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Our Ottawa Letter.

The Federal Parliament has been called to meet on the 1st of February and there is no reasonable doubt that this will be the last session before a general election. Both political parties may therefore be relied upon to strain every effort in the Legislative arena to make a favorable impression on the electorate. That the policy of the Government will be fairly and frankly discussed upon its merits is almost too much to be hoped for; the course pursued by Oppositionists on the public platform and in the press during the last four or five months gives no indication of any change in this respect, and there is therefore every promise of a bitter, and it is to be feared somewhat unedifying session. We have been much inclined lately to pride ourselves on the progress we are making as a people in the development of our national attributes, and upon the rapidity with which we are modelling our institutions upon British lines, but we are a long way yet from the desired goal. In no respect have we more to learn and greater improvement to make than in the working of our system of party government. The way in which party lines are absolutely obliterated in the presence of national danger has never been so well exemplified in the history of Great Britain as it has this fall, and it would indeed be a tremendous step forward if our Canadian statesmen, of all shades of politics, could be induced to resolutely follow the example set them by the statesmen of the Old Land.

PEACE AND WAR.

The past two weeks have been a strange mixture of peace and war, for in the Capital of the Dominion in common with other parts of the empire the anniversary of the Nativity of the Prince of Peace has been observed in the midst of stern and all absorbing preparations for war. It is nearly half a century since the empire passed through similar experience, in fact it is one practically without precedent in the life of the present generation.

As far as the Dominion is concerned the incidents attending the mobilizing of the second contingent are largely a repetition of what occurred two months ago. There is the same prompt, thorough and efficient official action, the same abundance of the very best material from which to select the men, the same eagerness to enlist, and the same popular enthusiasm in the community to do everything in its power to show interest in and appreciation for the brave fellows who are to represent Canada on the battle-field. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that all these features in connection with the second contingent are more marked than they were before, nor is this to be wondered at for the situation has greatly changed in the interval, and the fact is realized to-day as it was not then, that the empire has a task before it demanding its best efforts to satisfactorily adjust.

CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD.

The following extract from the London times is an excellent indication of the improvement which has developed in the Old Country in the proper understanding of the attitude of Canada in imperial matters. The Times says: "It is quite plain that the eyes of our fellow-subjects in North America are riveted on South Africa. Nor are we left in any doubt as to the nature of the interest thus keenly excited; it is sympathetic and even enthusiastic for the British cause. This more than friendly attitude is not dictated by any belief that Canadian interests are directly involved in the affairs of South Africa. The present and well-nigh universal feeling seems to be not only that the British quarrel is a righteous one, and not merely that Canadians would be uncharitable to stand aside while we are struggling to confer on South Africa the just government and equal rights which Canada has long enjoyed, but that the British Empire is an organic whole, that the interests of one part are the interests of all, and that a blow struck at the South African branch of the Imperial family is one which every other branch of that family is bound in its own interests to resist."

Victoria Square

The Christmas Tree entertainment held in the church on the 23rd of Dec. was a great success, the best yet given. Rev. N. Wellwood occupied the chair in a creditable manner, and a good programme was presented. The church was beautifully decorated, and with the Ferris Wheel laden with candies and presents made a lovely appearance. The cantata, "Santa Claus Entertained," was well given, and the committee, Mr. Ed. Forester, Mr. C. Sanderson and Miss Jessie Brown, who trained the children, deserve great credit for their work. As usual Mr. Ed. Forester made an ideal Santa Claus. The door receipts amounted to \$30. On the following afternoon Rev.

Mr. Wellwood preached special sermons to the children, who were seated on the platform and who read responsively with the minister.

At the close of Clayton School, No. 12, Markham, on the 21st ult., for the holidays, Miss Jessie A. Brown, who taught the school successfully for the past seven years, was presented by her pupils with a lovely bracelet. The presentation was accompanied by the following address:

DEAR TEACHER,—As the time has now arrived when you are to end your connection with us as a teacher, we wish to convey to you in some way our feeling of regret at our separation. For seven years you have been unceasing in your efforts to benefit us. In addition to your attention to the duties which belong to every teacher, you have given much time and thought to make our attendance at school a pleasure. As a slight token of our love for you we ask you to accept this present. We ask you to accept it purely as a remembrance of the happy days which we have spent in this school under your care. In bidding you good-bye we hope you will have every success in whatever position you may be placed in the future.

Signed on behalf of the school.
EDITH NOBLE,
JEAN BRUCE.

Hope

The anniversary services in connection with the church here were very successful. On Sunday, Dec. 31st, sermons were preached to large congregations by Rev. R. J. Fallis of Weston.

On New Year's Day a grand oyster supper was served in the school house, and afterwards a musical and literary programme was rendered in the church. The musical part of the entertainment was given by local talent, and Master Georgie Boyce of Toronto, played a couple of organ solos. He also gave a recitation and was warmly applauded.

The elocutionists, Miss Eva Petch, of Aurora, and Miss Emma Byam of Maple, were listened to with close attention, and were heartily encored after each selection. Miss Petch's first selection, a patriotic selection entitled "Ordered to the Front," is worthy of special mention. Short addresses were given by the pastors. The ladies provided so plentifully that it was found necessary to have a social on Tuesday evening, when a pleasant time was spent. The proceeds amounted to \$126.

The Best Work on South Africa.

From the Guelph Daily Herald of Dec. 20.

The war in South Africa has caused several publishers to advertise forthcoming histories of that country. We have several of the prospectus books before us. One is from the pen of a newspaper correspondent who was in South Africa a short time ago, but it is not there at all now. Another is a rehash of Livingstone's and Stanley's travels, with a few engravings and pages added. Apparently newspaper reports and paste and scissors are relied on to make up nearly all such forthcoming books on South Africa. But we are glad to know that South Africa, with the added interest of the war, is going to be the subject of one first-class book by the best known authors of the present day, and that the same is not being run through with lightning speed, but has been in preparation for several years. John Clarke Ridpath, L.L.D., author of "Cyclopaedia of Universal History," "Life and Times of Gladstone," "History of the World," etc., is undoubtedly the best American historian living, and the equal of any historian of any land. He is assisted by Edward S. Ellis, M. A., author of the Standard History of the United States, a work that has made Mr. Ellis a world wide reputation. A considerable part had already been written when hostilities commenced, and a great number of photographs and drawings obtained while official sources were easy of access.

As war became a certainty, arrangements were made for direct correspondence as to the progress of events. The work will excel all others as a record of the war, and be incomparable in other respects. It will be profusely and handsomely illustrated. There will be about 150 full page, half tone engravings, executed in a style superior to that of the largest American magazines, and certainly in striking and beautiful contrast to the illustrations in the other prospectuses that we have seen. These will comprise scenes in South Africa, and sketches of the great battles—many of which have been sent from South Africa direct to the publishers—life like portraits of Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, Col. Otter, Gen. Joubert, Paul Kruger, and other prominent commanders of the British and Boer forces. Of special interest will be the section devoted to the Canadian contingent, which will

be from the pen of Mr. J. A. Cooper managing editor of the Canadian Magazine, and one of the ablest writers in the Dominion. There will be twenty full page illustrations of the first Canadian contingent, and equal justice will be done the second contingent now in course of organization. A comparison of the prospectus of this book by the side of several others before us, shows at a glance its great superiority in paper, printing, engraving and binding, and yet the price is no higher than the others. The work is being published jointly by two of the largest and wealthiest publishing firms in the United States, and a Canadian edition is being issued by The World Publishing Company of Guelph, Canada; a firm that publishes only the best books, a firm that has exported millions of books to foreign countries, and has sent five hundred men to Australia, and that has had a branch house in South Africa for the last nineteen years, which gives it an immense advantage over any rival publisher in securing photographs and material, an article from its representative being a special feature.

The maps contained in the work are the best we have yet seen of South Africa. Surely a fortune awaits the publishing firm, and a rich harvest for the agents on such a book and at such a time. The call for agents by The World Publishing Company of Guelph, Ont., for this great work, will be found in another column.

Vinegar Hill

Mr. Shierk of Stayner, is spending a few days with Mr. Elias Nigh. Douglas and Alfred Read have spent their holidays in Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Nelson of Valentia, are spending the Christmas holidays with their parents.

Mrs. Beatty is visiting her son, Mr. W. Beatty.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Nigh of Kettleby, are visiting the former's father.

Mr. Geo. Forester went to Toronto last Thursday to try for the championship of the Dominion Off-Hand Rifle Association, but as he had to come away before the shooting was over the result is unknown to him.

The following is the report of S. S. No. 4, Markham:

Senior Third—Elsie Brillinger, Ada Hoover.

Junior Third—Maggie Cosgrove, E. Hoover, Joseph Hunt, Stewart Read, Russell Williams.

Senior Second—Foster Hickson, A. Nigh, Alie Rand.
Sr. Part Second—Cora Brillinger, E. Cosgrove, Clarence Doner, E. Hunt, Alex. Williams.

Municipal Elections

Mayor of Toronto—E. A. Macdonald.

King Township—Reeve, S. Lemon; Councillors, T. H. Legge, Gallagher, Burns, Rogers.

Aurora—Councillors, T. H. Lennox, W. J. Knowles, D. E. Rogers, A. E. Taylor, W. Winter, J. Anderson.

Toronto Junction—Mayor, P. Laugh-ton.

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