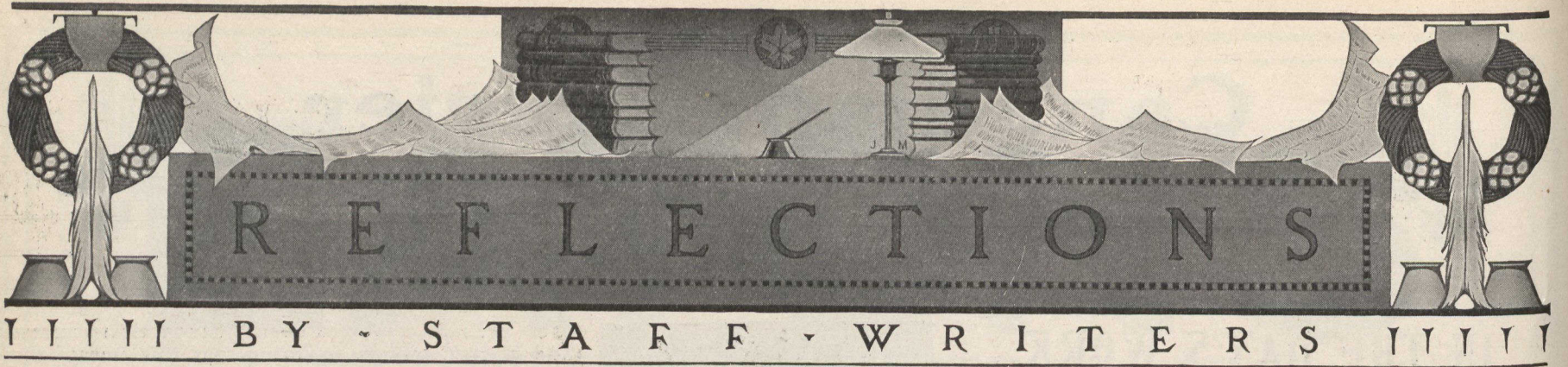




THE RACING SEASON OF 1909

CANADA looks forward to the racing season of 1909 with considerable interest and some apprehension. The moral wave that has swept the horse race out of nearly every state in the Union leads to a conclusion that the sport of kings is not an unmixed blessing, that it has features that it would be well to suppress. But there the trouble begins. For the suppression of the disagreeable features means the death of the sport. No state has yet legislated against horse racing. Each has passed laws against the gambling which either follows in its train or is responsible for its existence.

In Canada, racing has come to us by inheritance from our British fathers. They still race horses and continue to figure that what is good enough for their king is not too bad for common people. And in Canada we figure along pretty much the same lines. We take our racing with its sugar-coating of vice-regal patronage and fashion and close our eyes to the disagreeable pill the coating may cover.

But across the line there has been a large race track following who have made an easy living by trading on the foolishness of people who try to turn a sport into a means of getting rich quick. Will this undesirable element go back to work now that their trade in the Republic has been wiped out, or will they try to find new fields to cultivate, in Canadian race tracks? It is only natural to conclude that the great majority of them will head this way and the coming season will tell whether they can kill the sport in Canada even as they have across the line.

So far as the actual racing goes it should be a wonderful season on the Canadian circuit. While a few of the millionaire American owners have taken their horses to England, the others will have to choose between the non-betting, curtailed meets of the Metropolitan circuit, with their cut stakes and purses, and the open racing in Canada. This means a better class of horses for Canada than has ever raced here before. For after all it is the American horse that makes the Canadian meet. We have our classics like the King's Plate open only to Canadian-breds, that are won by the big Canadian owners with horses of their own breeding, but the other features of the Canadian turf as a rule go to horses from the big breeding farms down south.

Thus racing will be emphasised in both directions and the question to be decided is whether the future of the sport in Canada did not depend on its not becoming too emphatic. Whether the veneer of patronage and fashion is sufficient to cover the shortcomings of the sport when it is given in stronger doses. The season of 1909 should furnish the answer to this question.



THE ALBERTA ELECTIONS

ALBERTA is shortly to have its second general election to select its second legislature. Premier Rutherford seems to have done well and there is no reason to believe that there will be a change of government. It is perhaps unfortunate, but not surprising, that the Opposition is so weak. A strong Opposition usually makes a stronger Government. Any provincial party-in-power which tries to reduce the Opposition to the vanishing point is inviting trouble for itself and for the province over which it rules.

Alberta is progressive and progressing. Railways are pushing their long arms here and there through the length and breadth of its enormous area, and yet are unable to keep up with the settler. Its eastern and western boundaries will this year be connected by three transcontinental railways, and its northern and southern boundaries are also being drawn closer together by the same rapid extension of railway communication. The province is now entering upon a policy of guaranteeing the bonds of branch lines of such local significance that the Federal Government cannot be expected to assist. The province has also undertaken to purchase and operate its own telephone

system, eliminating the Bell Telephone Company and other private corporations. It has even gone so far as to establish provincial creameries and to make an appropriation for a pork-packing industry. Shortly, it will possibly go into the business of mining and distributing coal.

The only possible danger is the too speedy widening of governmental and municipal activity along the lines of ownership. Free schools and free text-books are defensible because education is of primary importance. Guaranteeing railway bonds is justifiable as a temporary expedient for increasing the rate of railway-building, without adding to the burden of administration. Operating telephones, creameries and pork-packing establishments is a more doubtful proposition, and it is just questionable if the province is justified in indulging itself in this way. However, that is a policy which may be left safely to the people themselves to decide. If they find it unwise, they will not hesitate about abandoning it in favour of private operation of public utilities.



THE PUBLIC AND REFORMS

SUGGESTIONS of reforms come from the people and not from the parliamentary representatives who make the laws. This is a circumstance which is too often overlooked. Very few great forward measures originate within parliaments. The member of parliament or legislature is more concerned with vote-getting and vote-pleasing and with party organisation without and within the legislative body to which he belongs, than to initiating reforms in administration. The political worker who is not a member is too often a mere echo of his parliamentary hero; he is seldom found advocating reforms.

It is the business of the public to project and advocate reforms. They must talk and agitate them, write letters to the newspapers, pass resolutions at public meetings, and encourage those leaders of public opinion who are not active members of a party organisation. For example, the reforms in the care of game of various kinds have been advocated by Fish and Game Associations of one kind or another. Improvements in the care of our forests and in the attitude of the people towards reforestation are coming from such organisations as the Canadian Forestry Association. The movement for law reform has not come from within the provincial legislatures but from broad-minded observers on the outside.

The movement for further Civil Service Reform in the federal government and in the various provincial administrations must come from the people if it is to come at all. It is the people, not the politicians, who are in a position to make war on patronage and the spoils system. It is the people alone who may advocate the removal from our public life of that form of bribery which pays for votes or partisan service with employment at the taxpayers' cost. A civil service appointed and controlled by political partisans cannot give efficient public administration. The civil service must be put upon an independent, business-like basis if incompetence, partisanship, favouritism and greed are to be eradicated.

Public service of this kind is a self-denying ordinance. The man who has a business and a family may find that studying and agitating civil service reform is a tax upon his time and energy. Yet his obligation as a citizen demands the sacrifice. If every citizen were to take the selfish view and cease all discussion of public questions, the country would soon go to wrack and ruin. Every state's success depends upon the public spirit of its people. The efficiency of the public service of Great Britain was not secured without great individual sacrifice on the part of many generations of reformers. The great reforms in civil service regulations which have made brilliant the recent pages of United States history have been possible only because of a body of enthusiastic and public-spirited agitators. Those