

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Town Planning

A GENTLEMAN who has just returned from the "Conference on City Planning," in Chicago, reports that Alberta's Town Planning Act made a great impression upon the delegates assembled there. They were surprised that this new law should be the most progressive of its kind in the world perhaps. It provides that five per cent. of the municipal area is necessary for park purposes, a most liberal provision; that one-half of the increment in value of the real estate benefitted by a town-planning scheme, shall go to the municipality; and gives full powers to every municipality to carry out everything necessary for "efficient operation of the scheme."

All those interested in any way in town planning should get a copy of Alberta's act and study it. The subject is important from a local as well as a national standpoint. When the City Planning Conference meets in Toronto next year, Canadians should be prepared to take full advantage of the discussion.

The Western Situation

WESTERN CANADA needs sympathetic consideration at the present time. Real estate was over-boomed and the inevitable reaction has set in. Agreements for sale are being sold at a discount running from 25 to 60 per cent. The rate of interest is high. Farmers who have made themselves land-poor and piled up debts are being taught a severe lesson. Some of them are being foreclosed. The newer cities and towns are finding it difficult to sell debentures. The speculative builder is paying from ten to twenty per cent. for loans.

With a situation like this, the bankers, wholesalers and manufacturers should be generous and forbearing. The west is expanding rapidly, and the people must be housed and fed. The building must go on, and the east can show its friendship for the west by being patient and considerate. The railways were unable to handle last year's crop in such a way as to give the farmers a quick cash return. As a consequence many of them have their crops still unsold, or were forced to sell at a heavy discount.

This year the situation will be better. The railways are pushing extensions. New elevators are being built. The Dominion Government has decided to erect several large interior elevators at central points such as Regina, Saskatoon, Lethbridge and Calgary, where grain may be stored, cleaned and graded. If the bankers and manufacturers assist generously, the west will come through the year with flying colours. If the Dominion Government simply talks about what it is going to do and the bankers and manufacturers refuse adequate credit, the results will be far from satisfactory.

There is only one point at which credits should be restricted. There should be no loans on agreements for sale of city property. Loans on all kinds of town lots, other than revenue-producing property, should be absolutely discouraged.

The Making of Homes

SHOULD working people be left to build their own homes or should they be helped? This is a question which has agitated many minds in recent years. A century ago, a workman might live in a pig-sty if he wanted to, for all the world cared. To-day, each nation has come to realize that the workman is a citizen and the father of a number of citizens; and hence his welfare is a matter of national importance. Thus we have "the housing question" as one of the big, social topics of the day.

The Winnipeg Housing and Town Planning Association is trying to raise a million dollars to help workmen to get homes. A similar association in Toronto is doing the same. In Guelph, Galt and one or two other places, housing companies are being formed. Canada, with its huge immigration, is in need of homes—especially clean, wholesome, sanitary homes—at a fair rental. The newcomer cannot be expected to supply these. He has neither the capital nor the experience. Somebody must do this for him, and do it better than he would do it for himself.

Hon. Mr. Hanna put a bill through the Ontario

Legislature at the last session giving municipalities power to guarantee bonds of housing companies to the extent of 85 per cent. of the paid-up capital. Such companies are restricted to six per cent. earnings; all profits over this go to the benefit of tenants. The other provinces will no doubt watch the course of events in Ontario with considerable interest, and, if success follows on the heels of the new act, will introduce similar legislation.

Perhaps the chief points to be emphasized are that housing companies will help men who otherwise would not be able to get decent homes and will also set new standards in architecture, lighting, ventilation and sanitary arrangements. A housing association will not do its whole duty unless it raises the standards of the homes for workingmen in the community in which it operates.

Premier Borden's Speech

PREMIER BORDEN'S speech on the third reading of the Bill was an excellent performance.

It presented the Conservative side of the naval question in a masterly way and was in splendid taste throughout. Further, it indicates that the Premier is thinking of establishing a Canadian navy ultimately. Like Mr. Bourassa, he is willing to construct dry-docks and he promised to construct them on both the Atlantic and Pacific at an early date. These will be an aid to commercial shipping as well as an assistance to the Admiralty of Great Britain. He will also establish naval bases on the Atlantic and Pacific "entirely within our own control." The harbours and ports can be fortified. He may even go so far, he intimated, as to provide "torpedo boats and other similar craft" to help protect these ports. He also announced that the naval college at Halifax is to be maintained as well as training ships. For the latter purpose, he would use the ships of the hydrographic survey and the fisheries cruisers. Other small cruisers would be added.

It will thus be seen that Premier Borden does not intend to repeal the Canadian Naval Service Act passed by his predecessors in office. He will continue the work of training Canadians for the navy. A despatch from Vancouver says that the *Rainbow* is to be abandoned and the 120 men aboard her placed on shore. In view of Mr. Borden's utterance, the despatch is probably misleading. Mr. Borden has no intention of abandoning the two training ships which Canada now has, but rather to add to their number.

There may be those who doubt this and who believe that Mr. Borden will yield entirely to Mr. Bourassa and the Nationalists. However, if they will carefully read Mr. Borden's speech of last week, they must be convinced that the Government has no intention of allowing Canada's naval service to consist wholly of Dreadnoughts which are to form part of Mr. Churchill's proposed "Imperial Squadron."

The Six Heroes

ABOUT 11.30 p.m. on Thursday, May 15th, the House of Commons gave the Naval Bill its third reading by a majority of 33. The yeas were 101 and the nays 68. Of these 169 members, there were only six deserving of any special credit. One hundred and three voted obediently with their respective parties; six voted against their party. Five Nationalists turned from the Conservative alliance and voted against the Bill. One Liberal turned from his party and voted for the Bill.

These men are despised by their fellow members. They voted shamefacedly. They are no doubt subjected to all sorts of personal abuse, and to various kinds of cold-shouldering. Yet, in a way, they are real heroes. They had the courage of their convictions—a compliment which may be paid to very few men in these days of bitter and unreasoning partisanship.

Under political conditions as we have them in Canada, he is a brave man who dares to vote against his party in any question. Whenever a member shows any signs of thinking for himself, or of having intellectual heart-searchings, he is dubbed "a poor Conservative," or "a poor Liberal," as the case may be. And immediately the party machine is put in motion to get rid of him. Both

parties hate an independent—whether he is with them or against them. The constituency which elects him apologizes for him, and his friends tell him he is a fool.

Of course, it is all wrong. The people should encourage a member who shows independence. The newspapers should applaud him. Independents outside his constituency should write him notes of congratulation. He should be treated as a hero. All honour, therefore, to the five Nationalists who voted Liberal and to Col. Maclean, of St. John, who voted Conservative.

Brow-beating the Senate

DOES a section of the Conservative party desire the Senate to throw out the Navy Bill? If so, they are moving very cleverly to this end. Certain machine brand Conservative organs are engaged in threatening the Senate with "reform" or annihilation in the event of the bill meeting with a mishap while in the Upper House. The Senate has heard these threats before, and is too blase to fear that any government living in expectation of long years of power and reward for its political supporters will destroy what is bound to become one of its own bulwarks.

Both parties have contributed of their strong men to the Senate. Although Senate appointments are usually made because of partisan service, there are few weaklings. If political experience, business ability, culture and affluence count as assets in law-making, then the Senate easily ranks with the House of Commons. The Upper House, it is true, lacks in direct responsibility to the people; but appreciating the fact, it is the more likely to give serious consideration to a measure which has the endorsement of the majority of the people's representatives.

The Senate is rightly jealous of its prerogatives and the coarse threats of extinction are well calculated to goad it into action which, we believe, would be detrimental to the prestige of Canada within and without the Empire.

The Proper Solution

CANADA'S honour is pledged to substantial assistance to the Empire in naval armament.

The two great political parties are pledged. The difference in the assistance advocated, while substantial, is after all, only a matter of procedure. The Liberals alone are ready with a permanent policy. The Conservative proposals are avowedly a temporary measure, and are not inconsistent with the Liberal policy, and what the COURIER believes to be the Canadian desideratum, a Canadian navy. The present day policy of the British Empire and the self-interest of Canada are alike opposed to periodical contributions of money or ships to a navy the affairs of which are not administered by the Parliament of Canada. Mr. Borden's speech in introduction of the Bill, in view of his later declaration of policy was unfortunate. There should have been an unmistakable, definite repudiation of those who would destroy the autonomy of the country by the building-up of a centralized fleet under the control of the United Kingdom and in part supported by the taxation of the over-seas Dominions. Mr. Borden somewhat retrieved his position in later speeches, declaring that the measure was simply temporary and affirming his respect for the highly prized rights of self-government possessed by Canada. The permanent policy is not to conflict with these rights. This must mean that the government is going in for a Canadian navy. A plain statement to this effect would have been better, but the ways of politicians are above the divination of ordinary mortals.

Once Mr. Borden declared against periodical contribution, there was a chance for the leaders to rise above the commonplace, unite the two programmes, and prove to the world that true statesmanship exists in Canada. If either leader had had the courage to take this action, he would have secured the support of many influential non-partisan naval advocates in this country. But why speculate on what might have been when what is to be demands attention? So long as it was a case between the Government measure and an effective Canadian navy, we favoured the latter. Now it is a case of the Government measure or nothing, at least for the present. The Senate may very properly affirm its belief in the Canadian navy and pass the Government legislation. The Naval Service Act of 1911 is at least still law and the Senate will doubtless see that it remains so. An awakening of public sentiment may be safely trusted to ensure that the government will soon bring down a permanent policy consistent with the country's self government and its duty to the Empire.