

# The Charlottetown Guardian

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## OPPOSITION HOLLOWNESS EXPOSED

Mr. Bell's vote of censure upon the government in connection with the Public Accounts recoiled beautifully upon his own head and upon those of his colleagues. His contention was that the Provincial Auditor's report should contain an itemized statement of the amount paid to each individual with respect to roads and bridges.

Mr. Bell neglected to inform the gallery, for whose detection this criticism was given, that an itemized statement of all such expenditures is placed before and should be minutely examined by the Public Accounts Committee of the House; that he himself, appointed at his own insistent request, and two other members of the Opposition are members of that Committee; he forgot to inform the gallery that although he insisted upon being appointed a member of the committee he never attended one of the meetings and that at only one of the four meetings held during the session was there a single Opposition member of the Committee present. If there were any objections to raise or any question to be asked concerning these individual expenditures, Mr. Bell had his opportunity at these meetings, but he neglected his duty and blamed the government for not supplying him with an itemized statement which he could peruse at his leisure or waste the time of the House in expatiating upon for the benefit of the gallery.

He charged in the second place that the External Auditor accepted the Provincial Auditor's statement with reference to the accounts, without satisfying himself as to their accuracy—a most childish as well as a most unjust charge to bring against a reputable and responsible Banker whose signature stands for his reputation for professional accuracy and honesty. Mr. Bell did not tell the gallery, what even the gallery knew, that no reputable Banker would certify to the accuracy of any document without fully satisfying himself as to what he was certifying to and that all the books and documents bearing in any way upon the Public Accounts were placed at his disposal, that without such, no reputable banker would undertake an audit.

The emptiness of Mr. Bell's contention was made so clear by the Premier that even Mr. Bell himself finally appreciated it, but the climax came when Mr. McNeven read his amendment showing how unfaithfully Mr. Bell had discharged his duties as a member of the Public Accounts Committee which he insisted upon being appointed a member of in order that he might keep faithful watch over the expenditures of the province. He never attended a single meeting of the Committee and when brought to book for his neglect put up the puerile plea that he was too busy attending to his other legislative duties. It will be remembered that Mr. Bell's name was not on the first draft made by the government of the personnel of the Public Accounts Committee, whereupon Mr. Bell roundly abused the government for their neglect. It was explained to him then that the reason his name was not in the draft was that it was presumed he would be too busy with his legislative duties to attend meetings of the Committee but he insisted and his name and that of Mr. Saunders were substituted for the two originally appointed. Mr. Saunders attended one meeting; Mr. Bell did not show up at any of them and he now attempts to censure the government for not providing him with a special edition of accounts and vouchers which he could have enjoyed the full use of if he had taken the trouble to attend the meetings of the Committee, or if he had known enough at the beginning of the Session to take the government's advice and put an Opposition member on the Committee who could attend to his duties.

This debate shows the extreme hollowness of the Opposition's criticisms of the Government's finances and the outcry they made about the all importance of the Leader of the Opposition being a member of the Public Accounts Committee. In Mr. Bell's favorite phrase, "the public will judge for themselves" in this matter and their verdict will not be in favour of Mr. Bell and his colleagues.

## QUEBEC AND THE TWO PARTIES

There have been two by-elections in the Province of Quebec since 1911: in both cases the result being Conservative victory. This notable fact draws attention to something most people seem inclined to forget; that ever since 1904 the hold of the Liberal party upon Quebec has been steadily relaxing.

The year 1904 marked the high tide of Liberalism in Quebec. In the general election of that year Quebec gave the Liberals 147,239 votes as against 109,821 for the Conservatives—a Liberal popular majority in round numbers of 37,000.

In the general election of 1908 the Liberals polled 153,303 votes—a gain over 1904 of 6,154. The Conservatives polled 129,364 votes—a gain over 1904 of 19,543. Whereas in 1904 the Liberals had a popular

majority in the province of 37,000, in 1908 had fallen to 24,029.

In 1911 the falling off in the Liberal vote was even more notable. The Liberals polled in 1911 164,274 votes—a gain over 1908 of 10,881. The Conservatives polled 159,292—a gain over 1908 of 29,928. Whereas in 1908 the popular Liberal majority in the province was 24,029, in 1911 it was reduced to 10,899.

These figures indicate as impressively as anything can that during the past 14 years Laurierism in Quebec has steadily declined. Between 1904 and 1911 the popular Liberal vote in Quebec increased by only 17,000. In the same period the Conservative vote increased by about 50,000. Two elections in the five years that have since intervened have resulted in Conservative victories.

These facts offer stern challenge to those who talk of a Liberal sweep in Quebec when the two parties again battle at the polls.

## OUR STREET SIDES

It appears that after all that has been said about the beautifying of our City, the care of our street sides and front lawns, that the truckman or the driver of a delivery wagon is strictly within his rights as a citizen when he drives over these and cuts them up into unsightly stretches of earth and matted and trampled grass; that there is no redress for the owner of a lawn when he finds that what he has prided himself upon beautifying is utterly destroyed, except to arm himself with a club and stand guard—which might lead to serious consequences. Successive City Councils in their law making have neglected to make provision for the care of street sides. There is no law prohibiting driving loads or carriages, Spring or Summer, over the boulevards or street sides within the City and our teamsters are taking such advantage of the fact that many of these are ruined Spring after Spring and, instead of being green, beautiful swards of which the City might well be proud, remain grassless and unsightly throughout the greater part of the Summer.

A bye-law forbids driving on the grass in Victoria Park, but in the City there is no such provision. Many have built temporary barricades to protect their own lawns but even these are not always respected. The absence of a bye-law in this respect is, we feel assured, not due to any desire on the part of the City Councilors to have this vandalism perpetuated, but rather through an oversight and we trust they will lose no time, now that it has been brought to their attention, in making it a penal offence to drive off the streets except where there is a legal thoroughfare. Charlottetown has streets whose beauty would compare more than favourably with those of most Canadian cities—if properly cared for. As they are at present many of them are an eyesore and a disgrace. We trust the necessary bye-law will be enacted at the earliest possible moment as nothing short of legal action will effect a cure.

## TEARING ASIDE THE VEIL

A few days after the United States declared the existence of a state of war with Germany, the Kaiser called upon his Chancellor for proposals looking to the reform of the Prussian electoral law and alleged that at the beginning of the war he had ordered "preliminary work" to be done with such reform in mind. Herr Harden is skeptical. He is too polite or too cautious to resort to the use of the word short and ugly, but he says there is no evidence that any such order was issued and he might as well have called himself an infidel, seeing that it is a species of infidelity to doubt or to question Imperial veracity, even by implication. There is a divinity that doth hedge, etc.

This peculiar manifestation of Harden's permitted Kultur to be told in print, that Germany's fate depends not upon bits of territory lost or won, but upon the acquisition of a higher spirituality. Also, it permitted a presentment setting forth that the will of the German people must be free, so that they may light up the German house.

Herr Harden did not describe this house as being in darkness, but he called attention to the facts that Bagdad is English, that wide acres of French soil are once more in possession of the French and that 100,000,000 people desiring for themselves neither land nor money, nor even repayment of the cost of the war, have joined the "crusade" against the Central Empires.

As it never rains but it pours, Count Reventlow caps a climax: "Without a German victory, the German monarchy will soon cease to exist." There is a corollary for nothing succeeds like success—nothing fails like failure. German remonstrants can now say with safety what would have opened prison doors for them a few months ago. That censorship should be relaxed for outputs such as these, tearing aside the sacred veil, impregnated with the gall and wormwood of the bitterest truths, is more than suggestive of fright in high places. It is indicative of panic.

## NOTES

German troops are moving toward the Russian front, or at least are being moved in that direction by Nivelles and Haig.

"Hindenburg," explains the New York Times, "drew back one fist, intending to lunge with the other. Before he could do it the British hit him on the point of the jaw."

The routing of Turkish armies seems to be a common achievement for the British forces in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. There was one period of the war when such victories would have been a sensation of the first magnitude. Now they are regarded almost as a matter of course.

## AGITATED FOR REVOLT TO GET PEACE EXCUSE

LONDON, April 22.—Under the title "Tomorrow in Russia," the Times says: "A competent observer who witnessed the revolution in Russia, has furnished the following account of the episodes of the revolution, and present outlook in Russia:

Reflections of the recent changes in Russia, growing in a sense from the perspective lent by geographical distance, serve only to increase the feeling that the revolution was of the most astonishing and almost miraculous events of modern history. Even now it is difficult to say exactly how that came about. It undoubtedly was the work of the people and the army, but had it been possible to ask the people or the army ten days before it occurred whether there would be a revolution, it is by no means certain that is what the reply would have been.

## An Excuse for Peace

One thing certain is that the reactionaries, led by the Empress and Protopopoff, Minister of the Interior, were bent on promoting a disturbance in Petrograd and elsewhere. Of this fact there is irrefutable evidence. Not only had a state of famine been deliberately engineered in Petrograd and other cities with the object of provoking disturbances which the reactionaries were prepared to turn to account as a pretext for the conclusion of peace favorable to Germany, but Protopopoff had appointed a prefect of Petrograd, with instructions to organize disturbances.

So generally was the organization of these disturbances known to the police that when an influential personage reached Petrograd by train on the morning of the day when they were to occur, and finding no conveyance at the station and called a policeman to get him a carriage the policeman replied, "Certainly, it is not yet midnight and it does not begin until 2 o'clock."

## Fired at Spectators

What it meant was apparent when at the hour appointed thousands of police agents dressed as workmen appeared on the streets and began to demonstrate. At first the people took no part in them. It was only when the police agents stationed in attics and in other points of vantage began to fire upon genuine crowds that the masses began to react. It should be said the secret police agents had previously visited munition factories and ordered the men to cease work. In one factory where the reply was made that they were being done for the war and could not be stopped, the agents answered that the factory would be dynamited. The workmen then threatened to complain to the Government, and the agents withdrew, laughing significantly.

The actual course of the revolution in Petrograd need not be recounted. People rapidly perceived the nature of the Government plan and became exasperated. When 200 machine guns were discovered in one single depot with the idea that these machine guns should be kept for use against themselves when the regiments at the front were short of such weapons, it caused the utmost indignation.

The police became objects of popular fury, and when the police headquarters were stormed and the arches burned the movement became irresistible. It is difficult for western Europe to appreciate the curious mental angle of vision of the Russian people. There is a simple idealism among them that must be experienced to be believed.

## Wouldn't be Free

Take, for instance, the conduct of a large number of convicts in one of the big prisons. The revolution liberated not only the political prisoners, but condemned malefactors. When the convicts of one prison were told they were free they answered, "We have no right to be free. We committed crimes, and must expiate them." Straightway they elected wardens from among their number, and swore to obey them and hang any man who attempted to escape. It was a common experience that, when soldiers of the garrison or armed civilians executed or shot police agents, they immediately sought out a priest, confessed their deeds, and asked absolution.

## DAILY SELECTIONS FOR GUARDIAN READERS

Furnished by W. S. Louson,

## NOW, ALTOGETHER, DIG!

Philadelphia Ledger: This spring is destined to see an expansion of the vegetable garden under private cultivation to an unprecedented extent. The man with the hoe instead of being a remote and isolated target of will be domesticated in every suburban household, and even in city back yards he will be found engaged in making a dozen tomato plants grow where only the clothes-tree flourished before. It is time for everybody to raise something besides prices. There is one ozone for the golf links and the garden; there is raking exercise to be found with the rake as well as with the racket. The market-garden monopolist, keen to set a fancy price on his Jerusalem artichokes or his Brussels sprouts because Jerusalem and Brussels are involved in the war, will have to abate his exorbitant demand for home-grown green goods will flaunt their lustrous foliage in his mercenary eyes. Many who never knew it before are finding the joy of life in the outdoor toil that rivals the blissful productivity of Eden.

"There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick, there's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick, But it can find some useful job that's crying to be done, For the Glory of the Garden glorifies every one."

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Similar traits of child-like simplicity were noticeable even among the soldiers, who demanded the right of electing their own officers. They understood that officers required treatment different from that of men, and wished to elect the most capable on condition, however, that the men should be entitled to dismiss the officers if the officers failed in the military duty.

## Don't Regret the Czar

But the most astonishing feature of the whole revolution was the revelation of the weakness of the Czar's hold upon the people, peasants and workmen alike. He was nothing to them—hardly even a name. I have visited several parts of the country since the revolution, and nowhere found regret over the abdication of the Czar.

## The Peasants

The peasants seem scarcely to have been affected by the propaganda of a free distribution of land, but have in many places expressed a wish to be allowed to buy land at fair prices from the Government.

## Pray for Duma

It is true, one peasant woman whom I saw, wept on hearing of the abdication of the Czar. "How shall we now say our prayers?" she asked tearfully. It was explained that she could pray to the Duma. This substitution of the word "Duma" for that of the Czar is now widespread in Russia. Outside Petrograd, especially in the north towards Finland, I saw shocking proofs of the wickedness of the late Government in attempting to create an artificial famine. At one place a huge building was crammed with sacks of flour, but the roof was gone, and snow covered the flour with damp, and ruined the whole stock, which must have been worth a large sum.

## Cattle Starved to Death

Again, when a delegate to the Duma was announcing to the peasants the fall of Czarism, explaining that they henceforth would enjoy political liberty, they said: "Then if we are free we no longer have to see cattle die." Enquiry revealed the fact that in this one district 1,700 head of cattle had been collected by the authorities and starved to death. Every peasant who attempted to bring food to the famished beasts was being chased away by guards. This was within a comparatively short distance of Petrograd, where meat was at famine prices.

The most interesting personality of the old regime was certainly the Empress. The Emperor was thoroughly anti-German and probably the Empress was anti-Ally, and pro-German not so much out of love for the Germans as because she believed her mission was to maintain an absolute monarchy in Russia for the sake of her husband and son, and thought Germany was much less dangerous in this respect than England. She would say Germans must be chastised, but she was ready to cede a certain amount of territory to them if she could thereby secure an early peace and save absolutism.

## STRIKES WEAKEN GERMAN DEFENCES.

LONDON, April 22.—A message sent by Field Marshal von Hindenburg to General Groener, head of the German munitions department, with reference to strike in industrial communities has been received here by wireless from Berlin. Field Marshal von Hindenburg says he recognized that the population has been hit hard by the reduction of the bread ration, but that undoubtedly delivery of potatoes will

compensate therefor. While he is convinced that the authorities will see the proper distribution of food-stuffs, the Field Marshal said: "I am, therefore, quite unable to see how the food situation can be made the ground for strikes by workers while our present position, on the western front, which must be fought out there, demands an undiminished production of war supplies of all kinds. This is the first task and takes precedence over all others."

"Every strike, however small, may be the means of an unjustifiable weakening of our defensive force and is an excusable crime against the fighting force, especially the

men in the trenches who bleed in consequence." A Reuter despatch from Amsterdam says that von Hindenburg concludes his message by asking General Groener to see that all means are employed to continue the production and despatch of arms and munitions and also to have the necessary explanation given the armament workers to that end which "in my opinion appears the principal condition for attaining our great aim."

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