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Manager. Editor.

DAILY HERALD.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1903.

MR. BLAIR'S FUTURE.

The report that Mr. Blair has resigned his seat in parliament is not confirmed, and Mr. Blair himself says it is premature, but there can be little doubt that the announcement will be officially made within a very short time, possibly during the present week.

Mr. Blair, it is admitted will be appointed to the chairmanship of the railway commission, a position which his ability and legal and railway experience admirably fit him to fill, and the country is to be heartily congratulated on being able to secure the services of so eminent a gentleman for the office. In the meantime Mr. Blair it is said, will visit the United States to secure information bearing on his new duties.

The departure of Mr. Blair from active political life will be sincerely regretted by every Canadian who takes a pride in seeing the ablest men of the country guiding the administration of public affairs, and especially by the Liberal party which has had great satisfaction in recognizing the distinguished New Brunswicker as one of its leaders.

Mr. Blair has been in active political life, and has led a strenuous existence for the past twenty five years, and it is small wonder to his friends at least, that he is freeing himself from the onerous and exacting official duties which he has had to discharge, first as premier of his native province and for the past seven years as head of an important department of the federal government. Mr. Blair was always a hard worker, and the strain cast upon him would have broken down a less physically strong man. For twenty years he has borne the burden of exacting official duties and his friends, while sincerely regretting his removal from active political life, will extend to him the wish that he may find his new position congenial to his tastes. They feel sure that he will give excellent service to the country.

THE ONTARIO SITUATION.

Premier Ross, of Ontario, has not given any public opinion of the result of the North Renfrew election, but it is said by Ontario newspapers supporting him that he has no intention of paying heed to the Tory demand for the government's resignation. Mr. Ross has still a majority at his back in the legislature, and there is fight enough in him to stand by his guns and defend the Liberal citadel in Queen's Park, Toronto, so long as the legislature is prepared to vote confidence in his administration. Any other course even at the impudent demands of the Tory opposition would be cowardly, and the Ontario premier has never been accused of cowardice in the face of the enemy.

There are five election petitions lodged against as many supporters of the government, but none of them are scheduled for trial before the middle of January. The Ontario House generally meets in January, and during the session all election petitions are hung up. Premier Ross will probably call the legislature together at once, transact the business of the country by the aid of his majority of three, and continue in office notwithstanding the threatening attitude and demands of the Whitney gang, who like the proverbial Tory out of office, are as savage as she bears. The premier could no doubt secure a dissolution of the legislature, but so long as his party is in the majority, there is no valid reason for him following such a course. In British Columbia the Tory government met the legislature without an assured majority, and why should the Ontario government

throw up the sponge when it can count on a safe majority of three with the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. Thorne, who owns the Sun, Editor Scott of the same newspaper, and Mr. Hazen, are in Montreal conferring with the Tory Machine on election matters. The Machine in Montreal centres around the Star office while the Machine in St. John has its headquarters on Canterbury street very near the Sun office. It is probable that the Tory candidates for New Brunswick will be named at the Montreal conference, so that the people who profess to be Tories will have little to say in the matter. That is the way the Tory Machine works.

A NAVAL PROBLEM.

Bridge Is Too Expensive for the Signallers, Bunting Tossers.

The signallers in the British navy are nick-named "bunting-tossers," and like their compeers in our land services from a set apart by themselves. There is a sort of Freemasonry in their circles, and they are somewhat non-communicative except to certain superiors in rank. Even then, messages during active service are passed through, and need not necessarily transpire, as when a deserter in the Eastern Transvaal "called up" by helio his own station, and inquired, to the delight of his own comrades, how "old Broadwood" was "getting on."

Signalling communication is maintained between warships by colored signal flags, flag semaphore, and wireless telegraphy. The group of signallers aboard is under the command of a non-commissioned officer, called the "Yeoman of Signals." As in the army, both he and his signallers are badly paid for their highly technical services.

During the time of peace the means of communication may be termed effective. Marconi's receiving instrument obtains the fullest advantage it demands, viz., exposure on the top of a very lofty mainmast.

But what of the situation during a naval engagement? The Yeoman of Signals knows well that it is an impossible one. Nelson paced the deck of the Victory during Trafalgar's battle with Hardy alongside, and his signalman behind him. The captain of the huge H.M.S. London of our Mediterranean squadron, with its dreadful amount of top hamper and running rigging, under the conditions of the present day high velocity lyddite shell, must retire within the conning tower under the forebridge, and its chart house superstructure.

The fore and after bridges and their superstructures in action will be shot away or set on fire to the danger of the directing officers in the conning tower immediately underneath by reason of splinters and smoke. German warship constructors are obviating this danger by greatly modified designs composed of iron and steel.

The position, therefore, of the signallers is in battle untenable. Marconi's instrument in time of peace can be tapped, which is bad enough; during action it will be shot away. How will visual signalling be maintained during a naval battle of the future? Yeomen of Signals shrug their shoulders when you ask them this question. No one aboard ship will be able to live unless under cover of casemates. Even the doctors will not trouble about amputations in the confusion, but move from horror-stricken battery to battery lending first aid.

The only solution of the difficulty lies in wireless telegraphy. At Argostoli last year Prince Louis of Battenburg with his weaker fleet, ran the blockade successfully by paralyzing the wireless telegraphy instruments. Not only must the instruments be "tuned," but the "receiver" must be also within the coning tower.

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Fredericton, Dec. 15th, 1903

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Dec. 24-d1w31

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... AND ...

A Happy New Year

TO ALL.

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DECEMBER 29th, 1903

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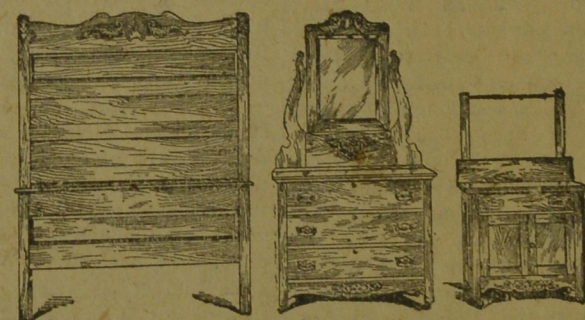
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