

THROUGH A MONOCLE

VALUE OF A GOVERNOR-GENERAL

ONE of the last activities of the Senate before adjournment was to discuss the duties of the Governor-General. His Excellency had failed to arrange to come down to give royal assent to the bills which had been passed, delegating that onerous duty to Sir Charles Fitzpatrick. A discussion ensued in which important members of the Senate complained that this was hardly paying proper respect to the Second Chamber; but Sir Richard Cartwright explained that these abstinences of His Excellency were quite as much for the convenience of the Chamber as for any other reason. He pointed out that, while he did not scruple to tell his "excellent friend," Sir Charles, when he arrived at five o'clock, to "give assent," that he would have to go home, take his uniform off, and then return to Senate again at nine, as the bills were not yet ready for assent, he would have hesitated to have so ordered the Governor-General about. Incidentally the remark was made that "the assent to bills is on the whole the most important part that the Governor-General has to play in Canada."

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I AM afraid that it will occur to the plain citizen that, if this formal ceremony of giving assent to bills is the most important duty which the Governor-General performs in this country, we are paying a big price for a little thing; and that we could quite well get along without it. At best, it is a pleasing and empty ceremony. It would be almost unheard of for His Excellency to refuse his assent. He might, acting, in practice, as the spokesman for the Home Government, withhold assent until he had reported a bill to the Imperial Ministers for consideration. But this is very seldom done; and it might be all managed very much more cheaply by simply mailing the British Ministry copies of our bills as they are introduced and passed. That would be quicker, cheaper and more business-like. To base the value of the Governor's usefulness on this duty, is to rate it very low. "Royal assent" at Ottawa is, in truth, merely a pretty way of closing a session of Parliament.

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BUT I am most strongly of the opinion that the Governor-General serves much more valuable purposes. He is our last remaining visible link with the Empire. That is worth something in this world where things must commonly be seen to be believed. Then, as Sir Richard Cartwright put it so neatly, he is an Ambassador from the British people to the Canadian people; and this a side of his office which Earl Grey has filled to perfection. He has made it his business to come in contact with all sorts of Canadians; and he ought by this time to have an almost unrivalled knowledge of the various phases of Canadian thought and opinion. He has realized that Canada does not live on Parliament Hill; and he has studied our most widely separated problems at close range. He has even penetrated our white north and learned the worst about our climate. As a volunteer member of the immigration department, he ought to be invaluable when he returns to the Mother Country.

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I HAVE a feeling, however, that, perhaps, the greatest usefulness of a Governor-General is yet to be mentioned. It is not in what he takes from Canada, but in what he brings to Canada. He is commonly an Imperial public man of some considerable experience. He knows the world-wide responsibilities of the Empire, and Canada's relations thereto. He has seen us from the outside. He ought, therefore, to be able to give us some notion of our true position in world politics—a bit of knowledge almost wholly lacking to our people at present. We are in the habit—a habit we probably have borrowed from our neighbours to the South—of looking on Canada as the centre of the universe; and acting on the easy theory that what we don't know, don't matter. We read of wars and international complications occurring in less fortunate and heaven-blessed parts of the earth, much as we read of cyclones and pestilences and famines and other evils from which we do not suffer. By our merits, we are immune. The hand of Providence and our own superior wisdom shields us from all such evils.

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NOW that is exactly the way that a certain Christian gentleman by the name of Paul Kruger once felt. I very well remember a pas-

sionate letter from the gifted Olive Schreiner, written several years before the Boer War, in which she demanded in outraged amazement if it could really be that war—hideous war—was coming to their peaceful, pastoral and religious countryside. Well, it came. Boer homesteads went up in flames. Boer women and children were concentrated in war camps. Boer husbands and fathers were shot dead on the battlefield. The Boer people, in spite of their almost theocratic government, were ridden over by the harrow of war and their independence taken from them. I wonder if Paul Kruger ever reconciled this crushing fact with his theory of life during his long and lonely days of exile in Holland and on the Riviera.

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BUT the thing for us to remember in Canada is that he was wrong. South Africa was not beyond the reach not only of war, but of conquest. Neither is Canada. In fact, we are perilously close to some of the consequences of possible war. We are in the world like other people; and we will become more and more aware of this fact as our wealth increases—adding to the temptation we must always present to powerful peoples—and our interests spread across the seas. Now our Governors-General being men who know the world and see it whole, should regard themselves as missionaries to our people in the matter of their larger responsibilities. I know the task requires tact. All missionaries must be tactful. All missioned people are very sensitive touching the form of unenlightenment which it is the purpose of the missionaries to remove. Still our Governors have usually been tactful. Earl Grey is tact itself. And Earl Grey has let a lot of light on the subject of our real position in the world into sections of mental darkness where it will do the most good. And all missionaries will tell you that no Pagans are so hard to convert as those who have a satisfactory religion of their own.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

That Proud Boast

THE United States seems to be quite proud of Andrew Carnegie because he sold the Carnegie Steel Works to the United States Steel Corporation for \$320,000,000, although a short time before he had given an option on it for \$160,000,000. Last Saturday, Mr. John W. Gates told the story again before a committee of the House of Representatives at Washington. It was certainly a great sale, but there have been sales in Canada on which the profit has been nearly as large proportionately. The Kingston Locomotive Works was turned over to an English syndicate the other day for somewhere about five times what it cost originally. The Montreal Rolling Mills is said to have been turned over recently at three or four times its investment value. Mines in Cobalt and Porcupine worth 10 cents have been sold to the public for \$100,000. Farms around

Toronto worth \$10,000 have been sold for \$300,000. And other instances might be quoted.

The United States is not the only country where factories, mines and real estate have been sold for two or three times what they were worth. The United States need not be quite so proud of Carnegie; they are Carnegies in Canada, even if the transactions do not run to quite so many noughts.

The Warm Weather

MAY, 1911, has been the warmest, driest May the North American continent has known for many years. If this is an indication of what will prevail in July and August, the harvest will not fulfil early predictions. Nothing can stop Canada except a series of bad harvests, hence every wise business man is hoping that this warm spell will soon be broken.

Profitable Ten Dollar Bet

AT the Woodbine, Toronto, last week, a man who bet \$2 on a race, sometimes got back \$2.40, sometimes \$2.60, and he was lucky when he got \$3. The profits were exceedingly small, because the public seemed to bet on favourites only, and the favourites usually won. Under these circumstances the "machines" hadn't much profit to distribute. The value of these "machines," however, as compared with "bookies," which will operate on the other Canadian race-courses, was well illustrated by the first race on Saturday. A Toronto man by the name of McSweeney, had a horse named Carillon in that race, but nobody bet on him. He was considered to have no chance. However, his owner being a good sport bought a ten-dollar ticket to show his faith. Only one or two tickets "to win" were sold. When the race was over, Carillon was declared the winner. The man with the ten-dollar ticket marched up to the paying teller in almost solitary grandeur, thousands of people looking on, and drew out \$1,136. No wonder the crowd cheered him as he stuffed the wad of bills into his various pockets. So much for the honesty of the pari-mutuel machines.

Coronation Humour

IN a more pronounced sense than usual old London is, these days, the centre of the world. And certainly in the huge English-speaking part of the world no event is causing anything like the great interest that the coronation is arousing.

The papers, of course, are full of coronation talk and coronation pictures. They are taking the matter seriously, but not too seriously, as is indicated by such comments as the following:

London is beginning to wear quite a coronation aspect, and visitors seem unanimously of opinion that they have never seen a finer show of scaffolding in any city.—*The Bystander*.

We understand that, though scaffolding and seats are being erected in Parliament Square for the purposes of the coronation procession, provision is being made, no doubt at the instance of Our Dumb Friends' League, to enable all the statues there to have a good view of the pageant.—*Punch*.



Group of young Canadian-born sailors from H.M.C.S. "Rainbow," with their instructor, who left Esquimalt recently for London. At Halifax they were joined by a similar squad from H.M.C.S. "Niobe."

Photograph by Smallwood.