

# The Charlottetown Guardian

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1916.

## FOREST PROTECTION

The repeated cries for "more production" in order to enhance the wealth of Canada are apt to cloud the fact that prevention by waste by Governments themselves is the most direct and obvious means of filling the country's purse.

When one knows that the Governments issuing the admonition are themselves fully empowered to eliminate waste in such assets as agricultural and forest lands, the proposition to fill a leaky pail loses some of its reasonableness.

Ontario's forest fires this year represented a straight loss of about six million dollars in the Clay-belt alone, counting only the immediate property damage. The fires in Quebec certainly will show a substantial financial injury. Were all the provinces and the federal government to add their forest fire debits, after a complete and frank survey of destroyed areas, the result would illustrate the fallacy of trying to make an extra million out of wheat and at the same time tossing away its equivalent in preventable forest fires.

The growing forests represent the easiest money Canada ever will lay her hands on. No less than seven and a half millions a year are paid into provincial and federal treasuries each year from timber operations. Five thousand industries look to living forests for their supplies. Our mines, fisheries, agriculture, are helpless without the co-operation of a cheap wood supply. When we abandon the guardianship of this precious pillar of our prosperity to the fire fiend himself, we betray the interests of present and future. "More production" as far as the forest assets of Canada are concerned, means nothing until the responsible provincial and federal governments provide "more protection."

## THE QUEBEC BRIDGE

While the Quebec Bridge looked like an assured success, while engineers, senators, members of parliament and the dominion generally were being invited to see the triumph of engineering crowned, the Liberal press claimed the credit for the achievement for the Laurier government.

When the centre span went to the bottom of the St. Lawrence the tune changed with a suddenness, equalled only by the collapse of the bridge itself. The Toronto Globe, which did the early shouting, undertook to lecture the Borden government on the situation, as follows:

"Coming at a time when Canada's financial and industrial capacity is subjected to the heavy strain of war, the disaster is specially unfortunate. The deplorable loss of life is beyond human remedy, and this brings a sadness that no financial loss could occasion. This should make the Dominion government all the more determined to profit by the repeated lesson, both in avoiding attempts at the impossible and in taking adequate precautions against errors in design or operation that lead to disaster."

Commenting on the Globe's credit and debit comments, the Ottawa Citizen says in part:

The Globe's claim of Monday morning that the Laurier government was entirely responsible for all designs, plans and contracts in connection with the Quebec bridge is quite correct.

The Laurier administration began in 1898 by giving a big subsidy to a practically bogus company to construct the bridge. This company—"The Quebec Bridge Company" was its title—put up in actual cash from first to last just \$15,400. The company was practically an association of politicians. The Laurier government began by subsidizing them with a million dollars.

By 1903 the Quebec Bridge Company was in a bad way. Its paid up capital was nominally \$65,000, but of this no less than \$49,600 was represented by fees which had been credited to directors, and then paid back by them for stock. The total real money paid for stock, was, as already said, \$15,400. The company owed \$779,550, and had obligations amounting to \$7,500,000. The Laurier government stepped in nobly. It agreed to guarantee bonds to the amount of \$6,678,000, and although it took power to appoint directors to the company's board, it let the company blaze away. As early as 1898, Mr. Douglas, a government engineer, had criticized the bridge plans. No notice was taken. In 1903, when the bonds were guaranteed, Mr. Collingwood Schreiber advised the appointment of a bridge expert, Mr. Nichols, to supervise the plans and construction. He was appointed, but the bridge company kicked, and Mr. Nichols never acted. Then in 1907 the bridge fell down. The net loss to the Dominion treasury which resulted was nearly eight million dollars.

At this stage what did the Laurier government do?  
 1. Took over the whole undertaking as a government work—as it should have been from the beginning. Why lavish millions on a bogus company which had not even an indirect railway interest on either side of the river?

2. Assumed all the liabilities of the Quebec Bridge Company—bonds, debts, etc.  
 3. Paid back to the shareholders of the Quebec Bridge Company the par value of their stock, which by various processes had been increased to \$265,000; together with interest at 5 per cent. to December, 1908, and a bonus of 10 per cent. Total \$555,279.  
 4. Paid to the Bank of Montreal interest on company's loans \$880,687 and interest on interest in arrears, \$75,673.

The exact total loss to the Dominion treasury was 7,784,275, beside \$31,765 which it had to pay in investigating the mess.

Then the Laurier administration launched into its next effort. Plans were made by a government commission of engineers for a new bridge. Tenders were invited from all-comers. But in the stipulations calling for tenders was inserted a clause that any company desiring to tender might not only do so upon the basis of the government plans but might send in an alternative plan of its own, with a tender for the work. This peculiar and unusual proviso resulted in a contract for the St. Lawrence Bridge Company, which sent in an alternative plan. For this, naturally, there was no competition—other companies, of excellent standing, had sent in tenders for the work under the government plans, but knowing nothing about the St. Lawrence Bridge Company's alternative plan, they of course, could not tender for that. And the Laurier government, disregarding the designs of a commission of expert engineers appointed by itself accepted the St. Lawrence Bridge Company's alternative plan, and accepted the company's figure for that work without further competition.

The story of this second contract for the bridge throws a side light upon the Globe's unctuous paragraph, "The plans were prepared for the present contractors, the St. Lawrence Bridge Company, which secured the contract in the face of keen competition and obstinate opposition." As a matter of fact there was no competition, and any "obstinate opposition" was simply protest against the absence of competition. Assuredly, as the Globe claimed on Monday morning, the Laurier government, that famous "business administration," is entitled to all the credit for and the total cost to Canada from first to last has been \$20,043,578.

## GERMAN CASUALTIES CONCEALED

We give the following, clipped from a United States paper, as it may be regarded as a more unbiased comment on the subject dealt with than if it emanated from either of the belligerents:

"The British official casualty lists are as nearly correct as it is possible to make such lists under present war conditions. Like other official British reports, they invite full confidence. The report for August, therefore, forms a reliable basis of comparison and conjecture. In August 36,250 officers and men were killed or missing, and 96,838 were wounded, a total of 132,988. The British hold about 50 miles of front in Flanders and France, and the only big campaign waged by them in that month was on the Somme. Probably 90 per cent. of the casualties reported occurred in that offensive. But the Germans were fighting not only against the British, but against the French and Russians. At Verdun there was ceaseless slaughter. On the French section of the Somme front there were many desperate battles. The Germans had to reinforce the Austrians heavily in Galicia. There were many conflicts along the German front from the Priepet marshes. Russia brought at least two million troops to bear against German and Austrian armies on the Eastern front. And yet the official German casualty lists show losses in killed, wounded and missing, as only 100,000 more than Britain had, though the latter held a relatively small part of the war circle. The Germans admit 42,700 killed, 44,000 prisoners, 153,000 wounded, a total of 240,000. Is that reasonable, comparing the British losses? We can see daily the evasions and equivocations of the German General Staff's announcements to the German public. We know the German Admiralty has confessed brazenly that "for military reasons" the admission of battleship losses in the Jutland fight was withheld. Is there not equal reason for believing that the German War Office, as has often been charged by military experts, deliberately conceals the extent of German losses in order not to depress the people at home? The comparison of August casualties supports such a belief.

## NOTES

What are we doing for Canada comparable to what the men in the trenches are doing? Mark you this question will be asked of us frequently in the years to come.

There is only one way to make Canada great; that is to have all her citizens do some thinking about the country's problems. We have all been too prone to think of our individual prosperity. The country has done much for some. It is time they did more for the country.

It is the German people, as incarnated by their soldiers, who have carried off our daughters of the north captive and delivered them to the officers of the Kaiser. It is, therefore, against the German people as a whole that our race is making war, and not against any fiction of isolated imperialism. The Germans are alone responsible for their crimes, and any other conception of the present war would only lead us to degradation, dupery, and defeat. We must avenge the children of Roubaix and Lille—avenge them without mercy or pity. This is one of the works of France during the war; and for long afterwards—Paris, Figaro.

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## THE AUTOMOBILE IN P. E. ISLAND

Sir—Your report of the anti-automobile meeting of September 2nd, interested me greatly, because as a native of Prince Edward Island, I have never taken the greatest interest in all that concerns its welfare, and also because being the owner of an automobile I realize the extent of its usefulness.

The use of all great inventions that civilization and progress has brought forth has ever met with the most bitter and determined opposition, most invariably from the very ones who ultimately would reap the greatest benefit therefrom. And it is a sad thing indeed when a community must look for leadership in matters so vital to its interest, to people who are opposed to every form of progress.

In the state of Maine where autos are allowed the same freedom as other vehicles, they have proven a great source of income to the State; the total receipts for the year 1915, being, \$271,987, and for the year 1916, \$362,538, an increase of over \$80,000. This has made possible a number of improvements on the highways and bridges in this state, which otherwise would have been impossible.

In ten years more the roads of the state will be in perfect condition and will require but little expense for upkeep. This income which will in a few years have reacted to an enormous amount, will then be used for other public enterprises and will result in a great reduction in taxes resulting in great benefit to the poorer people.

The above income is derived solely from license fees paid in the State. Apart from that the owners pay a license tax which gives considerable revenue.

In Charlottetown and the surrounding places just a few weeks ago, and failed to find a single road wagon which could not be used conveniently by teams and autos alike. In a number of places in Maine not a road nor in better condition than the roads in that vicinity. It is my candid opinion that should the whole island be opened up freely for autos the income derived from licenses and taxes, would in a very

short time relieve the farmers of a considerable burden of taxation, and spell the prosperity of the island by attracting to it thousands of tourists and summer visitors each year. There is no doubt that in a very few years the island would be one of the popular summer resorts on the Atlantic coast.

Would it not be wise, citizens to get together and work for your interest and welfare instead of opposing progress? Think it over.  
 I am, Sir, etc.  
 M. J. M.

## LETTER FROM 105th

Sir—I thought I might interest the readers of your widely circulated paper to know something of the life of the boys of the 105th as having here. We are still in canvas tents but expect to be moved to Bramshot soon where we will be quartered in huts. Life as it is in the tents on the whole is very good. At 5.30 a. m. Reveille sounds and you come rubbing your eyes and playing it is going to be a wet day. You stick your head out of the tent door and see the sun rising clear over the hills and see the cooks bustling around the field kitchen and then comes the smell of burning bacon. Then comes the Orderly Corporal with his cheery shout of "anybody sick in here." And the answer comes "yes, man over in the corner there sick." The Corporal then takes his name, number and a lot of other things and tells him to fall in sick parade at 6.00 o'clock. Then there is all the blankets to fold up neat and pile out in front of the tent, the tent floor to be swept and all the kit bags and other possessions to be neatly packed around the wall. Next comes the Orderly Officer and the Sergeant-Major inspecting the tents.

If there is a tent with a dirty floor or the blankets not folded, the Officer asks "Who is in charge of this tent." "Lance-Corporal so and so" answers the Sergeant-Major. "Take his name for the Company Office," replies the Officer. At 6 a. m. bugle sounds (sick parade) and the Orderly Corporal parades the sick to the hospital where the doctor attends to their ailments. In the meantime we are shaving and polishing our buttons, equipment and boots. Then "cookhouse door" sounds and we all get our mess tins and line up before our field kitchen. Then "pick it up" sounds and the cooks start to dish out the breakfast two slices of bread and butter a tin of porridge, bacon and beans and a tin of tea. After eating that we go to the hot-water kettles and wash our tins and pack them away until noon. At 7.00 "dress for parade" sounds and about ten minutes later you hear the Sergeant-Major shouting "Fall in!" We fall in our respective platoons and our sergeants call the roll. Then comes the Orderly Sergeant who calls a list of names who are up for Company Office. They are paraded before the Capt. or Major and have their sentence passed, so many days "C. B." or "the Clink" as the case may be. Again they fall in with their platoons and the battalion is marched out for physical exercise for one hour when we come in again, put on our puttees, coats and belts, take rifles and bayonets and march out again and drill until 11.15 a. m.

## DAILY SELECTIONS FOR GUARDIAN READERS

Furnished by  
 W. S. Louson.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE HOME.

Home should be the happiest, brightest, cheeriest spot on earth. As life is what we make it, so also is home what we make it. The peaceful, happy home in some sequestered spot is love's abiding place. It may be but a tiny shack in a mining district, or a stately mansion in a great city. What makes the real home, the true home?

A man and wife who love each other, and who, together with the children, sent to bless their union, live in the love and fear of God; who speak out to one another and to the world, and keep their hands and hearts clean and give to the world the best they have, knowing the best will come back to them; who scorn to harbor a revengeful thought, who have their convictions without malice and who are big enough and brave enough to forgive and forget, when this is necessary.

Sometimes, of course, one may err; then cannot the other overlook it, or, if it is a real fault, help to overcome it? Blot out, as far as possible, the disagreeable things of life. Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday, start out with a clean page for today and write upon it, for sweet memory's sake, only those things which are lovely and lovable.

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VICTORIA ROW

At 12.30 when we are marched in and get our dinner which is the same performance as breakfast only we get roast beef, soup, potatoes and some kind of pudding. At 1.45 "Dress for Parade" again sounds and again we fall in and the roll is called. Maybe it is a route march for the afternoon, if so we march to our parade ground where the guard for the night falls out. (Continued on Page Six.)

## Always Be Prepared



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