THE FLESHERTON ADVANCE

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RELIEF FOR EX-SOLDIERS AND WAR PRISONERS

If the Dominion Parliament in the revision of the Pensions law does not provide more liberal regulations than those now existing, it will not be from lack of advisers. The friends of the returned men are legion, and the men themselves have not been slow in pointing out reasons for more liberal treatment than has yet been extended to them. A new aspect of the matter is given by an ex-prisoner of war who writes to the Toronto Star in these terms:—

"As the Pension Act is to-day, the man who enlisted and never left Canada is given the best deal, while the first contingent man is turned down. I know of cases of men who stayed behind and never heard a shot fired granted pensions for disabilities said to have been caused through the war. These men are in good physical condition and are holding good positions, own their own houses and autos. There seems to have been no mention of the ex-prisoners of war, who suffered more than any man overseas. They were entirely at the mercy of the enemy, and if it had not been for the Canadian Red Cross parcels all the men would have died of starvation. When the prisoners were sent out on working detachments it was sometimes several weeks before our parcels reached us; therefore we had to exist on the German food which consisted of a very small portion of putrid black bread and a bowl of cabbage water soup. We were forced to work ten and twelve hours a day on these 'rations.' There was no fresh food, as our parcels consisted of canned food. I was taken prisoner in the first gas attack at Ypres, April 1915, and was in captivity until the latter part of November, 1918. I was accepted on enlistment, marked fine physique on my attestation papers, and was discharged as medically unfit for further service. I was given a small pension for war disabilities and commuted same in 1921. My condition today is considerably worse than at any time. I have had two medical examinations at Christie St. recently and was turned down. The pension board stated that at the present time reinstatement of pension cannot be considered. It seems to me that a man must be dying before he is eligible for a pension. When I mentioned the suffering of us prisoners of war, I heard the remark of one doctor: 'That prisoner of war stuff has got my goat.'"

We trust this returned man will not seriously take to heart this rather callous remark. It will not be endorsed by many of the medical fraternity and surely by no doctor who served on the battlefield. Nor do we think Parliament should make any distinction between sufferers from the war serving at the front and those whose health was impaired through the callous treatment extended to them in German dedention camps and prisons. Once for all too the new law which the Prime Minister has promised to provide or the removal of all technical objections to the granting of pensions to returned men because they "signed off" as in good health at the close of the war. It was but natural that the poor war weary fellows should be willing to sign any declaration that would have the effect of speedily returning them to their homes and their loved ones and it was to be expected that as time passed the effects of long service in the trenches, the nervous tension of "going over the top," the awful suffering in body and mind, of poison gas though not evident in the flush of victory should be made known in later years in a body broken down and rendered unfit for labor of a remunerative character. Instances of this nature are unfortunately occurring now, and will continue to occur as the distressing results of the carnage are experienced by the victims of the most terrible conflict that is known to history. No really meritorius application for relief should be ignored. The taxpayers of Canada are paying a big price for the victory which they called upon the gallant lads to go forth and achieve. But no one can surely object to the country making ample provision for alleviating the distress of the returned men and their families. This is not national expenditure in which red tape would be warranted. Let the law be liberalized to the fullest extent honestly possible.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Those who believe in old time winter weather are surely satisfied this year. We have had an abundance of snow and some road obstruction, but had fared beter n this respect than many localities.

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Over 100,000 widows of men who fought in the great war have married in the Britist Isles. This is one way of relieving the British taxpayers: the pension ceases with the new deal.

* * *

The Dominion Parliament will not meet till early in February. That is alright if the M. P's meanwhile prepare to talk less and work more speedily than is their custom. Thereby they will be ready early in spring for the ploughing.

* * *

The names of autoists who have been deprived of their permits on conviction of drunkeness or reckless driving or both, are being posted in a Government office at Toronto. This may be a small penalty if the loss of the permit is temporary. Some of the delinquents are getting off exceedingly easy and will be on the highways again in full feather very speedily.

* * *

A number of musically inclined citizens reintroduced the carol singing on Christmas eve, as suggested in The Advance of a couple of weeks ago. The time alloted was too short to organize the event properly. Dr. E. K. Richardson gives us this week an entertaining account of the first carol singing in Flesherton. Now that a revival of this charming practice has been inaugurated we hope that it will never again be subject to inertia or lethargy.

Fascinating Links In Canada's History

It is a surprise to visitors at the Dominion Archives at Ottawa to find that one of the most cherished possessions there is a modern looking chest of drawers which is really over one hundred and seventy years old. It is a solidly built chest which was once the possesion of the great general, the Marquis de Montcalm, who was placed in command of the Colonial troops at the beginning of the Seven Years' War and was mortally wounded at the battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759.

The chest stands about four feet high, is about five feet wide and about two feet deep. In spite of its great age it is in remarkably good condition. Three drawers are ornamented with heavy brass work and opens with a three inch brass key. The catch is double requiring two turns to unlock the substantial drawers. The chest is supported on four large solid walnut claws.

The history of this treasure is a long one, beginning at the time when General Montcalm lived in Quebec city. The house he occupied was later taken by Sir Isaac Brock who purchased all the furniture which Montcalm had left. General Brock was later transferred to Upper Canada where he ws in command of the forces during the war of 1812.

After his death at Queenston Heights, his possessions including the chest of drawers, were inherited by a family in Sherbrooke, in the eastern townships of Quebec. From this family it was recently obtained by Sir Leicester Harmsworth who offered it to the Archives to be added to the Northcliffe collection which was presented to Canada by him in memory of his brother, Lord Northcliffe.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of the Toronto Candidates rejoices in the cognomen of "Wemp."

Now that we are all intent on turning over a new leaf, it is well to bear in mind that the first rule for keeping peace in a household is to not unnecesarily irritate people.

A common fault to be fought against is narrowness.

He lives best who lives in helping others.

Our former Governor General Aberdeen, now a hale Octogenarian evidently believes in the wife being the custodian of the purse. At least he told a "Sale of work" audience in the northern capital the other day that he could not assist the object of the sale financially until the Marchioness arrived with his purse.

Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, celebrated his 55th birthday on Tuesday, December 17th.

Mr. Frank Gray, of Hillsburg, was the victim of a peculiar accident one evening recently, while putting air in a high pressure tire on a truck at Sargent's garage. While he was stooping over it, the tire blew out and something hit him on the right jaw with such force as to render him unconscious, in which condition he remained for about two hours, bleeding profusely meantime. It was found later on that one of his back teeth had been knocked out He remained in a semi-unconscious state for about twelve hours. He has quite recovered from his injuries.—Orangeville Banner.

Early Carolling in Flesherton

By DR. E. K. RICHARDSON

"Herb! Herb! Wake up! Get up, Herb!! The church is on fire!!"

"Bless the Lord- Bless and praise His holy name! That one so unworthy should wake in heaven on Christmas morning! I can hear the angels' voices and the golden harps ringing, but I can't see—I can't see, John are you there?"

Such were the greetings and impression aroused in opposite sides of the village by the first singing of carols in Flesherton. How different, and yet how true to those who voiced them! Herb's brother, rousing from the deep sleep of a healthy youth and passing through that borderland that lies between that state and full wakefulness, easilu mistook the muffled voices of the carollers and the shifting glare and shadows of the lanterns for a dread disaster to the church across the way—the object of ther care and affection. John's dear saintly wife may be excused for her exclamation, for had she not for years been abiding unawares in the borderland of that state for which she had so devoutly longed! Who that had heard those carols ringing out on the crisp still winter night, "Angels from the realms of glory," "Hark the herald angels sing" and "Joy to the world," led by Wesley Armstrong and accompanied by Hugh McKechnie, Johnnie Campbell, John Long and others, with violin, cello, cornet and horn or flute has not felt it was a foretaste of Heaven? The rehearsel at Wm. Richardson's followed by a light supper of cold turkey, mince pie, Christmas cake and hot coffee seemed to give the heavenly musicians the right midnight start and a similiar light snack at Wesley Armstrong's seemed just the right night cap to bring them back to earth after a sound sleep.

It must have kept Santa Claus hustling to keep out of sight for long before daylight there were bright little eyes and suppressed giggles borne by all too eager little bare feet scampering down stairs to dance around the lighted Christmas tree and to see what he had brought. A hurried finding and unwrapping of toys, books, fruit, nuts and candy, must be done before breakfast. This over, father got out the horse and cutter and the whole eight of us set out for Daddy Broughton's down next to Campbell's corner. An upset in the deep snow while passing a team only added to the fun. By the time we had swarmed into the little log house with its huge fireplace—shaken the snow off our outer wraps, before hanging them up, and mother had presented our hostess with a Christmas cake—we were ready to sit and listen while Daddy, who had seen eighty Christmases played his fiddle as we munched the russet apples that Miss Broughton provided. By the time we got back home and had our first try-out of the toys and books, mother had Christmas dinner ready and our appetites were ready too. How we could eat! still we were able to get out and sleigh-ride or skate all afternoon with the Clark boys, Jim and J. P., the Armstrongs, Strains, Heards, Claytons, Baskervilles and Wrights and—who could name them all?. Of course we don't dare begin to name the girls. Our sisters played with them.

At the time I speak of the Presbyterians had not started holding their S. S. anniversary on Christmas night and so it became almost a regular custom to have a big party at M. Richardson's. Charades were the chief amusement and for impromptu affairs were clever and entertaining enough, far beyond some Vaudevlle numbers. Some of my readers may recall one the "Breach of Promise Suit" of Jane Blain(Jennie, our merry laughing schoolmarm) against Mr. W. Doll, jeweller(our own live doll) Mr. Richardson was judge, Mr. Harry Hooper, clerk(" my how he would bang the Webster's Dictionary on an up ended wood box and roar "silence in the court!") A. J. Campbell, Will Campbell, Jos. Blackburn and others were important witnesses—conspirators was a better name—The joke played was good—almost too good—now you need not ask whats the joke," as it is not for publication.

And so with the singing of "Auld Land Syne" a happy day was ended.

As the years rolled by the Christmas carols became a fixture and passed through many and varied stages. The first night there were only male voices with stringed instruments and a cornet. Later ladies' voices were added, and the S. S. organ in R. J. Sproule's grain wagon box on runners drawn by Wm. J. Davis' prancing steeds furnished transport for about twenty five or thirty carollers. But that crowd did not overtax the good folk of the town, for some had been very disappointed when we did not go in to enjoy the feast they had prepared. Their capacity for providing and ours for accepting, grew apace and seemed to have no bounds. On one occasion Sept. Good—our good purveyor, and a S S. teacher—had us in for what proved to be a oyster supper. All had finished and gone out except our genial and silver voiced leader, Mr. Armsrong, and myself. There remained a vegetable dish full of raw oysers—just fairly beseeching with languishing big blue eyes—to have a part in the party. We couldn't resist(perhaps we didn't struggle hard) and so they formed two merry processions down our two throats throats with nerry a halt, a chirp nor a flap of their tales till they were gone. Such a night kept us up till four in the morning which was too late. Once it rained and dampeed the enthusiasm, but as a guest at our home was a teacher in Owen Sound Collegiate, just a choir-leader who had never sung carols, a few ventured out and thus kept up the custom. Eventually the assembly comprised the third generation of musical Armstrongs, to which were added two each of Boyds, Bunts, Thurstons, Trimbles, to four Mitchells, two daughters of the late beloved Rev. Walter Ayers, some Richardsons and others to the number of about thirty. The original leader of that first little group of male musicians had as many others, passed on to join "'the choir invisible" but Dr. Robt. Henderson and the writer managed to marshall one of the merriest choirs of carollers yet from place to place, from midnight till about two in the morning, which was a very suitable time to wish each other a very Merry Christmas, and hasten to sound and peaceful slumber.

What an influence those carols have wielded, who can say? and what remembrances are awakened as each Christmas comes around and our children may want to know what we did on Christmas when we were young as they. What wonder that a small group set out to do in their childish way—couldn't wait till Christmas eve—what they could in that line. Instead of suppers some unexpectedly handed them a little money, said it sounded like angels,requested they repeat their carols so that children who had been asleep might hear. Thus the spirit of giving is brought forth in various forms and typifies in some greater or less degree the Divine Gift which the day's celebration commemorates. May it long survive in our land to drive out the spirit of avarice, worldliness and materialism that tolls the knell of a nations spiritual death.

WHY DO TAXES COME BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Why, oh why, must taxes coincide so nearly with Christmas? And why, oh why must they go up ten dollars every year. Last year I remember the tax man came just as the threshing machine moved out, and this year he came on the very day we had shipped some fat stock. It just seemed as though he timed his arrival so we should not forget our financial obligation or take any satisfaction in our grain bins or the cheque from the stock yards. If you see a group of farmers standing at the street corner, you can be pretty sure that the one topic under discussion is taxes. They splutter and grumble and make an awful fuss, and then when the time comes they each one hand over their hard earned money like a lamb. Well, I suppose these things have to be and possibly in a good year one would hear very little about taxes but in lean years, they certainly do seem to take the gilt off the gingerbhead. Be that as it may, since there is no way out, we might as well smile and look pleasant and think of taxes as a necessary evil.

Young actor: Yes, at the last town in which we stayed my landlady shed tears when I left.

Landlady: Well, that ain't likely to happen here. I want my money in advance.

The film director was making a Western thriller, and working very hard to get some action into it.

Finally he turned from the brink of a cliff, mopped his brow, and glanced at a dummy made of straw and old clothes lying on the ground beside him.

"Good heavens!" he shouted. "Who was it we threw over the cliff?"

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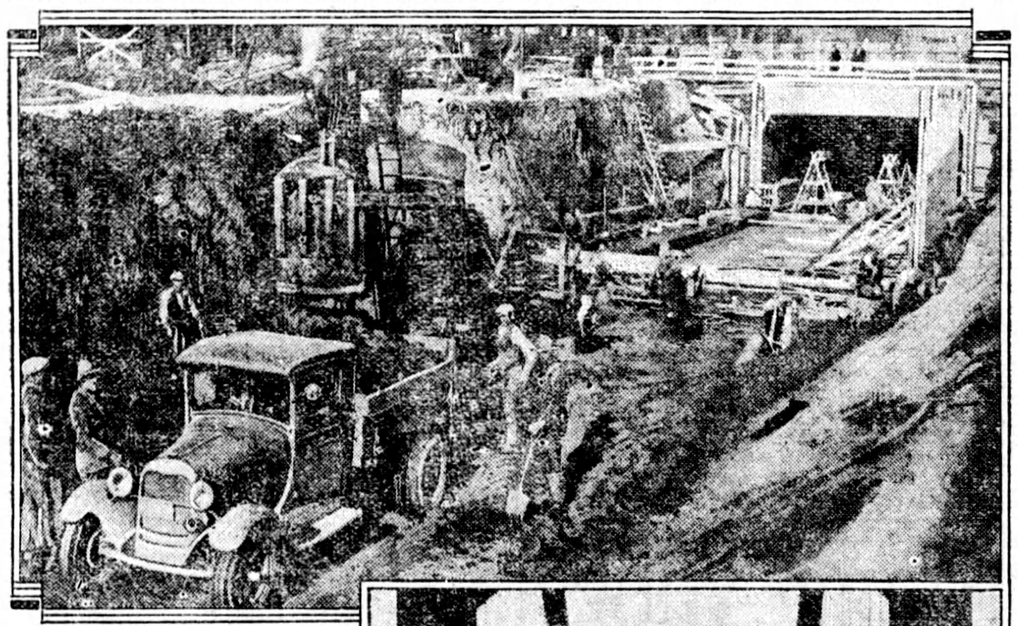

Longest Suspension Bridge In World Opened.

ABOVE and below, the international boundary between Canada and the United States is being spanned where the Detroit River separates Ontario and Michigan.

Already the two-mile Ambassador Bridge is linking the people and interests of the two countries. Following a dedicatory ceremony on Armistice Day, the span was thrown open for public use on November 15. For three years, it will enjoy the distinction of being the longest suspension bridge in the world. By 1933, however, its stretch of 1,850 feet between the two sky-scraping towers will be forced to take second place because of the longer span of the Hudson River bridge linking uptown New York and Jersey. Until the building of the Ambassador bridge, world distinction for the longest suspension span was enjoyed by the Philadelphia-Camden bridge over the Delaware River, its suspended length being 1,750 feet.

In the meantime, dredging and excavating are being rushed on the Windsor-Detroit tunnel. It is expected that, before another year has passed, this international thoroughfare also can be in use.

An example of the manner in which this work is being expedited is given by the record accomplished by Ford trucks in removing 40,000 cubic yards of wet clay from the Windsor entrance in the short period of two weeks. This record achievement required that the trucks make 35 round trips daily, a distance of three miles each trip with a load of two yards of wet clay.

Below—Curve of the huge span of Ambassador Bridge, opened between Windsor and Detroit November 15, is shown by the lower level of the further cable tower, visible through the rear window of the Ford sedan.

Above—Work on Windsor-Detroit tunnel is being speeded since opening of international bridge. Photo shows truck removing clay from Windsor entrance.