

The Daily Mail

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Fredericton, N.B., November 18, 1911

THE MILITIA CONFERENCE

Col. Sam Hughes, the new minister of militia and defence, and a number of officers from various parts of the country, have been holding a council of war at Ottawa the past week. The object of the Conference was to exchange ideas and ascertain what means should be taken to increase the efficiency of the militia. Judging from the published reports of the proceedings, there were as many opinions expressed as there were officers in attendance and there was unanimity only in one thing—that the camp canteen should be rehabilitated. The old government abolished the canteen because a large section of the population objected to it, and it was felt that such an institution was not altogether in the best interests of the service. The new government, if they act on the recommendation of those who attended the Conference, will re-establish it, but it is scarcely likely that the temperance and moral reform organizations of the country will permit them to do so without a protest.

The problem of keeping up the militia, especially the rural portion of it, is undoubtedly a serious one and deserving of the best attention of the authorities at Ottawa. Many reforms have been brought about in recent years, but there is still room for more. In the old days a commanding officer's tenure of command was unlimited, consequently promotion was very slow. Today he must step down and out at the end of five years' service and an improvement could be brought about in several New Brunswick cases, even if that period were further reduced. The prosperity of the country has no doubt greatly interfered with recruiting the rural militia. In the old days many a young man was glad to don an ill-fitting uniform, buckle on a waist-belt that had been discarded by some Imperial regiment, shoulder an old gas-pipe and play soldier for the sum of fifty cents per diem. Today, with an up-to-date equipment, improved rations, increased pay and a common sense course of training, it is much more difficult to get good men to go into camp than it was ten or fifteen years ago. This is the condition of affairs as it exists and a remedy must be found if the rural militia is to be anything more than a uniformed aggregation of hayfoot, strawfoot.

If some means can only be found to make the service more attractive it would, no doubt, be a great stimulus to the rural militia. We believe that much can be accomplished by converting the present rural infantry regiments into mounted corps. It would mean increased expense, but it would also mean increased efficiency. The 28th New Brunswick Dragoons, organized in this province last year, is an excellent object lesson of what can be done. Although on the establishment list only a few weeks, the officers had no difficulty in getting together a splendid lot of young men and the corps went into its first camp almost up to strength. Both officers and men seemed to take great interest in their work and naturally the regiment made a good showing on an inspection day. Because of the increased pay and other attractions offered by mounted corps the officers of the Dragoons had little trouble in recruiting this year and it is safe to say that next year they will not be able to take all the men who offer. Such a corps, composed of husky young men who can ride well and shoot straight, would not only be a credit to the district which

produced it, but would undoubtedly be of invaluable service in time of war. The large cities are capable of furnishing all the infantry that Canada needs, and this being so, it would undoubtedly be in the interests of the country to limit the rural militia to cavalry, mounted infantry and field artillery. If some plan can be worked out along this line, inefficient officers weeded out, and a substantial increase made in the rate of pay, we firmly believe that the problem of recruiting the rural militia will be solved.

SIR WILFRID'S BIRTHDAY

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the leader of the Liberal party, today celebrated his seventieth birthday, and is receiving many congratulations on the event. Sir Wilfrid, although no longer the premier of Canada, is, to use the words of an ardent admirer, still the premier Canadian. He is easily the greatest statesman of Greater Britain and occupies a high place in the affections of the Canadian people. As a political campaigner, he is unique; as a parliamentarian he is without a peer, and his authority among his followers has never been questioned. Indeed, his sway over the hearts of his supporters is complete. Even his bitterest opponents come under the spell of his charming personality.

A few months ago Sir Wilfrid dissolved parliament and went into battle with the zeal of a crusader for the welfare of the common people. He was firmly convinced that closer trade relations with our neighbors would be of great economic and political value to Canada and the Empire. His government went down to defeat—went down as the gallant old leader expressed it, in "a high and honorable cause."

Although he has arrived at a time of life when he could well seek that rest and repose which he has earned by long and faithful service to his country Sir Wilfrid has consented to remain in harness and lead the opposition to the Borden administration. A man endowed by nature with wonderful gifts, eloquent, forceful, picturesque and possessing great physical endurance for his years, he is easily the outstanding figure in Canadian public life. Long live Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

The Laymen's Missionary Congress which opens at St. John this afternoon, promises to be the most notable gathering of a religious nature ever held in the province. Upwards of five hundred delegates from all parts of the province and representing all the Protestant churches, will be in attendance and the proceedings promise to be full of interest. The list of speakers will include Sir Andrew Fraser, late governor of Bengal, Mr. J. Campbell White, who has just completed a tour of the world's mission, Rev. Canon Gould, Archdeacon Renison and many other leaders of missionary effort. The Laymen's Missionary Movement, although inaugurated only a few years ago, has already made wonderful strides and is certain to prove a powerful factor in the noble work of extending the Gospel of Christ.

The new secretary of the Provincial Board of Works owes his promotion to the fact that he has been able to make a bit as a political healer. Although holding a position in the government service for three years he has never ceased to be a Tory partisan. His sphere of activity has included Scott Act, Civic, Provincial and Dominion elections and he is even credited with having engineered the Regent Street turnover. Measured by the standard set by the politicians at present in control of affairs in York County he has fairly earned his reward. If the new secretary of the Board of Works is wise in his day and generation he will let some of the smaller fry of the Tory party do the manipulating in future and devote himself strictly to the duties of his office.

An Ottawa despatch states that Premier Fleming, who has been at the capital on Valley Railway business, has started for home. He did not get the Valley Railway contract signed but he will likely have an "announcement" to make in the course of a few days.

The Tory patronage dispensers of York evidently take no stock in Premier Borden's Policy of civil service reform.

BRILLIANT DRAWING ROOM AT OTTAWA

Ottawa, Nov. 18.—The senate chamber on Saturday night witnessed the greatest scene in its history from a social standpoint of view, and the largest drawing room ever held in Canada.

There were 1,120 presentations to their Royal Highness the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Everyone of any prominence in the capital and many other points were there among the brilliant gathering.

The duke wore his uniform of field marshal of the British army and the duchess the robes she wore at the coronation of the King at Westminster Abbey, with the train held by two pages. The first to be presented were Lieut. Colonel and Mrs. Gibson, after whom came Premier and Mrs. Borden and the members of the cabinet.

The church dignitaries and judges of all the high courts followed, then senators and their wives and members and their wives, after which came the general list of those not having the right of Private entry. Their Royal Highness afterwards paid a visit to the speaker of the senate.

BALFOUR'S GOING DEADLY BLOW TO THE TORIES

London, Nov. 15.—The last week was filled with successive and amazing surprises. Premier Asquith began by announcing that the ministry intends next year to introduce the measure making a gigantic change in the suffrage system in England, reducing it to manhood suffrage, and other reforms which must make an enormous addition to the voters and which will mark a further milestone in the complete democratizing of England.

But Arthur J. Balfour's resignation as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons submerges that and every other question, and adds another point to the extraordinary run of luck to the Liberals and another deadly blow to the already broken fortune of the Tories.

Mr. Balfour chose a splendid moment for his resignation. During the short interest since the opening of the parliamentary session, he had made three splendid speeches, which re-established his position as the greatest mind in the Tory party, and when at last his resignation came to be known, all his enemies stopped over each other in declarations of loyalty to him.

Though mean intrigues and open attacks upon Mr. Balfour hastened his resignation, ill health was the real cause. For some years he has suffered from weakness of the heart, and a devoted sister who lives with him and his doctor presented the ultimatum to choose between resignation and death. Mr. Balfour's farewell speech, gracious, kindly, and free from all rancor, and all recrimination, impressed everybody.

The Tories after recovering from their staggering blow, took up the difficult task of choosing Mr. Balfour's successor. For the first hours Austen Chamberlain was rushed to the front, then Walter Long was caught up, but the final decision was that the place should fall to Andrew Bonar Law, who is a junior in service and in rank, and still more in social position, to the two others.

The Liberals are delighted at the change in leadership. It means a headlong plunge of the Tories into high protection and food taxes, which Mr. Balfour so long prevented, and it means that Tories will stand forth as a solid and united high tariff party unless some strange and unexpected cataclysm interrupts British trade which is now booming, and brings a long spell of unemployment and hunger.

No high tariff party has any visible chance of success for many years. Thus, today the Liberal ministry, after five years in office, stands in a stronger position than ever, and already the people laugh at the possibility of any serious difficulty in

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THE STANDARD AGENCY

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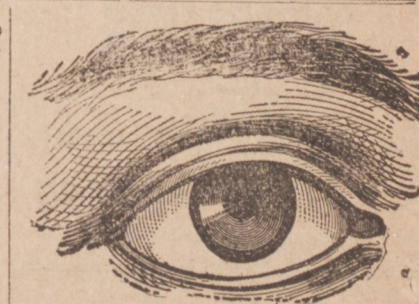
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