

The Charlottetown Guardian

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Tuesday, January 1st, being New Year's Day, and a Statutory Holiday, the Morning Guardian will not be issued on Wednesday. The Evening Guardian will not be issued on Tuesday but will be published as usual on Wednesday. Advertisers please note these changes.

TUESDAY JANUARY 1st 1918.

THE NEW YEAR

In entering upon another new year it is natural to look backward as well as forward; backward towards those possessions and those conditions upon which the future is to be built; forward with renewed determination to profit by the errors and the successes of the past and to build more securely and in even greater faith.

In looking backward we look upon a year of extraordinary prosperity, prosperity founded largely upon our peculiar relation to the world war in which we are engaged. Our farms have yielded at least as abundantly as in our best average years, while prices were enormously increased by the demands of the war. One striking example of this increase is shown in the report of the Cheese Board published in yesterday's Guardian giving the range of prices since the organization of the Board in 1899. In that year cheese brought 9.10 cents per pound; last year it brought 20.80 cents. Pork, potatoes, cattle, sheep, and indeed all the products of the farms have increased proportionately in value so that from the standpoint of our greatest industry, we may look forward with confidence to the new year upon which we are entering, feeling assured that our soil and climate which have never failed us will yield the husbandman a profitable return for his labours.

Our fisheries also have been exceptionally good with one solitary exception. The failure of the oyster business has proved a serious loss to the province. The death of our oldest and most productive oyster beds is due to causes as yet unexplained, but nothing is now impossible to science and it may be that the disease which has worked such havoc may yet be discovered and overcome.

The fox business which at the outbreak of the war suffered a severe check is again re-established upon a sane and stable foundation, the foundation of real values and this industry now promises to be one of our most remunerative and profitable.

Politically there have been notable changes. On the retirement of Sir W. W. Sullivan from the Chief Justiceship, Hon. J. A. Mathieson, the Premier and Attorney-General, was appointed to the position. The retirement of Premier Mathieson who had been leader of the Conservative party since 1903 and Premier of the province since 1911, was an almost irremediable loss to the political forces of the province. The position of Premier he filled with exceptional ability and to the great advantage of the province, settling once for all the vexed question of representation in the Commons and securing an annual subsidy of \$100,000 a year besides an increased share of the agricultural grant. Many other provincial questions he brought to a point and either settled outright or paved the way for settlement. His promotion to the highest judicial appointment in the province is looked upon as an honour well deserved and well earned, and he is certain to bring to the discharge of his new duties the same painstaking diligence and sound judgment for which he had been noted in the premiership.

He is succeeded in the Premiership by his first lieutenant, Hon. A. E. Arseneault, who has already given promise of winning a high place in the political life of the province and has been credited by the Opposition press as being of Dominion Cabinet calibre.

With this casual retrospect we pass on to contemplate the year that is before us, the year on whose threshold we enter today. What holds it in store for us? The Twentieth Century has been truly described as a century of sorrow. We have but to recall the Titanic and Empress of Ireland disasters, the Mexican troubles, the Jamaica hurricane, the Chinese floods and rebellion, the great world war and the overthrow of dynasties, the more recent disaster at Halifax and that of the present week at Guatemala. Will the year that we have entered hold for us any similar catastrophes or will the darkness of disaster

be dispelled and a brighter era dawn for mankind?

Some authorities, including Sir George Reid, ex-Commissioner of Australia in London, prophesy that peace will be concluded before another Christmas. He bases his optimism on the desperate domestic conditions prevailing in Austria and in the Balkans and says that the social disaffection will permeate Germany before 1918 is far advanced. We hope Sir George is right, but we feel that if peace is declared it will be more the result of the new battalions which our Ally, the United States, and ourselves will be able to pour in to support and assist the valiant European Allies. We cannot penetrate the future. At best we can only attempt to interpret the signs of the times and judging by these we are afraid peace is a long way off and that we in Canada in common with the peoples of the world in general will have to endure considerable and ever increasing hardship before relief is obtained. The Food Controllers of the United States, Great Britain and Canada all warn us that in the coming year conservation will be followed by restrictions which will make waste practically impossible. The food required by the armies at the front makes demands upon us which can be met only by the greatest economy by the state and by the individual. These restrictions are being imposed gradually and are therefore not felt to be revolutionary, but almost every day now special editions of the Canada Gazette are issued containing proclamations regarding restrictions in the use of food-stuffs and other necessities of life.

As a province we seem to be providentially safe-guarded in the matter of food production, but should an unfavourable year be experienced we would not fare much better than other parts of Canada. We do not wish to close on this New Year's morning on a note of pessimism. Let us be thankful for the blessings we enjoyed in the past year and hope that these will be continued in abundant measure during the year on which we have entered.

GOVERNMENT AND RAILWAYS

As a parting fling for 1917, and as a New Year welcome for 1918, the Patriot abuses the Union Government for the increase of 15 per cent. in freight and passenger rates. The Union government has just as much to do with the increase as the Patriot had, and our contemporary knows it. Freight rates are governed by the Board of Railway Commissioners and are not influenced in any way by politics or governments. The Board in handing down its decision says: "there can be no question in view of actual results, that the railways require greater revenue and must have it, if proper efficiency is to be maintained, and the demands of the country for transportation at all adequately met."

Costs of labor, coal and materials have been increasing with the result that the expenses of the Canadian roads are mounting at a much swifter rate than earnings. The increased rates allowed, the judgment states, certainly will not equal the increase in costs to which the railways are subject and which are not in any way attributable to the railway management.

With regard to the increase in passenger rates, the judgment states that "it is in the public interest with a view to conserving coal, railway facilities and manpower that passenger travel should be as light as possible, so as to facilitate efficient freight movement."

As to the Government taking over the railways in Canada as in the United States the Patriot ignores the fact that the Government owns, or largely controls practically all the railways except the C.P.R. and if that were taken over for management during the war the same as the railways in the United States, the Government would have to guarantee the C.P.R. a net operating income "equal to the average net income of the three years preceding June 30, 1917." That is, the C.P.R. would take no risks whatever and the Government would pay the dividends and reserves averaged during the past three years, making good all losses out of general revenue. This has been done in the United Kingdom as well as in the United States, but the object is not to reduce freights, but to control traffic in the interest of war transportation. Under this system commercial freight has no claims for precedence as the government monopolizes the railways entirely in the interest of the war.

NOTES

It is estimated that the wheat crop of South Australia will yield 26,000,000 bushels, or an average yield per acre of 11.70 bushels. Last year's record crop

MILLIONS FLED IN NORTH ITALY

ROME, Dec. 31.—It will be a long time before the world at large will realize what the crashing in of the Italian military line meant when the Germans forced their way through over the mountains and threatened the Venetian Plains. It was different from the surge into Belgium; unlike the burst into northern France at the beginning of the war. The Italian people had learned from the example of Serbia, Rumania and Belgium, to fear the invaders for they knew what it meant to be crowded literally under his heel. They saw the horrors that follow in the wake of German invasion, and the mere fact that German troops were used and advertised was enough to intensify the horrors of invasion. Germans who repeat the application of the term Hun to themselves would understand why it is applied if they could realize the horror in which they are held by the peasantry of all European countries outside the Prussian League.

The population of the invaded Italian areas was terror-stricken from the beginning. Some provinces were almost depopulated by the mad rush of the people toward the rear. In other parts all of the people fled in panic. It was this frightful jumble of citizens, old and young, with soldiers, broken military units, crowded roads, narrow bridges—everything that made up both a great army and a great peaceful population in addition—it was all this, jammed suddenly into roads and fields—scrambling toward safety, that made the retreat for some days look like a riot.

Stampede of Civilians

In truth it was never so neatly a riot, militarily, as it was made to appear by reason of the stampede of the civil population. The withdrawal of the armies would have been comparatively simple but for the submergence of merely military affairs in the awful chaos.

The scene of operations was crowded with refugees from the invaded regions, disbanded soldiers exhausted after the hardships of the great retreat from the Isonzo and reinforce-ments, both Italian and Anglo-French pushed to the front. Traffic was congested, march discipline lost and a great deal of confusion was inevitable. In such circumstances it was natural that the inhabitants of the towns and cities behind the lines should assume that invasion was imminent and hasten to seek safety in flight.

It was impossible to make use of the railways which served exclusively for the transportation of troops from the invader's regions, to those from whom were added those from the towns and cities behind the lines lined along all the roads leading to the west. The stream of people increased on the way to such an extent that progress was practically impossible. The panic spread and the utmost confusion prevailed.

DAILY SELECTIONS FOR GUARDIAN READERS

Furnished by W. S. Louson,

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

Each man is Captain of his Soul, And each man his own Crew. But the Pilot knows the Unknown Seas, And He will bring us through. We break new seas today— Our eager keels quest unaccustomed waters, And from the vast uncharted waste leap in front. The myetic circles leap To greet our crews with mightiest possibilities; Bringing us—what?— Dread shoals and shifting banks?— And calms and storms?— And clouds and biting gales?— And wreck and loss?— And valiant fighting-times And, maybe, Death!—and so, the Larger Life!

THE BRAVEST OF ALL

The bravest battle that ever was fought! Shall I tell you where and when? On the maps of the world you will find it not: 'Twas fought by the mothers of men. Nay, not with the cannon or battle shot. With a sword or noble pen; Nay, not with eloquent words or thought From mouths of wonderful men. But deep in a walled-up woman's heart— Of a woman who would not yield. But bravely, silently bore her part— So, here is that battle-field! No marshalling troops, no bivouac song. No banner to gleam and wave; But, oh, these battles they last so long— From babyhood to the grave! Yet, faithful still, as a bridge of stars, She fights in her walled-up town. Fights on and on in the endless wars. Then, silent, unseen, goes down. O ye with banners and battle shot. And soldiers to shout and praise, I tell you the kindest victories fought Were fought in those silent ways. O spotless woman in a world of shame With splendid and silent scorn. Go back to God as white as you came— The kindest warrior born! —Joaquin Miller

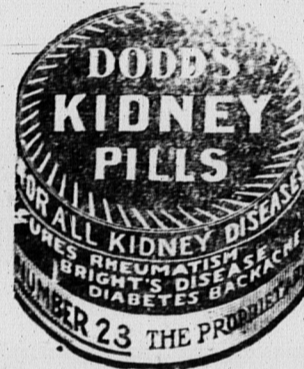
As the danger of invasion really existed and the art treasures of Venice were being removed from churches, museums and galleries, books and valuable manuscripts from public and private libraries, and important documents from archives and offices, everybody was convinced that the invaders were advancing rapidly. It was impossible to ally the panic among the common people, as the well-to-do citizens who had money at their disposal and could therefore afford to pay exorbitant prices for carriages were the first to escape. Even those in authority, who should have remained at their posts, fled and not only villages, but towns and cities, were deserted by all the inhabitants in the space of a few hours.

Transport Was Disorganized

One can easily realize the enormous difficulties confronting the military authorities on account of this exodus. Transport services were utterly disorganized and neither food supplies nor ammunition was reaching the front line, where the troops, exhausted after the retreat from the Isonzo, unsteadied by the disaster and hopelessly mired up, had to confront the enemy under most unfavorable conditions. Food was lacking both for the troops and the refugees. All the peasants who abandoned their houses drove their cattle before them, but after a couple of days not only were the horses and mules had to be slaughtered on the road to feed their famished owners, who often ate the flesh raw.

Practically one-half of the entire population of six out of the eight provinces forming the region of Venetia, including besides Venice, Treviso, Padua and Rovigo, besides the entire population of the two provinces of Udine and Belluno which were occupied by the enemy, roughly speaking about two million souls, fled for or made preparations for immediate flight. The amount of property destroyed or damaged to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy was considerable, and incalculable damage was caused to crops, agricultural implements and machinery, irrigation system, industrial plants and stores of foodstuffs and other materials accumulated for the winter.

What stopped the exodus and allayed the panic was first of all the resistance opposed by the Italian troops on the Piave and the mountain front. When the enemy's advance was delayed immediate steps were taken to prevent people from leaving their homes in town and country. Orders were issued prohibiting all the men



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POLES ON THE RIGHT SIDE TORONTO, Dec. 31.—Preceded by a band and marching under banners "We are off to France" two hundred Poles who have been training at Niagara Camp, marched through the streets today.

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