

CALL OF DOMINION OF CANADA

By Sara Hamilton Birchall, in the Reader Magazine



THEY are coming, though probably when the gallant Canadian and Australian contingents went home from the Boer war in the dusty Transvaal and Kipling wrote "The Parting of the Columns," he hardly had in mind the Winnipeg immigration halls. But there they are coming. I stumbled over no less than half a hundred of them as I picked my way through the dust of the backyard of the great Canadian Pacific station to Commissioner J. Obed Smith's big day nursery, and brought up before a door labelled "Immigration Offices" in nine incomprehensible languages, each worse than the last.

They are coming by the thousand. That sunny spring morning they stood by the score at a long, smooth counter, bending over maps, following the explanatory finger of a clerk, waiting their turn at gate and door and corridor, chatting in cockney English, muttering in throaty Roumanian and Bulgarian, spitting French, or laying down the law in leisurely, drawing United States.

Dialects and all, some 30 tongues must be spoken by the officers of the immigration bureau.

The larger part are English, however. Of the 216,000 Canadian immigrants in 1906, 76 per cent were English-speaking, and of these 63 per cent were from the United Kingdom and her colonies, the remaining 13 per cent being from the United States.

Besides these there are French, Russians, Polish, Lithuanians, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Montenegrins, Finns, Scandinavians, Germans, Hindus, Chinese, Japanese, and almost every other variety of humanity sprinkled in.

The Oriental Problem

Commissioner Milne, in Victoria, British Columbia, has the problem of the Chinese, Japanese and Hindus to deal with.

There is the inevitable Chinatown of the Coast city, dirty, queer-smelling, evil, with dozens of little butcher-shops hung with unspeakable dried claws and joints and horrible dead things; with staring coolies and rattling voices and silent, dark, myriad-windowed, carefully-curtained little courts that hide heaven only knows what warrens.

There is the Japanese quarter up the hill, where there are open shops and pretty baskets and dainty, kitten-soft Japanese women peeping through the screens.

There is the Hindu district out toward Westminster, where the red and blue turbans add a note of color to the sober blacks and grays and browns of the Anglo-Saxon. Handsome fellows are the Hindus, tall and straight, with finely-cut features and the erect grace of carriage that comes from generations of aristocracy. Sikhs and Punjabis they are for the

most part, veterans of many a border skirmish, equals of any man. It is pathetic to see them in this western land, trying to work according to occidental customs; but as one looks at their tall, muscular, lean figures, one believes in their eventual victory over time and place and circumstance.

An Assorted Family

Yet, although Commissioner Milne has eliminated the Asiatic peoples, Commissioner J. Obed Smith of Winnipeg has a large and various family to care for. I went over the five-story immigration hall, from the boilers in the cellar to the ventilators on the roof, in company with Mr. Smith, who is the visible authority, the engineer of the machine.

We began with the baggage room, where the miscellaneous boxes and bundles and trunks of the prospective settler are cared for by the bureau. In one corner were piled stout rope-handled boxes containing samples of Canadian grain, honey, fruit, etc., ready for shipment to Europe as advertising exhibits. Wagons containing these tempting exhibits travel through the country towns of England, and booklets on Canada are in great demand among the young farmers, who thereafter take advantage of the immigrant rate "from Liverpool to the harvest fields," and become good Canadians.

I smiled at a mysterious automatic pump for increasing the water pressure when the city supply was too low to insure a good stream from the faucets of the fifth story, for Winnipeg has far outgrown its system of water supply. I counted the boilers in the basement and noted the fireproof divisions of the cellar; I peeped into the big storerooms which occupy the central space on each of the five floors; I regarded the gap where soon a pair of elevators will be installed; I admired the careful fire protection by which any point in the building can be instantly reached with a huge fire-hose; I smelt the cookery of the immigrants in the big kitchens, and saw many of them eating dinner at the long tables in the dining rooms; and everywhere I marvelled at the cleanliness and order.

Cleanliness a Problem

It is no small task to keep up this absolute cleanliness with scores of various nationalities of immigrants living, bag and baggage, children, canary birds and household effects, in one room apiece for a varying number of days. Most housewives would shrink back aghast from the demands of the situation, but the officers of the bureau of immigration manage it easily, without apparent friction or fuss. Everywhere the clean, antiseptic odor of a hospital remains. The rooms are thoroughly gone over with an antiseptic soap compound, and are frequently kalsomined. Everything, from the gongs of the double fire alarm system to the floor of the office filerooms, shines with scouring.

Those who fall ill go to the hospital building, where a slender, frail head nurse with olive hollows under her eyes, does the work of two housewives and a bookkeeper, and only longs to go to the foreign field that she may do yet more.

"I'm afraid I'm not strong enough, though," she said wistfully. "Perhaps I shall never go. There is a great deal that can be done here."

And I could only wish her fulfilment of her pathetic dream as she turned away patiently to the measles ward, for it was the season of the year when Mamie and Gretchen "have them," and Mamie and Gretchen are among the most important sojourners in the immigration halls.

Indeed, the children are everywhere. One tiny mite did a cakewalk, holding up her diminutive petticoats and singing to herself down the long corridor. An English baby beat his chubby fists on the table and crowed gleefully. In another room a Swedish youngster eyed us for a minute with great, sad, serious blue eyes, and without a whimper of warning burst into a tearful roar that made me damp in terror. Babies crawl on the floor, and sprawl over the cots, and toddle along beside their mothers' skirts. I hardly dared step without fear of putting my foot on some little creeper.

Caring for Immigrants

The families are made very comfortable in well-lighted, simply furnished, orderly rooms. The single men have dark, but clean and comfortable rooms assigned to them. The storerooms on each floor contain everything that the immigrant might, could, would or should have to tide him over, until he can get things going in the new country and secure resources of his own. Blankets, tinmed goods, lanterns, shovels, picks, spades, washboards, boilers, pillows, clothes, mattresses—everything from a package of Uneda biscuit to a disk plow emerges at call from those many-shelved storerooms to fit out the immigrant as he needs. The department plays nurse, teacher and maiden aunt to the prospective farmer, and sends him on his way in peace.

It is no small undertaking to uproot a man from his home over-seas, or in a well-settled country, and bring him to Canada to take over 160 acres of raw land. Yet "The West" calls to him as it has called to men since the days of Semiramis, and westward he goes, leaving the purple coast of Ireland, or the steppes of Russia, or the elm-shaded streets of New England or the chestnut groves of the sunlit Apennines behind him; leaving manor and farm and hut and chalet to those who are content to prune the ancient hedges and keep all things in the old traditional way.

They say it is the man who wants the almighty dollar who comes to Canada. It is not true. It is the man who desires to fulfil his dream—the man who has heard of the gardens

of Hesperides, and goes seeking them. The Greeks were wise, and in their wonder-story is the germ of all truth. The golden apples were but the excuse—it was the search that lured, and thus it is today.

And so Commissioner Smith, seeing this, gives more to the immigrant than spades and blankets. He gives experience and patient, wise, humorous advice to the twentieth-century Argonaut. Many of them need it, for conditions in Canada are absolutely new to the city-bred people who have depended on mowing somebody's lawn to keep a jingle in their pockets, and on the corner grocery to put the casual loaf of bread in the pantry. In my enthusiasm I said gaily that I wouldn't mind homesteading myself.

He looked me over, taking in my patent-leather slippers and lace collar and my smoothly gloved hands.

"You know what a homestead looks like?" he queried, with a quizzical twinkle. "It's a piece of ground just the way the Almighty left it. There's no house on it until you build one; no water unless you carry a flask; no food unless you take it in your pockets; nothing on it but a piece of sky, and that's too far away to keep you warm in winter. You take my advice, and save your money to buy a piece of land where some other fellow's knocked the corners off."

I had been suppressing a smile for three sentences, and as he finished, our eyes met. We both laughed.

"Goodby," he said. "Come again when you return to Winnipeg. I may be able to do more for you when you've seen the immigrant in his adopted wilds."

I promised to do so, and departed on a 6,000-mile journey, so that it was nearly a month before I saw the immigration halls again and almost greeted them as old friends.

The Process of Assimilation

In that time I had seen the immigrant becoming the settler, the farmer, the citizen, the millionaire, in half a thousand towns of the open prairie and the bush country. I had seen him breaking his first 80 acres and putting up his log-and-clay shack; sowing miles of wheat and raising record crops of barley, oats, alfalfa and potatoes; getting a lumber house, breeding blooded cattle, horses, sheep, hogs and poultry, filling the red elevators beside the railway to the top; adding an "L" to his house; accumulating a useful bank account; becoming prosperous and happy.

"Remember this," said the commissioner. "We all came out here with 50 cents and a toothpick, just as these men are doing now. Isn't that so, Mr. Bowtell?" he inquired of one of the immigration agents who stood by. "That's right," answered Mr. Bowtell, laughing. "Some of us didn't even have the toothpick."

"Not even the toothpick," laughed Commissioner Smith. "Remember that when you're writing about the immigrants. These men will all be well-to-do in five years' time, but to the fellow who comes here with \$20,000 to spend—spends it, and doesn't get a thing back. Then he goes home and tells how there's no chance in this country. It's a country for the man who is willing to work and can use common sense."

Stories of misapplied farming and wasted money are not uncommon. Stories of fortune making by industry and courage are even more rife. From the Russian Doukhobor to the settler from Illinois or Devonshire or Melbourne, it is the poor man who has made the money by the work of his hands and his head, while the speculator and the younger son have given up the country as a bad proposition.

In all towns of importance there is an immigration officer, and usually an immigration hall. Peter and Ole and Albert Edward are prepared for the fortunes of the road. At every little railroad station the immigration officer is waiting to receive them, house them, pilot them and look after them until they are in a position to depend on themselves, which is really surprisingly soon. Certainly the man who comes to Canada to settle is well cared for. And they are very grateful. In the files of the immigration bureau are sheaves and sheaves of letters from these men, reading something after the order of these, which I copied then and there.

One man, who came up from Iowa one year, took up land and next year brought his family, writes:

"I started with \$3,000 and a carload of settler's effects. Today we would not sell for \$30,000, and it is only five years since we came west."

Strathcona is the twin city of Edmonton, the last town of the north, where they have 18 hours of daylight in the summer.

"Some three years ago my family and I experienced your very kind and courteous treatment, and a word of thanks has long been due you. Three years ago last fall we reached Strathcona with just \$100 borrowed money. Since then we have bought an improved quarter section, live stock and implements. We also own two city lots worth \$400 each, and I expect to make about a thousand dollars on them this spring. I earn \$70 a month working in town during the winter months, and work on my farm during the summer."

These letters tell the story, both of the poor and the well-to-do man. They have worked and they have succeeded, and they thank the bureau of immigration, the department that has little to do with red tape, but much with red blood, the department that works day and night and Sunday, whose people live with the immigrant and work for him, from keen-eyed, quick-moving Commissioner Smith to the sub-assistant with the dustpan.

Engineering Feats In 1907

THE year that has just closed has been a remarkable one, in the respect that enormous progress has been made in various branches of engineering along well-established lines, rather than by reason of departure from previous practice, says the London Standard. It might be described as a period of evolution rather than of revolution. The advances made, however, have been none the less real on that account. Indeed, they show that what are regarded as laws governing the practice of modern civil, mechanical and electrical engineering are sound and reliable. This is an engineering age, when the people are dependent on machinery and engineering work generally for the supply of their daily needs, for their transport, and almost every comfort and luxury which they enjoy. The enormous growth of cities has placed the health of the people in the care of the municipal engineer, while the great majority daily expose themselves to the risk—if, indeed, it can be termed risk—incidental to some form of mechanical locomotion. It is gratifying to record that during the past year great strides have been made in rendering the transport services on land and sea still more secure and rapid, and in perfecting the means and machinery of production.

In marine engineering the past year has witnessed the completion of the two leviathans, the Lusitania and the Mauretania, gigantic examples of marine architecture. We would not be so bold as to assert that the limit in the size of vessels has been reached, but, so far as our present knowledge goes, enormous difficulties, both in the way of cost and of an engineering character, prevent any appreciable increase on the size of the Cunarders in the near future. These vessels have done much for British shipbuilding, by reinstating British supremacy on the Atlantic, and they have, by their subsequent consistent performances, added to the prestige of British marine engineers and designers. The successful design and construction of the turbine machinery in these vessels—both installations respectively developing over 70,000 h.p.—is an engineering feat which commands the admiration of engineers of all countries, not only

by reason of its enormous size, but also the courage and ability which planned and executed a work so far ahead of anything that had previously been accomplished. These great successes, combined with the excellent work done by the turbines in the Dreadnought, have influenced the engineering programmes in practically all the leading navies of the world, and war-vessels of large size, equipped with turbine propelling machinery, have been decided upon by Germany, France, America and Japan. In a smaller way, Messrs. J. I. Thornycroft & Co. (Limited) achieved a remarkable success in the turbine-driven destroyer Tartar, a vessel which, on its trials, maintained a speed of 35.36 knots per hour. This splendid performance was due to a combination of turbines, and oil fuel for raising steam, by which it was possible to maintain a higher range of temperature than with coal fuel. More experimental work than is generally known of is going ahead with gas engines using producer gas for marine propulsion. Many difficulties have, however, yet to be overcome, and though there is undoubtedly a great future before this form of power, much has yet to be done to start it in the race with steam.

With gas and oil engines for land purposes the past year has seen an enormously increased demand, especially for powers up to 600 h.p. There is also a steady development in this country in the use of large internal combustion engines, using blast furnace gas. Temporary failure of the large engines in Johannesburg has had some slight effect in retarding the development of the industry, but, on the other hand, the numerous large engines in use on the Continent and in America—many developing 1,000 h.p. and over in one cylinder—continue to give excellent results, not only in the matter of economy, but also in the more important feature of reliability.

In railway engineering little has to be recorded. The few and important private builders in this country have been extremely busy with orders for locomotives of typical British design and possessing few novel features. The simple engine is still favored, though in other countries compounding is continuing to grow in favor. Experimental

work is being carried out on several railways in superheating on the Schmidt and other systems, but here again locomotive engineers hesitate to follow the growing practice of other countries. In railway electrification a good deal of work has been done on town and suburban lines in America, Italy, and other countries, and some of our own tube and suburban lines have been brought to completion. In America some excellent results have been obtained with the single phase system, where it has been demonstrated that electrically worked lines will deal more economically than steam with congested traffic over short distances.

The British electrical industry still continued in a distressed condition throughout the year, and there is little hope of any improvement in the near future. It is suffering from excessive competition, and consequent cutting of prices, and efforts on the part of British manufacturers to arrive at some common understanding in the matter have been practically fruitless owing to the impossibility of dealing with the foreign element in the situation. There is little of popular technical interest to report, excepting the progress in wireless telegraphy and telephony (which has been dealt with in a previous issue) and the introduction of metallic filament lamps, with the announcement that the first works for their manufacture in England will shortly be established in London by the General Electric company.

One of the most striking developments of the year has been in connection with the use of steel reinforced concrete for buildings of all kinds, smaller bridge work, sewers, reservoirs, etc. This method of building construction has been found to be comparatively cheap and durable, and a method has been discovered of rendering the surfaces waterproof.

In the iron and steel industry, substantial progress has been made in the production of alloys for purposes such as motor car and other work calling for special characteristics in the metals used. Rail breakages in America have directed the attention of engineers to improving the material for rail manufacture, and the result is a tendency to favor open hearth steel. Under the auspices of the Canadian Government some successful work has been accomplished in electric smelting, and the past year has seen established in Japan the first modern steel works in that country.

Genesis of the Churches

JAMES CROIL, of Montreal, has recently published a new book, "The Genesis of the Churches," which well repays the careful perusal of all interested in the history of Christianity in North America. Mr. Croil has been for half a century an outstanding figure in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as author, journalist, administrator and historian. He was born in Glasgow in 1821, and received his education at the university of that city. He came to Canada in 1841, and a few years after purchased the historic Chrysler's farm, which was the scene of that famous battle in 1813, where a small force of Canadian militia under Colonel Morrison defeated a large army of American regulars under General Wilkinson. Mr. Croil removed to Montreal in 1869, and has ever since devoted his energies and facile pen to the advancement of Church and State. So liberal, unsectarian and cosmopolitan has he been that each evangelical church might claim him as her own, although his services were principally given to the Presbyterian church, and which have been appreciated and acknowledged in a variety of ways. He is the author of "Lectures on Agriculture," "Sketch of Canadian History," "The Missionary Problem," and "The Noble Army of Martyrs," besides numerous contributions to publications in Great Britain and the United States. But the most important of all his works is "The Genesis of Churches," which records the origin, progress and present condition of the churches in Canada, Newfoundland and the United States. To begin such an undertaking might well cause even a man in his prime to hesitate, yet Mr. Croil, although long past threescore years and ten, assumed the task, and in its execution he combined the sprightliness of talented youth with the discriminating judgment of a ripe old age. The space given to the denominations is well balanced and wisely arranged, so that each has its due proportion according to its relative importance in the great work of the Gospel. While the author does not claim "The Genesis" to be a church history, it faithfully represents the leading men and great events of the Churches in the light of living Christianity, and the springs which gave them animation, and the unseen power

of their inspiration. With his electrified goose-quill he infused life into past events in the recital, and resurrected men long dead, not as dry bones, or skeletons, but living, active beings. Mr. Croil acknowledges the hand of God in those heroes, who sowed the seed of the Kingdom in North America, whether they were Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, or any other, doing the Master's work. He faithfully records the strange din of arms he sometimes hears in the battle with iniquity coming over the years of the past, and plainly sees God in history, and Christ in the church.

The book from beginning to end is well written in the Queen's English, plain, simple, fluent, with short sentences, and the author's meaning unmistakable. It is profusely illustrated with beautiful plates of historic churches of all denominations from the Gulf of Mexico to Victoria. We are pleased to notice three of the churches of this city among them, the three which were the pioneers of Christianity west of the mountains. Mr. Croil has certainly put the Christian church in North America under tribute to him by putting in permanent form valuable material which was in danger of being lost through the flight of time. "The Genesis of the Churches" is a fitting memorial monument of his own Christian life.

Opinions are fairly evenly divided as to who is the best dressed man in the House of Commons. While the most critical cannot find fault with the elegant fit and cut of Mr. "Lulu" Harcourt's attire, some profess even greater admiration for Viscount Valentia's dark morning coat, dove-colored tweed trousers and white gaiters, a costume by which this Irish peer has been known for years.

A lesson on how to dress, however, can always be learned from the appearance of George Wyndham, whose frock coat has been described in the old term—immaculate. Among the literary lights of the House of Commons, Sir Gilbert Parker, A. E. W. Mason and Hilaire Bellos have all three found tailors who thoroughly understand the art of making a man look his best, while it is generally granted that Sir John Lawson Walton, K.C., is the best dressed man of the law.—Tit-Bits.