

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 1910.

GENERAL BOTHA, SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST PREMIER.

General Botha, a prominent commander on the side of the enemy during the Boer War, has been selected as the first Premier of United South Africa. His ability both as a military and as a political leader are admitted. He has frankly accepted British rule since the war, has so far been personally loyal to the new order of things, and what is better, has used his large influence with his Boer compatriots to assist in uniting the South African Provinces and to bring about harmony and concord between the two races.

In fact, beyond question, General Botha has quite established himself in the confidence, not only of the new Governor General of South Africa, but in the confidence of the Home Government, and of the leading statesmen of the Empire as well. Something like a warm friendship sprang up between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and General Botha when they met in London a year or two ago at the Imperial Conference and they still cherish a warm regard for each other. For the above and other reasons the people of Canada generally will wish the new Premier of South Africa success, peace and prosperity in his high office.

Still it is a somewhat strange and unusual thing that has happened. And if General Botha were not the wise, well-disposed and prudent man he is taken to be, trouble might re-

sult. The Dutch element still predominates among the voting population of the United South African Provinces, and among their leaders are some ambitious men who would, if they could establish and perpetuate exclusive Dutch dominance in the Government of the Union. Racial antagonism would again become quick-ly adame if in selecting his Cabinet Premier Botha should show any unfairness or illiberality in that regard. We trust he is too wise and statesmanlike to fall into such an error, the momentary triumph of which must end in ultimate disaster.

Under the British form of Government a successful Premier has great power and becomes practically the ruler of the state during his term of office. General Botha therefore will hold a considerable sway over four Provinces in which President Kruger ruled but one. But for the character of the man this might cause some trepidation among the English-speaking population of South Africa. We may feel assured that he will not, in the formation of his first Cabinet, or in the first election do anything to create or renew race antagonism. But it will be difficult for him, even if entirely fair and just, to escape altogether from misrepresentation and unjust suspicion. His task in the near future will be one befitting a broad-minded and tactful statesman.

PRESERVING VALUABLE WILD ANIMALS.

Within a generation past the buffalo herded in thousands upon the Northwest prairies. They were hunted down and mercilessly slain until not one remained in their native haunts. Last year the Canadian Government expended over a quarter of a million dollars in purchasing a buffalo herd in the United States, the animals being brought back to stock a park in the west where the remnant of the species will be preserved. The history of the beaver in Can-

ada has been similar to that of the buffalo in several respects. These intelligent, harmless and most interesting creatures were formerly quite numerous in every section of Canada. They were trapped and hunted for their valuable skins and fur until only the dams they built long ago are left as reminders that Canada was once the land of the beaver. The small remnants of the once numerous tribe have been driven into the northern wilds, and are even there, a

prey to the trapper and hunter.

In recent years laws have been enacted and administrative action taken for the protection of the beaver and other fur-bearing animals of value. The Ontario Government reserved a woodland park near Lake Nepissing named Algonquin Park, where the beavers were protected and left to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in their own way. The result has been that they have increased quite wonderfully. The Superintendent of the Park recently reported to the Government that the annual increase in number there is from five to ten thousand beavers.

Now that they have increased so much the Government has decided that the beavers must pay toll for the use of their park, and a beginning has been made in the toll-taking. About 1,000 of the animals have been taken and their skins are now for sale. This number were taken within three square miles, it is said without even being missed from among the thousands remaining. The incident suggests that a beaver farm might be made profitable along with the black fox farms we have in this Province. Beaver fur is valuable, though not so much so as that of the black fox, of course, but the beavers make their own living, and if placed in a right location will stay there and multiply without being fenced in.

AN OLD TIME THEORY OF COMETS' TAILS.

Many people are still talking of Halley's Comet and the nature and composition of that wonderful appendage thereto called its tail. According to the conflicting stories from the different observatories about the world, the tail of Halley's comet has varied in length at different times during its present visit from ten millions of miles to one hundred and forty millions of miles.

It is still a question in dispute whether or not the earth recently passed through the tail. Again, the tail has been reported to be lost, wholly severed from the comet and set adrift in space, while the head is now growing a new tail of rapidly enlarging length. These rapid changes in appearance and conflicting reports concerning them are puzzling to the lay mind, and give rise to speculation as to what the comet's tail is composed of and why a comet should have a tail at all. A horse's tail has obvious uses in any time, but there are supposed to be no flies to tickle the comet in its flight through space.

All of which goes to show that the wise ones of today have still much to learn about comets and their tails. A friend has directed our attention to a passage on this subject in a book written in 1749, that is 161 years ago, by John Robertson, F. R. S. of London, and entitled Elements of Astronomy. In the chapter on comets these words occur:

"According to the most probable opinion, this tail is a vapor arising from the body of the comet by the action of the sun's heat, in approaching very near to it, after having been a considerable time very distant from it, during which time the comet may have gathered a great quantity of moisture. 'Tis remarked that the less the perihelion distance of the comet, the longer its tail, and reciprocally."

The above old theory of the composition of comets' tails may be erroneous, but it is at least understandable, which many other more recent theories are not. It was formerly believed that a comet was the instrumentality which brought the

great deluge upon the earth. We have had no floods as yet, but seldom if ever has the atmosphere in this latitude been so continuously and heavily loaded with vapor as during the three or four months past.

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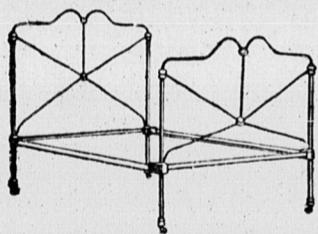
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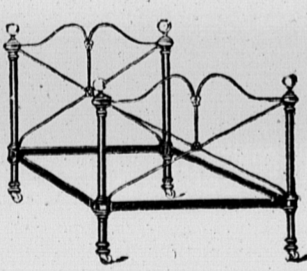
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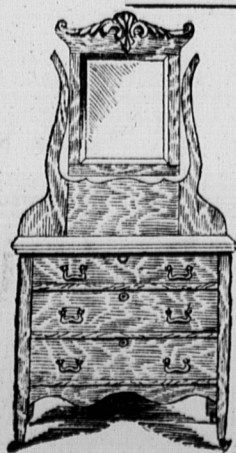
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