

The Acton Free Press

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H. P. MOORE, Editor and Publisher.

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EDITORIAL

The Premier gave short shift to the hopes of the Liberty Leaguers in Northern Ontario during his recent visit in that section. They suggested some modified form of the Ontario Temperance Act. The Premier spoke frankly and plainly at his public meetings, in referring to this question and declared there was no doubt as to the people's verdict on the referendum, nor was there any doubt that the Government was going to enforce the temperance legislation. This frank declaration has been generally admired and will strengthen his position before the public.

Canadian nickel is now in a fair way for playing a more reputable part than it is reputed to have done during the war. Then, it was alleged to find its way into the manufacture of German munitions. Now, it is likely to be used in the proposed new nickel coinage under consideration by the British Government. The substitution of a nickel coinage, or reducing the quality of silver in the silver coins is being considered. A Canadian nickel company is reported to have made contracts with both Great Britain and France for a supply of nickel. Silver has been growing very scarce in Britain, due in a great part to hoarding, especially in India, as well as to the high price of silver which has resulted in large quantities of coined silver being reduced to bullion.

The propaganda for the reduction of waste through unnecessary fires in Canada is bearing fruit. The public generally and the members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association particularly, are giving this important matter close attention, and the results are gratifying. The Insurance Committee of the Manufacturers' Association reports that for the first nine months of the present year the number of fires decreased by sixty; the fire loss was \$1,704,375, compared with \$3,247,044 for the same period of 1918, and the insurance loss \$1,603,831 less. These are gratifying figures, however looked at, and the result must cause thankfulness for what has been accomplished and inspire still further activity on the part of all citizens to make fire prevention the general watchword.

It is gratifying indeed that so many indications go to prove that Canada's credit stands high. A reputation for sound financial methods during the war has been of inestimable benefit to the Dominion. Behind this stands also the realization of her immense natural resources and the fact that on the North American continent she is almost the sole remaining outlet for new settlement on a large scale. Within the next decade or two she will probably receive millions of the best class of immigrants, and these will make her per capita burdens light. The net public debt of Canada stands today at 1,500 million dollars. Seventy-five per cent of it is due to Canadians. Weighed against her natural resources it is not heavy. It must also be taken into account that among her other assets Canada now owns and operates 14,000 miles of railway.

At the meeting of the Municipal Council last week it was decided to submit to the ratepayers at the time of the municipal elections a By-law providing for the appointment of a Commission to superintend the installation and operation of the waterworks system. The synopsis of the By-law, which is published in another column, shows that provision is made for a commission of four, with the Reeve ex-officio a member. After the first year the commissioners will be elected for two years. Commissioners of this nature have proven of advantage to many towns in Canada. There is a continuity to the members which is not provided for members of the Council. Experience in other places has shown also that business men who would not entertain a nomination as member of a Council with the multifarious duties and vexatious experiences, will accept office on a commission where the duties are confined to the one specific service. In this work they feel that they can satisfactorily perform citizenship claims and give the definite service for which business training has qualified them.

Another reform has been advocated during the week by Premier Drury which has much in the principle involved to recommend it. He suggests a form of local option in taxation. It would be a modified plan of single tax; not compulsory, but open for adoption by municipalities as they vote for the reform. The proposal is to tax the land and not the improvements. It would give the ratepayers of a municipality an opportunity to exempt, improve and raise the taxes on the land. One particular advantage this change in assessment would have over present methods would be to discourage speculation in lands. Vacant lots could not profitably be held for the rise in price consequent upon improved surroundings through the erection of fine homes and other buildings, by other citizens who spend their money for these improvements, while the speculator silently looks on and takes the price for the increased value, thus accrued to his vacant property. Such a move has long been advocated but former governments in Ontario never took kindly to the suggestion. At the last session the greatest progress along this line was made when the city of Ottawa was granted permission to make a trial of exempting improvements from taxation and imposing the burden on vacant land.

The reports from the Finance Department of the Dominion show that Canada's finances are in a healthy condition, though the net debt has reached large proportions. During the eight months to December 1, the ordinary revenue was \$218,027,000, and the expenditure \$203,530,000. November figures show that the ordinary expenditure was \$43,486,000 and revenue \$31,818,000. The larger portion of the deficit was due to the payment of war loan interest. Increase in net debt during November was \$32,063,000, as compared with \$20,304,000 in November of last year. The total net debt of the Dominion is now \$1,817,200,000.

At the last meeting of the Canadian Club, Toronto, Premier Drury said: "The party has made prohibition one of the planks in its platform, and it will consider it its duty to enforce the prohibition law impartially, strictly and effectively. The people have pronounced on the question. There is no question of it being a trick ballot. It was not a trick ballot. The people answered the questions fairly. They gave their opinions on four separate and distinct questions. We will see that those opinions are carried out impartially and fearlessly, because we do not intend to make it possible for one class to do what the other class cannot do. Personally, I think it would be discriminating against the rich if we allowed them to drink and the poor not to drink. I think that fair and equal enforcement is what we require."

The inequality of exchange between Canada and the United States continues to cause much concern on the part of the government and the business interests of the country. Although the shipment of ten million dollars' worth of gold to the United States by the Dominion Government last week to take care of Canadian maturities in New York is expected to have a beneficial effect on exchange, the situation is regarded as being so serious that Cabinet Ministers speak with approval of plans for a widespread "Buy in Canada" campaign as the only adequate way of dealing with the crisis. Some Canadian importers have been cancelling orders from United States firms on a large scale and here and there dealers in Canada of United States firms are notifying those from whom they bought goods already in stock that no payment will be made until the exchange situation has righted itself. The Dominion Government has protected itself, so far as the Post Office Department is concerned, by instructing post offices not to issue money orders payable in the United States until further notice.

The Dominion of Canada was fortunate in being accorded an unexpected prominence at the World Labor Conference at Washington. This was the first meeting of representatives of all the nations held under the auspices of the World's Peace Conference as a prospective branch of the League of Nations. This was due to the fact that the United States, the entertaining country, is for the present not in harmony with the peace nations. It has repudiated the peace treaty, and so could take no part, where it might have taken the lead in matters where it was very specially interested. Canada was strongly represented in all divisions, Capital, Labor and Government and must be considerably the gainer by being thus brought to light. A peculiar thing about this position of the United States is that it leaves her out even from that part of the world which in the treaty she reserved as her own preserve, namely, Latin America. The A. B. C. nations, Argentine, Brazil and Chile, with a lot of minor ones, are all members of the treaty combination.

"It looks as if the American consumers were starting on a general strike," said an authority on the retail textile trade of the United States, and then he asked: "What are the Canadians doing?" For some weeks past the tailoring trade, amongst many others has been greatly checked by the appearance of old overcoats and last year's suits. The consumers in thousands of cases are refusing to buy until prices tumble. This is especially true in the case of woollens. The world supply of raw wool is exceptionally large, and the people unacquainted with present problems of manufacture fail to distinguish between the enormous supplies of raw wools and the scarcity of woollens. Manufacturers do not deny the existence of raw wool supplies, but what they have to confess is the inability to convert this raw product into finished material with sufficient rapidity to eliminate the famine created by war and bring down prices within a few months' time. Better and cheaper woollens are coming, but it will be a few months before any appreciable change will be brought about in Canada or the United States. In the meantime it looks as if a lot of people were going to hold tight, keep their money in their pockets and wear last year's clothing.

There are many of the present generation who regret exceedingly that they did not have in childhood musical opportunities and are determined that these shall not be denied their children. The childhood of so many of us was at a period in the country's history when music was too generally regarded as something that could very well be done without. Music is the God-given right of children and to deprive them of it is a serious matter. There is dawning upon parents and educationists a realization of the necessity of music in character building, in nation building and in developing citizenship. No home and no school should be without music. Music will keep boys and girls at home when parental preferences fail. The study and practice of music develops the child mentally and physically. It makes the boy or girl more nimble of mind, trains him to think rapidly and accurately, trains the eye and the ear; teaches discipline. Music is more than refining. It is practical. Gradually music is getting on the curriculum of public and high schools. The Free Press, ever alert for the introduction of departments of interest and profit to its readers, has arranged for a series of musical talks by Prof. C. G. Laugher, teacher of music and signing in the public schools of Bowmanville. The series was written to help the musical development of his town, and particularly for the benefit of the children. We believe our readers will appreciate this series of musical articles, which commences this week and will be continued for several months. If musical development among the young folks of Acton and vicinity results the Free Press will feel amply repaid for the steps taken to secure the interesting articles.



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FAMILY DISCIPLINE

Family discipline seems to be almost a lost art in these days. Doubtless it should be recovered and made a fine art. It would be an interesting question how much of the spirit of lawlessness prevailing in the world today is due to the inability to manage government and the disregard to parental authority permitted during childhood. If statistics were obtainable—of course they are not—they would probably show a real and vital connection between the two things.

Perhaps no better or severer test of the quality of true parentage is possible than the ability to administer sound discipline in a sane and helpful way. It should be always vindictive, but never vindictive; punitive only so far as punishment tends to be a rebuke of evil past and a deterrent to evil future. At no time should a parent be more careful regarding his own state of thought and feeling than when it is necessary to punish his child. Never should discipline be administered in passion or irritation or without consideration of the mental and nervous condition of the offender.

"For lack of such considerations punishment which is just and necessary may become needless and unnecessary brutality. Children sometimes intuitively sense the psychological situation better than their elders. 'Do you know why I whipped you?' asked a mother, with intent of enforcing the moral of the chastisement. 'Yes,' was the sullen reply; 'you liked me 'cos you was mad.' And perhaps that was pretty near the truth of the matter. Little brother, broke a valuable vase, and little sister, 'told on him.' 'Yes, mamma, I broke it,' said the trembling culprit. 'Let's be sorry, but don't let's be mad.'"

Another little boy fell in the mud, hurting himself and soiling his clean suit. His mother impatiently ordered him to come into the house, promise him a whipping for his carelessness. 'Please, mamma, don't whip me till it gets dark hurting,' sobbed the little fellow pathetically. There was logic and sound reason as well as pathos in his plea. If punishment for carelessness was necessary, surely an open question, it would surely have been justly administered to while every nerve and muscle of the little body were quivering with pain—Exchange.

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The column presided over by "The Old Man of the Big Clock Tower" has been a marked success.

Letters of congratulation to this versatile old writer have been numerous. When this venerable old gentleman requested space for a contribution every week, some months ago, we were just a little dubious as to how our readers would take to this kind of writing, but the result has been wonderful. One day we ask him how long he considered he could continue his writings and historical happenings of the town, and to use his own words, he informed us, "As long as my rheumatics behave and Mary doesn't register a kick. It'll take me a year at least, at the rate I'm going."

And as long as he cares to write we will certainly be delighted to give our readers his jottings from week to week.

But Here's the Point

Here is assured one solid year's contributions by this writer, along with our usual interesting local features. To get the full benefits of "The Old Man's" writings it seems as if not a single number should be missed. We are now besieged for back numbers for friends. The only sure way of not missing an issue is to subscribe for the Free Press at once. Back copies of issues are uncertain and single copies are not always available. Tell your old friends about the features of the local paper—the Free Press—show them a copy of the "Old Man's" writings and the results will help us continue to encourage the "Old Man" and give him more space if the response justifies it. It will mean about—

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