

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

The Army Canteen

OPINION will naturally be divided as to whether the British authorities should have allowed the establishment of a "wet" canteen in the Canadian Camp in England. There is something to be said on both sides of the question. It is the rule of Canadian military camps that beer shall not be sold within the military lines except in the messes of the permanent garrisons. If this rule is advisable in Canada, then it is equally advisable for the Canadian Camp in England. On the other hand, it is the British custom to allow beer to be sold in limited quantities to British soldiers under military regulations. The British authorities have abolished the sale of spirituous liquors, but have not banished beer from the regimental messes.

As the Canadian troops are now part of the British army, it would have been very difficult to make one regulation for the Canadians and another for the British soldiers. Under the circumstances, the only solution was to give the Canadians the same privileges as the other part of the army.

No one need fear that the Canadian soldiers will deteriorate because of this new rule. Very few of them will take advantage of it. Those who do are men accustomed to a drink of beer and who would have secured what they desired outside the camp. It is certainly preferable that they should get their refreshments within the lines under proper supervision than outside the lines. Moreover, the sense of freedom will be considerable advantage and pleasure to the men themselves. Soldiers on active service cannot be treated as children.

Busy Factories

DURING the past fortnight the British and Canadian Government have placed large orders with Canadian manufacturers. This is having a quick and immediate influence upon our industrial life. There is no doubt that industrially Canada is in a better position than before the war. Had these orders not been received there would have been more unemployment in Canada than now exists. There are many factories working full time and double time that would otherwise have been working half time or been altogether idle. In this respect Canada is gaining considerably by war conditions.

There is no doubt also that part of this improved condition is due to the fact that Canada is part of the British Empire and that the authorities in London appreciate the sacrifices that Canada is making as part of that Empire. The British people are not unmindful of the splendid gifts of foodstuffs and other material sent over by the Dominion Government and the various Provincial authorities.

The financial situation is being taken care of in a similar way by the British Government. Canada is a large borrower in the British money market and the Dominion Government gets considerable sums every year. Just now the Government needs accommodation and the British authorities have arranged the necessary supply. This, again, will have a beneficial effect upon our industrial life in that it will enable the Dominion Government to finance work that would otherwise have been stopped. Freely have we given and freely we are to receive.

Too Much Urban Population

NEARLY forty-five per cent. of the people of Canada live in cities and towns. About the same percentage of the population of the United States is urban—to be exact, forty-six per cent. If the percentage of urban population in the neighbouring republic is near the correct thing, then Canada's percentage should be considerably reduced. In a country like Canada, with millions of acres of arable land untouched by the plough, the urban population should not be greater than thirty per cent. of the whole.

These are facts that the would-be city booster and the real estate fraternity generally should ponder over. Where a country's prosperity is so closely associated with agricultural development as Canada's is, to have nearly half the population living in cities is bound to bring about a reaction in business and trade generally, even if there is no big world war as an excuse.

Paying in Gold

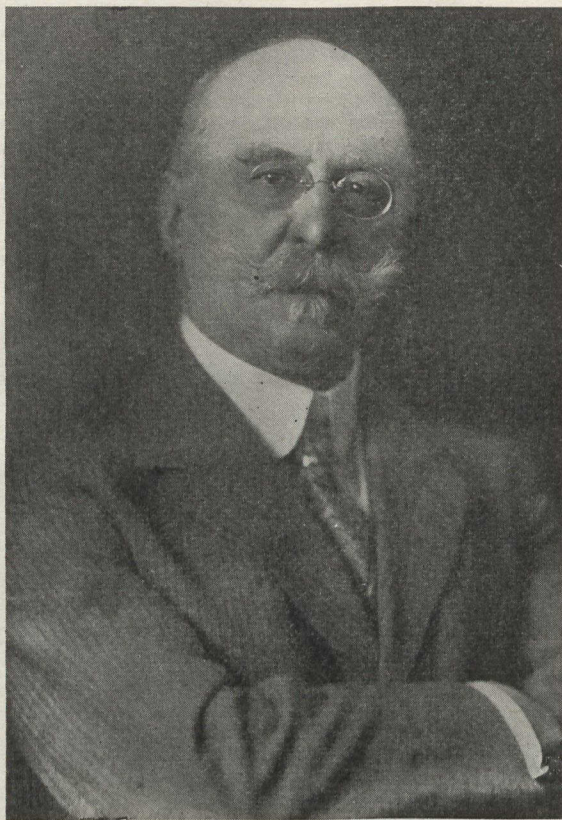
MANY people are talking of buying Canadian goods. There is little need for worry on that score. Canadians cannot buy foreign goods, simply because they have not got the gold to pay for them. The newspapers are trumpeting, advertising agencies megaphoning and the organized boomsters are enthusiastic on the steam piano—but their cause was won before the noise began. Cana-

dians must buy Canadian goods, because they can get no other kind.

Suppose Canada bought a hundred million more goods from the United States than they bought from us, how would we pay the hundred million? We did it in other years by borrowing money abroad. Now this process is stopped, and as there is no other to take its place, the buying must slacken. Hence the Canadian manufacturer will benefit by circumstances over which neither he nor his friends have any control. He will get a renewed start in life, and if he makes honest goods and sells them cheap, he will never again suffer from competition.

Second Contingent

THE method adopted for raising Canada's second expeditionary force will place more responsibility on the officers of the permanent force. This is understood to be carrying out the policy of the British inspecting officers who visited Canada a few years ago and made extensive reports on methods of mobilization. The theory is that Canada's



THE NEW POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

Hon. T. Chase Casgrain, who succeeds Hon. L. P. Pelletier in looking after the letters and newspapers of Canada.

permanent force is a skeleton to be given a body when occasion arises. The occasion has arisen. The district commanding officers have charge of the machinery of body making. This will keep them from grieving about whether they were sufficiently consulted about the organization of the first contingent.

What Does Russia Expect

OH, for a Russian Bernhardt! If we could know what Russia expected to do with her army in this campaign, it would add to the interest, and might relieve anxiety. Everyone knows what Germany intended to do—Bernhardt has told us that. We know, too, how far she has failed. The Kaiser intended to have captured Paris six weeks ago. The Great General Staff had planned it, and therefore it was to be. Perhaps, so far as they now have any positive plans, that may still be their hope—but a vain one. We know what France hoped to do, and she is doing it, resist invasion, and finally drive the enemy out. Her's is a negative policy so far. Britain's aim on land was the same as the French. On the sea, Britain's aim was expressed in the King's message to the Navy, to capture or destroy the enemy. The Navy now commands the sea. That is the aim. The enemy is taking good care to avoid the risk of capture or destruction. We know the Navy is prepared and capable of doing its full duty. But what has the Russian General Staff expected, and how are events meeting those expectations? If Russia had been the aggressor, as the Kaiser claims, Russian plans would have been known. It is good

evidence of her pacific intentions that even now the world is waiting to find out what to expect in that field. Did they and do they still expect to dine in Berlin on Christmas Day?

A New Cabinet Minister

SPEAKING of Postmaster-Generals, was there ever a greater contrast than between Hon. L. P. Pelletier, who has just resigned his portfolio because of ill-health, and the Hon. T. Chase Casgrain, who has succeeded him because of efficiency? Possibly once; and that was between Hon. Sir William Mulock, who gave us penny postage, and Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, who, after the drastic regime of Mulock, introduced us to sunny ways and seductive eloquence.

The postoffice department seems to thrive on contrasts. This counterfoil of Hon. Mr. Casgrain, with his dignified urbanity and suave statesmanship against the turbulent, forensic figure of the legal orator and autocrat, Mr. Pelletier, is at present extremely edifying. Most that Mr. Pelletier was in action, Mr. Casgrain is not. On one thing they are equals: each speaks both French and English with equal fluency.

We have recognized the master hand of Mr. Pelletier in the postoffice department; but it never became comfortable. There was about this Louis something of old Louis XIV.—"L'état c'est moi." Under Mr. Casgrain we shall have no such absolute rule by divine right. We do not believe Mr. Pelletier, who is in some respects a very tremendous figure in public life and was never meant to subordinate himself to a regime merely for the sake of pleasing the people. We do wish to intimate that his successor will be eminently successful because he will naturally refrain from imitating even the obvious virtues of Mr. Pelletier.

The Hon. Chase Casgrain was born in Detroit. Hence he belongs radically to the branch of the French race that peopled Western Canada in the days of the old wars along the borders. He really belongs to the Essex, Ont., branch of the race. His father was Senator Charles E. Casgrain, and his mother Charlotte Mary Case, of Detroit. The old Senator was one of the transplanted colony of French-Canadians who maintained a hard struggle to preserve their French language and customs and modes of thought among English-speaking settlers. And it was under such conditions that the young T. Chase Casgrain began to get the fine balance of temperament that now becomes one of his chief assets in administering one of our most important and perplexing portfolios.

While still a youth he was sent to Quebec for education, which he got first at the Quebec Seminary and afterwards at Laval University, from which he graduated with much distinction and the Dufferin Gold Medal. He went into law; and for many years in Montreal his name has been almost a by-word as member of the firm McGibbon, Casgrain, Mitchell and Casgrain. In 1882 he was made Crown Prosecutor for the District of Quebec, and in 1883, at the age of 31, professor of criminal law in Laval University. In 1885 he became a national figure by being made junior crown counsel at the trial of Louis Riel, impeached and hanged, at Regina for high treason.

POLITICS soon claimed him. He was too much of a persuasive orator to be content with private life. In 1886 he defeated Hon. P. Garneau in Quebec county for the Legislature, and held that seat until 1890. In 1887 he was made a Q. C.; in 1891 Attorney-General for Quebec, which position he held under two administrations. In 1892 he won Montmorency in the Quebec Legislature and held it until 1896; when, after serving on a commission to reform the legal procedure of Quebec, notably in the suppression of corrupt practices at elections, he was returned for Montmorency in the House of Commons. In 1886, also, he was elected a vice-president of the Canadian Bar Association. In 1904, defeated in Montmorency, he retired from public life and devoted himself entirely to law, except when his ability as a public man made it necessary for the Conservative party to enlist his services; which they did just before the general election of 1911, when he was one of the strong fighters against reciprocity. Since the Conservatives came into power, Mr. Casgrain has been still further recognized by being made Chairman of the International Waterways Commission, which in Quebec, with its great water powers, is no mere honorary distinction.

With such a lifelong fitness for public service, Hon. Mr. Casgrain has no need to depend upon his contrast to Mr. Pelletier to succeed as Postmaster-General. He has every possible qualification for the office; both political and personal. He understands both root languages of this country as well as either Mr. Pelletier or Mr. Bourassa. He knows the peculiarities of both peoples and how to strike a medium of democratic compromise between them. He is a brilliant man; a fine administrator; an effective orator; a man who understands Canadian history and politics and human nature. He knows how to fight without bitterness; how to administer without autocracy; how to serve the public and the country without being a servile politician.