

and restaurants. At the current rate, 18 cents a quart, this aggregated \$90,000 a day or about \$31,000,000 a year, an amount which the people could pay only because of radical savings on controlled utilities. He knew precisely what proportion of this aggregate was supplied by the six big dairy farms just outside the city limits. He knew also that the cost of the city's milk was at least ten per cent. more than its annual coal bill; 15 per cent more than the cost of bread; 50 per cent greater than the tax for urban transportation; 50 per cent more than the cost of electric lighting. In a very vital way milk was the economic king of Wabigo.

The Wabigo Milk Distributing Commission, operating under the Utilities Branch of the civic administration, offered the M.P.A. a compromise on one cent a quart extra. The M. P. A. refused. One day's grace was allowed by the M.P.A. At the end of that time unless the Wabigoites should get about 250,000 quarts of milk every morning, like the Israelites once got manna from heaven, Wabigo's 150,000 children of under ten years of age would be on milk rations or none at all.

It was the middle of a hot July. No possible long-distance haulage of such vast mass of milk. Arbitration was out of the question. The M.P.A. had a sure hand—as it always had.

"My friends," bellowed Abner from his verandah to a company assembled, "this is the sarcasm of evolution. Wabigo has broken the slaveries of the coalmen, the transportation systems, the power systems, the lighting companies, the real estate sharks, and the builders and the landlords. She is still in the grip of the milk producer. I don't deny that in its time Wabigo milked the farmer. It robbed him of his sons and his hired help, raised his taxes, cut up his statute labor roads, flung dust on his washings, scared his horses with automobiles and suburban

cars, jewed down his price of grain and cattle, and by an infernal system of middlemen spread the margin between the price to the original producer and the ultimate consumer so far that the only way to get justice to each was to abolish the middlemen. But those wrongs have all been adjusted or are in process of adjustment. The cow is the one remaining symbol of the farmer's power over the city. He has used it time and again before, because he learned the trick from the milk distributors whom we abolished."

Abner painted the certain terrible sufferings of Wabigo on those sweltering days in the city. Half a dozen reporters were supplied with copies of his speech. To-morrow a special delivery of thousands of copies would be made to every home in the Aero-Suburbs, reaching for miles from Drome No. 1. In every copy there was a flaming call from Abner Lee to all those who owned thousands of high-grade aero-suburban milk cows to give up nine-tenths of their immediate supply to the city of Wabigo. Before the last paper was read he had gone ahead and contracted for a huge supply of thermal delivery tins, sent over and distributed by cloud-jitneys. These containers, made of wood-pulp, with asbestosized lining, were quite cheap.

Most of one half day Abner spent on the telephone, calling up all the Aero-Suburbs Association Presidents, each of whom became at once a sub-manager of his sudden enterprise. Evening of that day thousands of high-grade suburban cows were milked in the interests of Wabigo. By daybreak from every suburban drome a small fleet of cloud-jitneys, suddenly transformed to milk-ships, rose into the clouds and swung away to the dust-lines of Wabigo, carrying to the consumers' distribution depot the milk of the evening before.

Abner Lee left word to be called on the line when-

ever the first squad of motors was ready to begin actual delivery at the homes of the people. And when he got that call the old man's face broke into a flood of uncontrollable tears. He could do nothing but gasp at the mouthpiece. He was assured that by noon every home in Wabigo-unserved by the non-strike companies would be left one small bottle of milk; that if the supply could be repeated during the day every home would get its average quota of milk, and if—

"Cut out the ifs and the rest goes!" shouted Abner Lee like a child screaming at a game. "Phone the president of the M.P.A. and tell him that he can feed his milk to the hogs. This cloud-jitney, aero-suburban aggregation has got enough cows to keep Wabigo running till further notice. We know to a pint how much we can produce, and as we've got enough butter in storage to do us for a month and more, we can release our entire output to you minus what we need for the daily use—and you can have that to boot if you want it. Sure! And say—"

Abner listened for a moment when he wasn't sure what the man at the other end was saying, because he was hearing the whirr of the cloud-jitney fleet of milk-ships swing over Drome No. 1.

"Morning milk delivery just leaving No. 1 now," he shouted. "Say—put it down on your memo. pad that from the time the M.P.A. decides to take the job off our hands until further notice, Wabigo gets its milk at a price determined by you in association with us. That's all to-day. I'm going to bed. When I get up I'm going to take a scud over to your office in the cool of the evening. Good-bye."

And when Abner Lee, just about sundown, saw the great Navajo rug of his Aero-Suburban landscape receding into its vista of real poetry, he wished to high heaven and every scruff of cloud he saw that he could live to be the age of Methuselah.

THE HUNDRED-YEAR CALL OF KILDONAN

IN this period of our Dominion Day celebration, the first in our second half-century of Confederation, we are driven irresistibly to examine the foundations of Canada.

And there are few parts thereof which afford a more interesting ground for study than that portion of the country which lies west of the Great Lakes. The famous Red River Settlement, where Lord Selkirk planted his colony in 1812, had demonstrated that the Western country, supposed by some to be an abode fit only for the Indian and the Buffalo and the adventurous hunter, was in reality the very home of the wheat plant. To it even before the Confederation period scattered settlers began to push their way from the East. Accordingly it was natural that when the four old Provinces had been brought together, the Fathers of Confederation felt that they should push back the sky-line towards the setting sun and unroll the map till it revealed the Pacific tide.

Some forty-five years ago a teacher who was coming to Winnipeg was condoled with by his friends in Toronto on his venturing out into such "hyperborean regions" where no one could live in any comfort. Yet we went on West and North to open up great arable areas around Edmonton and Prince Albert, eight hundred miles farther away. And some again said that surely that was the limit. Yet not long ago I stood at Peace River Crossing, three hundred miles north-west of Edmonton and swinging towards the Grand Prairie, saw some of the greatest harvests I had ever beheld. And away two hundred miles farther to the North we found Fort Vermilion, where the prize wheat for the World's Fair in 1893 was grown. If we add to this the opulence of British Columbia, with its minerals, fields, forests, fisheries and fruit, we shall know something of our Western heritage. This great west-land has been exploited much but it has hardly yet begun to be developed.

For the historical setting of the earliest colonization of the west, we must hark back to the opening of the last century to a strath in the North of Scotland, from which families were being driven in order to make room for sheep which would be more profitable to the land-owner. And so, while their

Dominion Day Recollections of the Old Selkirk Settlement and the Great Fur Companies.

By REV. R. G. MacBETH

Author of "The Making of the Canadian West," etc.

able-bodied men were away fighting under the Iron Duke for the liberties of Europe, the older folk and the women and children were harried out of their poor crofts and left to the tender mercies of the bleak hill-side. To these hunted people came the Earl of Selkirk, who had a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company and who had secured from that organization 116,000 acres of land in the Red River Country on which to plant a colony of his persecuted fellow-countrymen.

The Hudson's Bay Company is one of the paradoxes of history. With a charter given by the easy-going Charles II. to Prince Rupert and a few associates in the "Company of Adventurers," that gave these few men control over half a continent with the right to trade, build forts, make laws and even to organize militia, this organization was one of the most dangerously monopolistic in its constitution that the world has ever seen. Yet such was the high character of its employees that the Company instead of being autocratic became practically paternal in its general influence. A word to our politicians. In two hundred years no case of graft was ever known amongst men who handled annually thousands of pounds in value of furs.

AND so it was under the auspices of this Company, represented by "the Silver Chief" as the Red River Indians later called Lord Selkirk, that the earliest western settlers came into the midst of the "Great Lone Land" which their presence did so much to hold for the British Crown. But they paid the price for their pioneering by such struggles and hardships as rarely ever have fallen even to the lot of pathfinders. They faced a rigor of climate for which they were largely unprepared in every sense. They were ten years in the country in the face of floods and grasshopper plagues before they grew enough to feed themselves, and in the meantime these crofters, unaccustomed to that

mode of life, had to be buffalo-hunters in the winter and fishermen in the summer. But even these conditions were the least of their troubles. Because the Selkirk Colony had been planted by the Hudson's Bay Company and would no doubt be for them a source of supply in men and pro-

duce in the coming days, the rival organization, the North West Fur Company, determined that the colony should be rooted out and destroyed. They beguiled some of the Colonists away by promises of better prospects in the East, they carried them elsewhere ostensibly as witnesses in law cases, by various means they made it difficult for them to get a living, and finally by organizing an armed band of half-breed plainsmen under Cuthbert Grant, they killed Governor Semple, of the Hudson's Bay Company, and twenty of his men at Seven Oaks and followed this by ordering the remaining colonists to leave at once.

But these persistent settlers only went a short distance away till they were rescued and brought back by the Earl of Selkirk himself, who having heard of the troubles on the Red River, had hired some Swiss soldiers in Montreal, had taken the North West Post of Fort William and was now hastening to the relief of his Red River settlers. This visit by the Earl to his colony in 1817 was a notable one. A hundred years have gone, but the descendants of the old settlers to this day recall hearing those who met the Earl speak of his gracious presence, his gentle manner, and withal his splendid dignity. He told the settlers that their home on the Red River would be called Kildonan, after the parish in Scotland from which they had come and that they should have a minister of their own Presbyterian faith, but his death in 1820 caused the promise to remain unfulfilled for many years.

Canada, confederated in 1867, bought out the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company in the west, and in 1869 sent the Hon. William McDougall out as the first Governor of the new Province of Manitoba. We are bound to say that Canada did not manage the business very well. Of course the country was remote from Ottawa, with no communication by rail or wire. The Selkirk Colonists

(Concluded on page 30.)