash dishes. I'm just out of prison and nobody will give me work. I'm starving."

The proprietor betrayed a faint interest.

"I'll tell you the truth," explained the ex-convict behind the bar. "I was a kind of a counterfeiter. I used to take a hundred dollar bill and split it in two with a razor. I'd take a one and a one and split them and paste the halves together, so I'd have two centuries. If the sucker didn't look on both sides, it took 'em five years to catch me."

Mr. Cutlets beckoned the ex-prisoner behind the bar.

"Order what you like on the house," he whispered. "I've got a steady job for you. I'll give you \$20 a week to slice ham for my sandwiches."—Lippincott's.

A stranger visiting a church in a little village on the Scotch coast inquired of the vergier where he might sit.

"Well, sir," whispered the vergier, confidentially, "I'll give you a seat in the awful lot of visitors in the village just now, and ye'd best sit whar ye can see yer umbrella!"

"A German scientist says that in 800 years all men will be bald-headed."

"He may be right, but my own guess is that as long as there are men on the earth there will be some who think they can fool the public by letting their hair grow long on one side and slicking it across the top."

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HIGHER LEATHER PRICES
(Shoe and Leather Weekly, Chicago)

There is a feeling that the true inwardness of the leather situation is not understood by the average buyer of leather. Buyers of a commodity naturally are bears and chronically suspicious of the arguments employed to put a good face upon the market.

We learn of buyers of leather who predict that prices will be lower in thirty days. The writer hereof has no leather for sale, but has some reputation in the trade to sustain. We predict without hesitation or reservation that leather prices generally will be very much higher a month from now.

This is not an instance where the wish is father to the thought. It is common information that severe curtailment has been practiced in the tanning industry and that leather is in moderate supply. If one cares to contrast the statistical position of the industry today with a year ago he will discover a remarkable situation of affairs.

The surplus of leather, comparatively small a year ago, has been digested. There are no burdensome stocks anywhere. Furthermore, the supply of hides is inexhaustible. Since the passage of the currency bill has made money easier hides have advanced, despite the decline in quality. It now appears that poor quality hides are likely to bring relatively higher prices than the short-haired take-off.

Tanners face serious losses if they do not demand and obtain better rates for leather. If large stocks of leather and hides existed they might be compelled to accept losses, but such is not the case. Supply and demand are so close together that nothing can intervene to prevent higher levels of value all along the line.

Even harness leather, which has been about the most inert stock in the leather line, is stronger. It is a fact that one single tanner of harness leather had more stock on hand at this time last year than have the eight largest producers of harness today.

As we have said many times before, the statistical position of leather is stronger than it ever was before in the memory of anyone now living. The surplus of anyone now living. The surplus of anyone now living. The surplus of anyone now living.

At Home.
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