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The Watchman-Warder WEEKLY EDITION

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1909.

A LONG ADJOURNMENT

The Laurier Government has decided to adjourn the House from December 17th to January 10th—a holiday recess of unusual length, says the St. Thomas Times. This is the more extraordinary because it had generally been understood that the House would prorogue before Easter, which comes this year in March. It is an open secret that the Government is sending the members home to sound the people on the proposed naval program. They are surprised to learn how generally unpopular that project is, especially in Ontario. The Ontario farmer in the face of real peril to the Empire might approve the patriotic order which would vote the price of two dreadnoughts to assist the Motherland. But he is in no humor to have millions of dollars spent for the mere sake of spending it or merely to multiply opportunities for swords, ribbons, lace and graft. In his effort to walk the tightrope Sir Wilfrid Laurier has not met with his

usual success. The people of this country may be divided into two classes. One class favors genuine contribution to the British navy at any sacrifice, whether that contribution be expressed in dreadnoughts or their cash equivalent. The other class believes that there is no immediate danger to British supremacy and judges that the time is premature for Canada to launch a naval program. The Premier has certainly pleased neither class.

WHO MAY VOTE

The Ontario Local Option law provides that a local option by-law before being finally passed, must be approved "by the electors of the municipality" in which it is to take effect.

The courts have definitely decided that the words "electors of the municipality" are to be construed as meaning such persons in a municipality as would be entitled to vote in the election for members of the municipal council.

A municipal elector must be a British subject not less than twenty-one years of age. His name must be on part one or part two of the voters' list of the municipality as finally revised by the county judge. The last revised list is used in the voting.

An unmarried woman, either a spinster or a widow, may have her name on the list and may vote if she is otherwise possessed of the necessary qualifications.

A voter must be qualified in respect of property, either as an owner, a tenant, or a farmer's son, or must be assessed and pay taxes on an income of not less than \$400.

The property on which an owner or an occupant qualifies as a voter, must be rated on the last revised assessment roll as having at least the following valuation:

In cities \$400.00
In towns not over 8,000 200.00
In townships or villages 100.00

If two persons are on the assessment roll as joint owners, they may both vote provided the value of the property is twice as much as would entitle one person to vote. Similarly three or more joint owners may vote on the same property if its value is sufficient.

If, however, persons are jointly assessed for property not large enough to give each of them a vote, then none of them can vote.

A person assessed as an owner may vote whether he lives in the municipality of not, but a person assessed as an occupant cannot vote unless he lives in the municipality.

If a married man is not assessed himself as an owner or occupant, he may vote upon property so assessed in his wife's name, if of sufficient value.

A person assessed as a farmer's son may vote along with his father or mother, provided that the property is assessed for an amount sufficient to allow of two votes upon it, so with one or more farmer's sons.

A person assessed as owner, and a person assessed as occupant may both be on the voter's list in respect of a property assessed at only enough to give one person a vote.

No person is entitled to vote unless he has the requisite qualifications, and also has his name upon the voters' lists.

OBITUARY POETRY

The Toronto Star prints the following remarks on the above subject:

Much of the obituary poetry, that we see in some of the rural papers is of a nature that may partly explain the movement of country people into Toronto and other cities. No sensible person would care to die and be lamented in execrable metre in the columns of the local press.

It was bad enough a generation or two ago, when, after a man had lived as he liked and died as he had to, lines were carved on his tombstone that were wholly out of keeping with all he had been when in this world. But there was not much room on a tombstone and the charge for chiseling was so much per letter. Moreover, few visit cemeteries, and a man's grave is soon forgotten, so that a dead man could, if we may so express it, live down the marbled verse that was so inappropriate to him.

It is much worse now that obituary poems appear in the local papers. There is no charge for chiseling and the poems run to great length. Some local papers announce a charge of ten cents a line for publishing obituary poems, and—we are subject to correction on this point, if wrong—eleven cents per line if the editor be required to compose the poem himself on data furnished by the heirs. But we do not believe the editors of Ontario write many of the poems they print. In the rhymes the sure touch of the editorial hand is lacking, and we fear editors have to com-

pete with the cheap amateur labor of poets who cut prices.

The stified genius of the local amateur poet finds no vent except on the death of a neighbor. Then he writes, and, taking his scroll, reads it aloud to the bereaved. When a poet reads his own verses they invariably sound well, and sorrowing relatives are unequal to the task of telling a well-meaning poet that his verses are bad. Just as it would seem hard-hearted and mercenary to haggle over prices with the deeply sympathetic yet shrewd undertaker, so would it seem improper to pick flaws in lines laudatory of one's nearest and dearest. Grief, it is assumed, should numb all critical faculties. So the poet leaves the sorrowing home bearing a request to the local editor to publish the lines, and death in that community acquires a new terror. Before us lies one of these obituary poems. It begins:

Blow gently, blow gently, ye evening gales;
There's a mournful sound falls on my ear,
And in low whispers tells me true,
Rentless Death, thou has been here.

The author asks the evening gales to blow gently, although the petition would be more likely to succeed if he addressed it to the breezes or the zephyrs. A gale cannot blow gently. But it turns out that it is not the gales he is addressing, for in the

fourth line we find that he is addressing Death instead. The other verses are in keeping with the first, and the whole effort is in keeping with the class of rhymes to which it belongs. Why do people produce these rhymes, that are without rhyme or reason? Why parade grief in ludicrous garb? Why not, at least, circulate these lamentations on private cards, or if poems must be published, why not appoint, as township laureate to sing the local griefs, a man with some natural gift of versification?

CLASSICAL MASTER.

Everett A. Miller, M.A., B.D., has been appointed classical master on the staff of the Lindsay Collegiate Institute to take the place of Mr. R. A. Croskey, who has resigned and who leaves at Christmas. Mr. Miller is at present on the staff of the Napanee High school, where he has been employed since Sept. 1. He has had considerable experience in teaching and comes well recommended. At one time he taught in the Uxbridge High school and has taught in the west as well as in the eastern part of Canada. His duties commence here in January.

AN EXCELLENT NUMBER.

The Christmas number of the Farmer's Advocate is one that should receive a large sale throughout the country, and one that will no doubt be largely read, as it contains many interesting articles on farm life as well as a number of interesting Yuletide stories. The number is also well illustrated with various kinds of stock, farm buildings, etc. Among the articles is one by a well-known Victoria county farmer and breeder, Mr. John Campbell, of Woodville, Ont. It is headed "Why Young Men Should Stay on the Farm," and will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Controller Hocken opened his mayoralty campaign in Toronto.

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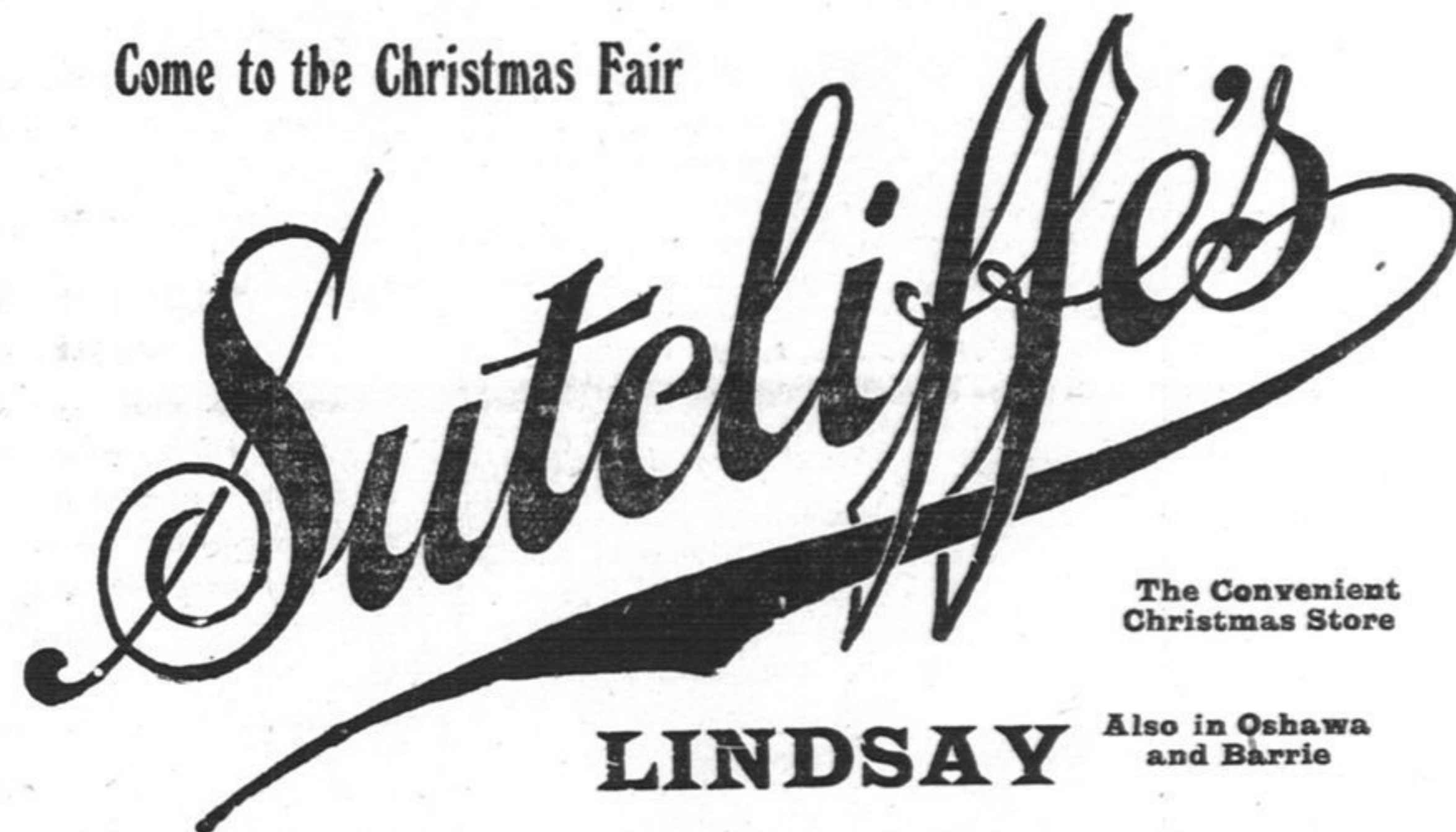
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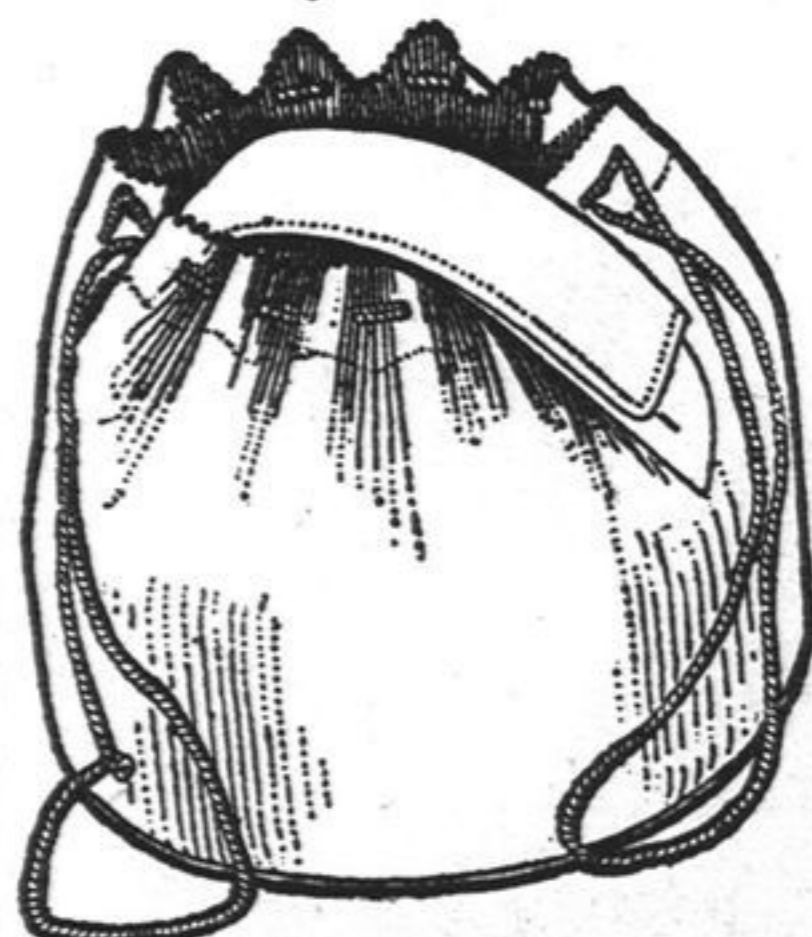
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