

The Charlottetown Guardian

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938

Dr. Stanley's Appeal

"We think," wrote Hazlitt a century ago, "in this age of reason and consummation of philosophy, because we knew nothing twenty or thirty years ago, and began then to think for the first time in our lives, that the rest of mankind were in the same predicament, and never knew anything till we did; that the world had grown old in sloth and ignorance, had dreamt out its long minority of five thousand years in a dozing state, and that it first began to wake out of its sleep, to rouse itself, and look about it, startled by the light of our unexpected discoveries and the noise we made about them. Strange error of our inflated self-love!"

We are reminded of this comment by some aspects of the present continent-wide campaign against classical studies in the field of higher education. We are privileged, in today's issue, to publish a letter on this subject by Dr. Carleton Stanley, president of Dalhousie University, who quotes a lengthy extract from a recent pronouncement by President Butler of Columbia University. Both these authorities emphasize the very serious danger of neglecting the study of the languages, the literatures, the philosophies and the institutions of ancient Greece and Rome, for subjects regarded as being more closely related to the events and problems of the moment. As Dr. Stanley says, "the warp-threads of our European or western civilization all reach back to Greek civilization. To cut these warp-threads means that the fabric of our life, our science, our politics, our freedom, our culture, will become a frayed and useless rag."

It is high time that those qualified to speak in defense of the classics were coming forward. Many, not thus qualified, yet appreciative of what classical culture means and worried at the persistent efforts made to discredit it, have had to hold their peace. "Every man," as Sir Thomas Browne sagely remarks, "is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity." Leadership in an issue of this kind rests with our higher educationists themselves. That they are beginning, in responsible quarters, to realize this is an encouraging sign. Our universities reared and fed on the humanities are now about the only bulwark against the tide of utilitarianism that is threatening our whole educational system. If they should fail us, the outlook would be cheerless indeed.

A Fictitious Surplus

How meaningless, so far as the taxpayers are concerned, is a balanced budget on ordinary account may be judged from the announcement recently made by the New Brunswick Government. Although actual expenditures exceeded estimates by about \$76,500, and there was added to the net debt of the Province during the year the staggering sum of \$9,125,000, the Government claims a "surplus" of \$29,000. Its debt increase this year, says the Independent Telegraph-Journal, is "the greatest in any year in the history of New Brunswick," and brings the outstanding obligations of the province to an all-time high mark of \$66,433,682, or practically double the amount of the net debt in 1929.

In the face of gradually increasing revenues," says the Saint John paper, "it is to be seriously questioned why all this money must be expended and at the same time the debt of the province increased to the extent that it has. Unless a move towards a spend-as-you-earn policy is adopted, the net debt of New Brunswick will become so great that the amount required to pay interest and sinking fund charges will cut seriously into the revenues needed for other necessary provincial services. . . . Not until a balanced budget together with a substantial reduction in the public debt has been achieved can New Brunswick feel that it is on the way to financial security."

It is the contention of Finance Minister Dunning—who ought to know—that there is no reality about a balanced budget which does not include capital as well as current account.

The Campbell Government in this Province is pledged to balance its budget annually. About a year ago, Premier Campbell explained that this meant only a balance on ordinary account. But the public interpreted it in a different sense in the election campaign, and will insist on so interpreting it notwithstanding Mr. Campbell's alibis. New Brunswick's "achievement" this year in producing a fictitious surplus with a nine-and-a-quarter million dollar debt increase, is not an example our Island taxpayers wish to see followed.

Mr. Hepburn's Offences

The Toronto Star (Liberal) no doubt expresses Liberal opinion generally in the following caustic comment on its party leader, Premier Hepburn: "It is seldom that a premier loses so much ground so soon after an election as has been lost by Premier Hepburn of recent weeks. "Issuance of the public accounts, which were held back until the campaign was over, has confirmed the conjecture that much of his supposed debt reduction represents simply a switching of debt from the provincial to the provincially-guaranteed column. "Issuance of the liquor control board's report

for the year ended last March—also delayed until the election was over—justifies the assertion that at least \$72,000,000 was spent in Ontario for intoxicants in that year, and that the gallonage of spirits consumed increased 71 per cent, wine 31 per cent, and beer 211 per cent, in the past three or four years.

"On the heels of this report has come a Christmas drunken driving record of startling proportions, with the government encouraging the purchase of intoxicants by extra hours of sale both before Christmas and in the interval between Christmas and New Year's.

"The period since the election has also been marked by the signing of new contracts for Quebec power although Mr. Hepburn specifically stated during his campaign that his platform was 'back to Niagara.'

"Further, there has been the spectacle of Mr. Hepburn allying himself with the premier of Quebec, head of the Union Nationale, in an effort to array central Canada against the Canadian West and the provinces against the Dominion, in order to prevent the modernizing of the B.N.A. Act.

"There has been Mr. Hepburn's crude and ungentlemanly attack upon the federal premier, paralleling equally defaming utterances on the part of his Quebec ally."

Of course, it was the attack on Prime Minister King that lost Mr. Hepburn the support of Liberal newspapers. His record as a demagogue was exposed time and again before the last election in Ontario, but it didn't seem to matter to his supporters so long as he carried the Liberal colors to victory. If he would only agree to play ball with Mr. King, and keep from washing dirty party linen in public, wouldn't he begin to be hailed in the Liberal press as one of Canada's leading Statesmen?

Editorial Notes

Halley, the astronomer, died this date, 1742.

There is likely to be a serious flare-up when parliament meets. Both agricultural and industrial interests have taken fright at Mackenzie King's proposed tariff concessions to U.S.A. and the "fat is in the (Liberal) fire."

Both Earl Baldwin and President Roosevelt have come under the ban of the German Nazis. Swiss Newspapers containing editorial discussions of Roosevelt's statements on foreign policy and quoting from Baldwin were refused entry into Germany. These were returned with the articles marked "undesirable literature."

Notwithstanding Hon. B. W. LePage to the contrary, the people of England are sixty-three-and-a-third per cent better than they were 30 years ago. Commitments to prison in England have fallen in 30 years from 180,000 annually to less than 60,000. Can we claim anything like this?

Bell ringers in Weymouth, England, have been aroused over a proposal to introduce "canned" bell ringing at St. John's Church by installing a gramophone and amplifier in the belfry. A spokesman for the Guild of Bell Ringers, announcing the innovation would be discussed by the guild, said: "Synthetic church music is an American importation—we cannot welcome it. The vicar, Rev. F. E. Coryton, declared, however, "some people were against the automobile, the airplane, and even the radio, but it is our duty to move with the times." There are 3,000 bell ringers in England. In many cases their jobs are hereditary.

There are a good many politicians wise after the event, and Mr. Jeremiah T. Mahoney, the defeated Tammany candidate for the Mayoralty of New York is one of them. Though he was supported by it in his heroic efforts to check communism and other evil forces that he dreaded, now that the battle is long over he has decided to relieve his mind. He says in effect that Tammany must be destroyed. Even its name, a symbol "for all that is crooked, slimy, unpatriotic and sinister in politics and in any machine-ridden city," must perish from the earth. There must be no more Tammany Hall. Commenting on this the New York Times says: "We all righteous Democrats of Manhattan must shun the temple in Union Square. The rules must be changed. The Manhattan Democratic organization must be 'modern and progressive' so that all members may have 'an actual voice in the affairs of the party.'" Never again must there be a 'tyrannical boss.' Mr. Mahoney forgets that there are no more bosses. 'Leaders' have supplanted them. He uses the now ritual word himself. 'No district leader shall become the leader of 'the Democracy of the County of New York.' Mr. Mahoney's zeal is beautiful, but it would be more edifying if it had been on display last Fall."

The Duchess of Rutland has discovered once more the truth of Rudyard Kipling's assertion that "Biddy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady" are all the same under the skin, or before British law. She stopped on the offside line of traffic, waiting for a chance to turn right into St. James's Street. A police constable told her to drive straight ahead along Piccadilly. Owing to her stop, only one line of cars could proceed. She was holding up those behind her. Her Grace made this gracious reply: "I don't want to go that way. I am not going. I shall fight it in court. You are a nasty man. I will ask the officer over there." The officer over there told her she must go straight ahead as directed. She said she wouldn't. She would "fight it in court." Then she would be reported for a summons. "I am going that way now, so you can't summon me," she cried. The obedient rebel, like Gentle Jane, did as she was told. In court she complained that the constable was "unfair and unreasonable" and that "put my back up." She thought constables were there to help traffic. This one was "so very unhelpful and uncivil." No doubt the contrast of the constable's conduct with her own helpfulness and civility astounded her. The unfeeling magistrate fined her 15 shillings, a penalty unworthy of so august a personage, but the measure of the law for such offences, whether by peer or plebeian.

NOTES BY THE WAY

The world's condemnation of Japan has been clear and all but unanimous. To this world-wide feeling the Japanese are patently sensitive and the plaudits of the tiny minority of mankind that believes in the logic of aggression can do little to fortify the Japanese against the consciousness of being condemned by an overwhelming majority of their fellow men.

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THE EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

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"The greatly changed conditions affecting the academic position and influence of the study of the ancient classics, which have been referred to in several earlier annual reports, now require an attempt to forecast the future rather than to dwell upon the accomplishments of years that are past. Not only has the long-continuing dominance of the ancient classics in the field of higher education been destroyed, but the study of the languages, the literatures, the philosophies and the institutions of ancient Greece and ancient Rome is being for the most part wholly neglected. The results are deplorable. The neglect of this field of study means that a generation is growing up without any comprehension of the origins of the intellectual life of the western world or of its highest standards of accomplishment in the fields of philosophy, of literature and of the fine arts. The pressure upon time and attention of subjects which appear more closely related to the events and the problems of the moment has completely displaced the study of anything like the important position in the work of liberal education which they occupied so long and with such remarkable results.

"Because of these facts it is all the more important that as the older scholars in the field of classics pass out of the University's service, there be made for younger men who are not only sound in classical scholarship but who have the personality, the enthusiasm and the zeal to make those subjects of obvious and vital interest to the youth of today and tomorrow. This can be done if undertaken in the right spirit by personalities who realize their responsibility and their opportunity. While hereafter classical teaching will reach out a small fraction of the student body—and that fraction poorly prepared, judged by standards which formerly existed—it can be made abundant in instruction and in stimulus if undertaken in the right spirit. It must be borne in mind that the study of the ancient classics is not a closed subject. Archaeological excavations are actively going forward in various parts of Asia, of Africa and of Europe, are constantly discovering new material to throw light on matters affecting ancient religion, ancient law and the beginnings of the natural sciences.

"Moreover, it must be insistently pointed out that the contribution of ancient Greece and Rome to modern civilization was not made once and for all. It is a continuing influence and is being actively manifesting itself in new and unexpected ways. Their languages are the heritage of our civilization, and their wisdom, their philosophy, their art, their science, their literature, their history, their religion, their law and their customs are the foundation of our modern life. What Plato saw and what Aristotle taught, what Caesar and Cicero and Livy and Tacitus wrote, was done for all time.

"The question of the moment is, where and how to stimulate competent younger scholars to become masters of some portion of this great and varied heritage. It is with inviting power and clearness to the youth of today. The quickest way to emphasize the importance of ancient civilization is to make it clear that it is not ancient but everlasting. That word, ancient, means only a beginning and not a complete circle in the geometry of the history of civilization."

All this is profoundly true. The warp-threads of our European or western civilization, all reach back to Greek civilization. To cut these warp-threads means that the fabric of our life, our science, our politics, our freedom, and culture, will become a frayed and useless rag. And do not the signs multiply all round us that this is happening before our very eyes?

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All this is profoundly true. The warp-threads of our European or western civilization, all reach back to Greek civilization. To cut these warp-threads means that the fabric of our life, our science, our politics, our freedom, and culture, will become a frayed and useless rag. And do not the signs multiply all round us that this is happening before our very eyes?

And yet, in the high schools in our three provinces, those who can teach the Greek language can be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is only very recently that this lamentable condition appeared. With the disappearance of Greek teachers has gone the disappearance of teachers of mathematics, which is a

horror which are devastating the Far East today will not tomorrow be the lot of Europe.—New Commonwealth.

At the funeral of the village renegade, a well-intentioned friend ventured the hesitant tribute that he was not as bad all the time as he was some of the time. The words might almost serve as an epitaph of the year that is ending.—The New Outlook.

In the Far East, the Soviets are expected to offer increasing material support to the Chinese. This United States is expected to find some means of aiding China directly. It may mean putting economic pressure on Japan. The outlook for Canada (for 1938) there is every reason, on the other hand, for optimism.—London Free Press.

What the world lacks today is undoubtedly the means of settling disputes peacefully—an Equity Tribunal—coupled with the means of repressing aggression—a pre-organized and comprehensive system of sanctions supported by an International Police Force. Not until these living institutions have been wedded into the machinery of the League of Nations can we be certain that the

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