

Dawn of Tomorrow

Published weekly in the interests of and for the Advancement of the colored people of Canada.

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Editorial

BELGIUM CONGO AND

THE NATIVES

A few weeks ago Emile Vanderveide, former minister of Foreign Affairs, and now Socialist Leader of the Chamber of Deputies at Brussels, laid serious charges against officials of the Belgium Congo. In his address in the Chamber Vanderveide quoted assertions by President Orts of the Congo Red Cross that Negroes were forcibly recruited for public labor even when in a dying condition, and the mortality figures among the natives reached 128 to 144 per thousand. These figures are almost equal to the casualty rate in Belgium during the World War.

During the course of the debate Premier Jaspar, who is also Colonial Minister, said that he knew of the existence of individual abuse but he declared that much reform work had been accomplished. He promised a gradual suppression of the forced labor system among the natives but refused a Parliamentary investigation.

The world, the dark world at any rate, has not forgotten Belgium's brutality to the natives during the period preceding the World War. Many fervent prayers went forth from the hearts and lips of black men and women, prayers which reached the very gates of heaven for the deliverance of the Congo natives, and when Germany's ruthless army tracked through Belgium carrying with it rapine, death and destruction, many a trusting soul looked upon it as a just retribution and the whole world thought that through this stern lesson Belgium had been taught to observe the golden rule of life—to give no more of sorrow than you would like to drink of bitterness. We recall here a cartoon of the Kaiser and Belgium's King. The Kaiser mounted upon his white charger looked down upon the king in rags and in humiliation and said: "So you have lost everything, eh?" "No," replied the king, "I have saved my soul." But had he? Does a man or a nation who has purged his soul through suffering and sorrow, by having walked through the valley and the shadow of death—does such a man or such a nation turn and rent his deliverers? Does his soul become adamant to human appeals for humane treatment?

It is enough to have robbed the natives of their birth rights, it is enough to have forced Belgium's civilization upon them when they

had a civilization which was in many points superior to that of Belgium; it is enough to have mistreated native women, to have become fathers of thousands of half castes without killing them off like rats.

If the Belgium Chamber of Deputies refuse to investigate the charges which have been made by Mr. Orts of the Red Cross certainly the League of Nations should do so.

LONDON NOTES

Mrs. Maggie Butler of Lucan underwent an operation for appendicitis at Victoria Hospital a few days ago. Her condition is reported as fine.

Mrs. Mabel Cook is in Victoria Hospital suffering with her eyes. She is slowly improving.

Friends in the city were pleased to have the Butlers of Lucan as callers a few days ago.

Mrs. Joseph Cromwell, who was confined to St. Joseph's Hospital for several days is convalescing at her home on Epworth Ave.

On April 3rd at the Ontario Hospital there occurred the death of Miss Jane Bartlett. Miss Bartlett was the last member of one of the city's oldest colored families. The entire family was noted for its thrift and integrity. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. E. A. Richardson at the Evans Undertaking Parlors. Six ladies of the local branch of the league acted as pall bearers. Interment was made at Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

An April Fool Supper and an aerial trip to Togoland will be held at St. George's Hall, Thursday, April 17th, by the Local Branch of the C.L.A.C.P. A good supper, a splendid program and lots of fun can be had for 25 cents. Don't miss it.

The Get Acquainted Club has decided to hold its concert early in May. In view of the fact that the house is expected to be crowded you will be acting wisely to purchase your tickets now.

Mr. Wm. Booker is quite ill at Victoria Hospital.

Mrs. Jennie Bowles and Mrs. W. E. Lounders of Detroit and Mr. L. Parker of Jackson, Mich., motored to the city last Sunday to spend the day with Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Poin-dexter of Grey Street.

In the Great War

Major H. J. Bennett, City Assessment Commissioner has a great respect for the bravery of colored troops. He served as a private in the Fighting First battalion and in his platoon as one of his comrades, was a colored man. He was cheery and nerry and to know a man you have to live with him. Several night Private Bennett spent in shell holes, in the open, and he wished for no better company than his colored comrade, and his companion acted as sentry, while Bennett slept or tried to sleep.

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