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ANOTHER BUSINESS PREMIER

HIGH Cost of Living or not—the Children of Israel would have gladly given a whole year's crop of manna for a Moses who would have led them out of the wilderness into the promised land in two short weeks. Such a leader the Liberal opposition in New Brunswick found in Walter Edward Foster, for within fourteen days of his acceptance of the leadership of the party triumphant victory at the polls against a strongly entrenched government, led by Hon. James A. Murray, was achieved. Hon. George H. Murray, premier of Nova Scotia—and I guess the old war-horse knows a thing or two about elections—called it "under all circumstances the most remarkable turn-over in the political history of Canada."

Two men the opposition got by the winning post in the elections of June, 1912, out of a field of 48. On February 24, 1917, 27 opposition entries came home winners, some by a nose, some by a length, more by several lengths. Ten opposition candidates lost their deposits in 1912; six government men forfeited their money this year. Mr. Foster was in that runaway race of five years ago as a green horse and an also-ran. Although he just missed election in his own constituency in February, he now leads the field as prime minister of New Brunswick.

The verdict of New Brunswick, if it means anything, is an expression of the people against the antics of professional tricksters and a turning to the plain, business methods of newcomers like Foster. Manitoba did it, British Columbia did it, New Brunswick swung into line. Not so much Liberal and Conservative in any of these elections as business vs. politics, statesmanship vs. partizanship, honesty vs. graft. Norris, Brewster and Foster may not be brilliant prodigies as orators, or manipulators, but they are sound business men, representative of the new ideal of governing on the basis of responsibility to all the people rather than government by the party, for the party, the whole party and nothing but the party. New-born war-premiers these are—all of them—while others could be mentioned who stood the test of the war-leavened, value-demanding spirit as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar. With Mr. Foster included in the circle, Canada may well be proud of her provincial premiers. History records how a similar aggregation of all-stars were drafted at one fell swoop into a bigger Canadian league, and some say history will repeat—but that, of course, is another story.

We have before us now Walter E. Foster, six feet, slim and straight as one of the poplars which waved over the place of his birth at St. Martin's,

Walter Edward Foster, the new Political Head of New Brunswick, Catches and Conveys the Idea of Canadian Public Efficiency

By STANLEY K. SMITH

Editor's Note:—Provincial Premiers in Canada are all Liberal now except two—Ontario and P. E. I. It's a pity our Provincial Premiers should be either Conservative or Liberal, but just big young or middle-aged men, who, at the head of public business, mislay their politics and go in for making our provincial planks popular successes. Merely being a Liberal does not put a man in line with broader ideas in democracy. It's the men who become bigger than either of the political 'isms that keep either of the old parties from dry-rot. W. E. Foster is some such a man. His biographer takes him seriously, because independent of partyism he has taken over a serious job. Conservatives reading this will please note that in this same issue we have devoted three pages, including the cover, to the nation-making record of the present Government.



N.B., April 9, 1874, his face clean and classically cut, keen eyes which require glasses, a pointed nose, full lips and a boyish, alert chin, which in happy moments helps to belie his forty-two years.

Irish ancestry, straight from his father, put the twinkle in the eye and provided the necessary fighting spirit; Loyalist blood, running deep and strong

in the veins of his paternal grandmother, showed very early in the capacity of the young Foster for patriotic service and in his intense love for the land which his forbears adopted. Born in the country, it must have been a temptation to the new premier, when speaking in rural constituencies, to claim an early kinship with the horny-handed sons of toil who get \$6 a barrel for their potatoes and 45 cents a pound for their butter. But even here, honesty forbade. His father was manager of a large lumber concern and, perhaps, some of the elder Foster's love of the woods is finding expression in his son's most active and successful effort as president of the Arboriculture Society to line the streets of St. John with beautiful shade trees.

It is characteristic of the Fosters that Walter Edward is home-trained as well as home-grown. He completed his classical education at our own St. John High School, and when the time came for the choice of a business career it was the Bank of New Brunswick, now absorbed by its larger Nova Scotia brother, that young Foster entered. Sir Thomas White spent ten years writing city hall reports and covering police court for the Toronto Telegram. W. E. Foster put in just an even decade in the wickets and over the ledgers of his city's own financial institution. Then he was given a chance as secretary-treasurer of Vassie & Co., Ltd., a large wholesale dry goods importing house. It will be noted that, given the chance, this young man always makes good. Some may see a sort of Captain Cuttle-Dombey & Son connection in the fact that Miss Johan Mary Vassie, daughter of the head of the firm, became Mrs. Walter Edward Foster in 1900, but this was a year after Mr. Foster's entrance to the firm. The olive branches are now draped gracefully about the Foster domicile in Coburg Street, St. John, four in number—one potential premier and, for that matter, the three little girls are likely to vote, too, some day, if the progressive party of which their daddy is leader goes the whole length and follows the lead of other progressive governments.

Although Mr. Foster was very much occupied in making his firm a very considerable factor on the commercial life of the Maritime Provinces, he by no means wore down his pointed proboscis on the whirring emery. At the age of 32 he was asked to take the vice-chair of the St. John Board of Trade. Two years later he became president, and this aggressive body was, more than ever, for two years, a real force under his leadership. He found time to take military training and retired with the rank of Captain of Artillery in 1903. Early in the