



Canadian Courier

THE NATIONAL WEEKLY



VOL. 7

Toronto, December 4th, 1909

No. 1

REFLECTIONS

By STAFF WRITERS

CANADIANS are at the stage when they admire most ardently the men who "do things." They are anxious to see the country progress and expand. The hum of new industries, the shrill whistle of new railway trains, the growing pains of the larger cities and towns, the crowded steerage decks of the incoming passenger steamers, the well-filled immigrant trains, and other similar phenomena indicate the rapid expansion and steady progress of a new country. The town which is not putting in new sewers and water-pipes on new streets, new pumping-plant, new electrical distributing equipment, and additional transportation facilities, is accounted dead. The province which is not spending money on new waggon roads, railways, telephones and telegraphs, public institutions and other undertakings is labelled unprogressive. The industrial leader or the statesman who most vehemently advocates progress and development is most popular.

The other day Edmonton citizens were asked to vote upon a by-law to approve an agreement whereby the Canadian Pacific Railway should enter that city. For years the C. P. R. and Edmonton have been unfriendly because the C. P. R. made Strathcona, which is across the river, the terminal of its only line in that district. To get into Edmonton it was necessary to build a huge bridge over a wide, deep valley, and to buy much valuable right of way through the capital of Alberta. Overhead bridges and subways were necessary. Land damages in connection with these improvements would be expensive. The apportionment of the cost was the "sticker." An agreement was arrived at after much discussion and many conferences. It was opposed by some of the conservative people of Edmonton and the arguments seemed all against it. Nevertheless when the people voted, the agreement was approved by a large majority. The proposed expenditure of millions pleased rather than dismayed the people of Edmonton. It is so in nearly every city and town in the West, and in the majority of cities and towns in the East.

BRITISH COLUMBIA also affords an interesting example of how the spirit which backed up Sir John Macdonald when he proposed to aid the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway from Montreal to Vancouver still exists. In recent years Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have undertaken to guarantee interest on many new miles of railway and the people have always approved of the guarantees which these provincial governments made. Then came British Columbia's turn. The Canadian Northern Railway had reached from Port Arthur and Winnipeg to Edmonton and the Foothills. It desired to go on across the Rockies, down the Thompson and the Fraser valleys to New Westminster and Victoria. To do this it needed a government guarantee for its bonds. Mr. Mann and Premier McBride came together and made an arrangement involving a guarantee of several millions. An appeal to the people followed, and the agreement was approved by a majority so large as to make it almost unanimous. Again the people showed their deliberate approval of men who do constructive work, their disapproval of all carping critics and cold-souled pessimists, and their determination to follow Davy Crockett's advice: "Be sure you are right and then go ahead; but go ahead anyway."



LARGELY, this is the spirit which is causing the Dominion Government to spend millions on our waterways and railways. The deepening and widening and lighting of the lower St. Lawrence, the improvements in the St. Lawrence canals, the proposal to build a new twenty million dollar canal between Lakes Ontario and Erie, the more chimerical proposal to connect Georgian Bay with the Upper Ottawa at a cost of fifty or a hundred million—all these huge expenditures are forced on the government because of the voracious

ambitions of a progressive people. If the Dominion Government were to decide on a policy which would cut out all these progressive works, which would delay the building of the Que-

bec Bridge where several millions have already been invested to little purpose, which would stop all further building of government railways and other public works in the Maritime Provinces, which would eliminate any further expenditures in the vast unexplored and undeveloped regions around Hudson Bay and in the Mackenzie River Valley—then at the next general election there would be a new set of cabinet ministers. The government which either advocates or practises economy and retrenchment will have a short life in this country.

It is the same in the United States. The other day, the Isthmian Canal report came out and it showed that the estimated cost of the Panama Canal was far too low. Instead of costing one hundred and fifty million dollars, that great work will cost nearly four hundred millions. When the announcement came a few days ago, the people never "winked an eyelid." They took it almost as a matter of course—estimates by competent engineers are so notoriously like the expert medical man's testimony in court and the salaried auditor's certificate of correctness.



LET no reader make the mistake that we believe that the people will approve reckless expenditure even in a good cause. They desire to get value for their money, or at least approximate value. They fully realise that governments cannot possibly get as much for a dollar as a private corporation, and hence they make allowances for the higher cost of government undertakings. Yet, show them that a government has been unreasonably extravagant and that it has been more generous to its political friends than the occasion warrants—and there will be a revolution at the next election. For example, if it could be proven beyond a doubt that the cost of the National Transcontinental has been doubled because of carelessness or worse on the part of the Commission in charge, we believe that even the unquestioned pre-eminence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier could not save the political situation.

There is less partisanship in Canada than some critics would have us believe. What is often termed partisanship is merely ignorance. No government in this country, whose misdeeds have been clearly proven, has ever survived a battle at the polls. A wicked government which is progressive will, however, have a better chance of surviving than a corrupt government which is lacking in vision and constructive ability.



LAST Sunday evening, for the first time in the history of New York City, a rabbi preached at a regular service in a Presbyterian pulpit. The Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Wise, of the Free Synagogue on West Eighty-First Street, preached for the Rev. Dr. A. E. Keigwin at the West End Presbyterian Church. Dr. Keigwin is the author of the idea. He believes in trying to find the good in people who are in disagreement with him, and believes that all religious denominations should draw more closely together. He does not believe in the possibility of organic union, but he strongly advocates federation and comity.

If the Baptists of Canada were to withdraw their famous proselyting mission in Quebec and try to recognise that a conscientious Roman Catholic may possibly be a good citizen and a future inhabitant of the same heavenly home as the conscientious Baptist, they would be exhibiting more of the modern spirit. If the Methodists and the Presbyterians were to work with the Anglicans in one broad, comprehensive missionary policy for the newer districts of the West, they would do much to restore belief in the ultimate elimination of