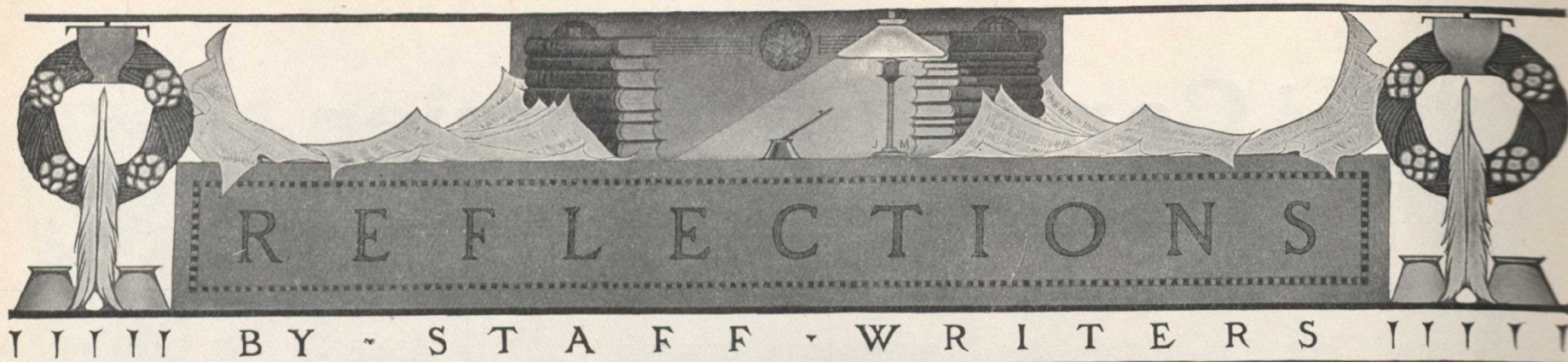




MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONS

THE movement in favour of municipal government by commissions might reasonably be made the subject of investigation by the Ontario Government. Galveston, Wichita, Des Moines and other United States cities are trying the experiment and official information as to its success in the United States and elsewhere would be both interesting and valuable. In this country, with the rapid growth of municipal undertakings as well as the great development of municipal business, there is need for improvement in municipal methods. If this new system secures better results than our present system of government by elected aldermen, the information cannot come too soon. Montreal is a shining example of a badly governed city, and Toronto is not noted for its careful management. A commission of experts might not do much better, but a discussion of the question would be valuable to all concerned.



FUTURE OF THE TELEPHONE SYSTEM

FOR some time, the Bell Telephone Company, or that portion of it which controls telephonic supplies, tried to keep the independent telephone companies from securing equipment. That policy has now been changed. The Bell people are now encouraging independent companies and seeking their patronage.

In the same liberal way, the Bell Company has not tried to dissuade the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta from taking over the telephone lines in these provinces. They have met them in a fair bargaining spirit and turned over their property at a price. On the night of April 30th, the last of the Bell lines on the prairies will be transferred to the Saskatchewan government.

When Sir William Mulock was Postmaster-General, he was in favour of taking over all the Bell trunk lines in Canada and putting them under the control of the Post-Office as they are in Great Britain. It looks now as if the various provinces would ultimately do what the Dominion authorities were unwilling to do. Already there is a movement in Ontario in favour of some such move, and no doubt the question will be discussed in the other provinces. The Bell Company is wise in not attempting to thwart the wishes of the people and in avoiding expensive litigation or arbitration. The method they have adopted will undoubtedly bring them greater rewards. The making and selling of telephonic equipment will probably furnish quite enough business and profit to employ all the capital in which the Bell people are interested.



A NOVEL SUGGESTION

JUDGE BARRON makes a novel suggestion when he advises Canada to prohibit the export of nickel in order to prevent Germany making nickel-steel plate necessary for great battleships. Canada and New Caledonia are the only sources of nickel. Germany must buy from one or the other. Canada can prohibit the export of nickel to Germany and France can prohibit the export from New Caledonia to Germany. And there you are—Germany cannot build any more *Dreadnoughts*.

It must be remembered that three-inch nickel-steel plate is better than the old-fashioned nine-inch armour. It may be dinged by a projectile but it does not splinter and crack like armour-plate. Moreover, being lighter, it reduces the dead weight of the modern ship away below that of the old armour-clad and also accelerates speed. Most of the nickel used by Germany in plate manufacture comes from Sudbury, and if the supply was cut off, the building of future German warships would be doubtful. Of course, Canada would let Great Britain have what nickel is required for her new *Dreadnoughts* and then Britain's supremacy would be ensured.

It is questionable if Canada has the power to do what Judge

Barron suggests. There are practical limits to what a government may do. The nickel trust owns the mines and if Canada destroys the mines or renders them nearly valueless, would the nickel trust not be entitled to compensation? Moreover, while Canada might put an export duty on nickel sent to any country but Great Britain, would it be practical politics? Furthermore, if the nickel went to Great Britain, would it stay there? Would not some patriotic British ship-builder find it profitable to sell the greater portion of his supply to the German plate-makers? The suggestion seems to be of doubtful quality, though it opens a broad field of speculation. Perhaps British statesmen might be invited to co-operate with Canada in acquiring and controlling the Canadian nickel deposits, and thus accomplish what Judge Barron suggests.



DETROIT'S FIASCO

DETROIT had a big meeting the other day to discuss reciprocity between the United States and Canada. Apparently, the Toronto Board of Trade was not invited to attend, because Toronto is thought to be "beyond redemption." The Montreal Board was invited to send representatives but declined. Canada does not seem to have been represented, except by Mr. Macdonald, editor of the *Toronto Globe*. Just how he came to be there and who he represented is somewhat of a mystery; nevertheless when he told them Canada was not seeking reciprocity, he came close enough to the truth to provide an excuse for his presence.

Any United States Board of Trade or other commercial organisation which issues invitations to Canadians to go over and discuss reciprocity should be treated just as the Detroit Board of Trade was treated on this occasion. They must be courteously but firmly informed that Canada is weary of fruitless discussions on this subject and that this country intends to devote its time to developing other avenues of trade. When the United States desires reciprocity, all it has to do is to lower its tariff to the level of ours, and then ask for discussion. That Canada has not tried to exclude United States products from this market is amply proven by the trade returns which show that Canada purchases twice as much from the United States as she sells to that country. Moreover, during the past ten years Canadian customs imposts on dutiable goods have declined three per cent., while the free list has been somewhat enlarged. On the other hand, the McKinley Bill and other tariff measures, including the Payne Bill now before Congress, have made it more and more difficult for Canadian products to enter the United States.

This is the explanation of the Detroit Board of Trade's failure to get any person to take a deep interest in its trade conference.



THE TRADE OF 1909

THAT 1909 is likely to be a banner year in Canadian development was predicted by twenty-five prominent business men whose opinions were published in the "Canadian Courier" some weeks ago. At the time, their prophecies seemed to be somewhat optimistic. Subsequent developments have shown their opinions to be fairly sound.

A side-light on the state of Canada's commercial activity during the past three years is to be found in the bank clearings in Montreal. In the second last week in April, 1907, they amounted to 26 millions; in the same week in 1908, they declined to 21 millions; in this particular week in 1909, they amounted to 35 millions.

Another side-light is found in the immigration returns. In 1907, the immigration was a record-breaker; in 1908, it declined to less than 150,000 new citizens, with a considerable leakage; in 1909, it will probably reach 200,000 again. Indeed, in this respect, 1909 promises to give 1907 a severe beating, since the immigrants coming in now are of a higher grade and are possessed of greater means.

Furthermore, the tide of migration from East to West continues