

## Three Events of Importance.

Recent events in the life of Western Canada are deserving of more than a passing notice. The harvest has been gathered; in one of the provinces a general election has been held; the Premier of the Dominion has paid a visit to what he is forced now to recognize as the Greater Canada.

### THE HARVEST

With regard to the harvest everyone will be ready to admit that it was not up to the average. And yet there were redeeming features. Until recently people have been in the habit of looking upon the southern half of the provinces as the only reliable section. Now they will be ready to admit that the northern townships can hold their own. At least this year they have saved the situation, so that in spite of drought and heat, Western Canada is able to give a good account of itself to the rest of the world. If in some sections there has been little return for labor, the neighboring states to the south have perhaps even a worse report to make. We are not the only sufferers this hard year.

### COST OF LIVING

The shortage in grain the world over will mean an increase in the cost of food productions. The farmer will not feel this so much as others for he has his own supply of eatables. He will find, however that, in common with others, he must pay more for the other necessities of life. Within ten years the cost of living has greatly increased, and the end is not yet. Eggs, butter, meat, clothing, lumber—name what we may—we find the cost much greater than a few years ago. If the burden is great for the farmer it is doubly great for the poor man in the city who finds that food, clothing and shelter cost more than in the past while the wage scale is very little higher. Those who could barely exist in past years now find themselves going into debt, or resorting to questionable means to eke out a bare living.

### THE REASON FOR HARD TIMES

The reason for hard times it is not always easy to explain, for there are causes at work which would naturally bring about cheaper living, yet in spite of this the cost is increasing. Working on the side of cheapness there are the additional capital and energy applied to the cultivation of land and the rearing of live stock; the greater use of scientific methods, which are as yet applied only here and there, in mere patches on the surface of the globe; and the possibilities of new inventions cheapening production. On the side of dearer we have first and foremost the increased output of gold. Within twenty years the amount available is twice what it was formerly. The purchasing power therefore is not as great as it was once. Articles cost more in consequence. History and Economics alike teach this lesson.

### THE WAY TO PROSPERITY

But in a country like ours there need be no hard times if we are content to observe the two principles that should govern our actions as a people. In the first place we must learn to rise and fall together. It must not be country against town, employer against employee, grain growers against transporters, manufacturer against consumer, but it must be recognized that a state is an organism in which every vital part is necessary to every other part, and that no part can be out of order without the whole organism suffering. Recently there have been attempts to make class stand against class where both are useful as if the law of life should be "Each for himself and devil take the hindmost." That is just as bad doctrine as is contained in that old motto, whether adopted by capitalist or worker on a small scale, whether by politician or the plain head of a family: "Both feet in the trough and a tusk for intruders." The second condition of prosperity in a nation is that it should live in the best possible relations with its neighbors. To erect unnecessary tariff walls, to tax ourselves for the sake of a few manufacturers whose efforts do but little to help the country; this is one of the most senseless proceedings that can be imagined. And just for the sake of rivalry to enter into the needless preparation of armaments is both nonsensical and criminal.

### THE MANITOBA ELECTIONS

The second event of importance in Western life is the fact that elections have been held in Manitoba. It is not for the Western Home Monthly to take part in party politics, but there are a few things in connection with the election that are of more than party and provincial interest.

When the British North America Act was brought into force it was found that certain problems were placed before the federal powers and certain other problems entrusted for solution to the provinces. These problems were distinct, and except in a few cases there was no possibility of overlapping. It might have been expected, then, that in provincial contests little reference would be made to Dominion politics, and that the contestants would limit themselves to provincial issues. As a matter of fact, it turned out far otherwise. Many of the government candidates refused to consider provincial issues, but harked back to Dominion questions; their opponents in some cases evidently felt that they must act as apologists for the party at Ottawa. This blending of provincial and federal is most unfortunate. The words Conservative and Liberal have no meaning whatever as applied to provincial politics. To use these terms is to take a step toward the complete domination of party politics as in the cities of the United States. It is easy to understand how the provincial and federal are so closely united. The newspapers, and many of the prominent workers in provincial elections are beneficiaries from the Ottawa Government. As political opinion seems to go in Manitoba today, the worst recommendation a candidate could have is that he possesses the backing of a newspaper controlled from Ottawa. The Manitoba government did not get its vote because it was strong, but because its opposition was so weak and its leaders so closely allied with Ottawa. And this is not condemning the Ottawa government as such. People object to having provincial issues decided by the federal powers.

### THE BALLOT-BOX THEFT

A feature of the contest was the tampering with the ballot box at Russell. It is to be regretted that this occurred, for it will lower the estimate which outsiders might have with regard to our people. It will undoubtedly lower our estimate of ourselves. We have as a people made much parade of loyalty but it is surely a poor form of loyalty which makes use of bunting but tolerates and encourages trickery and theft. There are no words strong enough for condemnation of those engaged in such work. Whether it is the work of politicians or gamblers it is a dastardly crime and any decent man would be ashamed to condone or to take advantage of it.

### THE WAYS OF JUDGES

In connection with this fraud the judge made a ruling which is characteristic of Canadian law courts. He admitted that there was shameful theft, but said that he could not recognize the crime. To the lay mind it would seem that there is something wrong in judgment based on the letter and on precedent, if plain common sense cannot be allowed to have some place. Better the old Cadi without the written law than a modern judge, if he cannot do what his judgment tells him should in justice be done. However, it is to the credit of the judge that in spite of his predilections and his knowledge of facts he did that which he felt legally compelled to do. What we contend is that in matters of this kind the written law should be the servant and not the master of the judge.

### TALK WITHOUT ACTION

The ballot-box outrage is said to be only one of many forms of crookedness in the election. If either party knows this it is a duty to prosecute. He who is silent with regard to crime is as guilty as the criminal. To compromise or remain inactive is an admission of inability to prove wrong-doing, or an admission of equal culpability. Under party government the onus of prosecution rests with the parties rather than with private individuals. Still we expect that as in the past there will be "much cry and little wool."

### THE DECLINE OF PARTY

The bitterness and the crookedness of this election indicates most forcibly the evil of the party system as it holds in Canada today. Manitoba is no better and no worse than any other province. That the party system must give way to something better is most necessary. In every phase of national life the last twenty years has witnessed a marvellous change. Even that most conservative of all forces, religion, has changed so that the orthodox man according to old standards is scarcely to be found. It is strange that in the matter of politics the same old views and same old animosities should prevail. Just as recent years have witnessed the centralization of manufacture, of population and of wealth, just as they have witnessed the entry of women into business, professional and even political life, just as they have seen co-operative organizations of all kind take the place of individual

effort, so before long we must see a change in the form of government that will make it more truly representative and useful. We have yet to see in operation government by experts. In all other lines we now have experts in control, but in matters of legislation we trust to the rule of those who are unskilled in their work. And in this we shall reap as we have sown.

### THE VISIT OF SIR WILFRED LAURIER

The third event of interest to the West is the recent visit of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his party. We did not expect much more than pretty speeches and vague promises, but it was something for the ministers to see what is destined to be the greater half of the Dominion. It is important, too, that he should understand that there are some immediate duties to the West that must be discharged. The Eastern Canadian must learn, and he cannot learn it too soon, that the only hope for himself is in the development of the West. His first market is here. The home for many of his sons is here. A divided Canada is no Canada at all. And this is true whether we speak as to territory, or race, or religious belief. It is gratifying to note that Sir Wilfrid expresses himself so emphatically on this very point.

### THE HUDSON'S BAY RAILWAY

Then, the Hudson's Bay Railway must be constructed without delay, and if constructed at public expense must not be handed over to a private company which will exact tolls from the people and give but an imperfect service in return. There are indications that the C. N. R. is alive to the situation and that it has expectations with regard to ownership and control of the line and of the terminal port as well. The public had better not be deceived by utterances with regard to the terminals. Unless we mistake, Port Churchill is more likely to be the terminus than Port Nelson. The few on the inside will know. The public will remain in the dark. This is always the way in such matters.

### THE GRAIN QUESTION

Another duty of the Dominion government is to protect the farmers in the sale of their grain. If Sir Wilfrid's visit did nothing else it secured from him a promise that there will be no further mixing of grades in the terminal elevators. This is excellent so far as it goes. The final adjustment of the grain question is evidently far off. In Manitoba the whole situation has been "queered" and there are interesting developments ahead. In Saskatchewan the Commission have found that the farmers do not know how to solve the question. Is it not time that a body of men representing the whole West should be appointed to consider this matter not only from the point of view of the producer but the consumer as well? It requires experts to settle a complicated question of this kind. A farmer may be an expert in raising grain; he is not an expert in the marketing of it. An ordinary legislator may know something of ward politics and perhaps of bridge building, but he cannot act intelligently in a matter of this kind because he is not well-informed. Some day we shall get a settlement that is wise and fair.

### HON. MR. OLIVER'S VISIT

There are two other public events of no small importance to Canada. The first was Mr. Oliver's visit to the far North-West. Our possibilities in that district are not yet realized. It is only fitting that the trusted Minister of the Interior should visit this great region and get information at first hand. It must never be that its resources will be handed over to those who know their value by a government ignorant of the facts. That has been Canadian practice hitherto. Evidently Mr. Oliver intends that his government shall be as well informed as any tramp speculator, and there will be no likelihood that coal and timber areas will be given away for a song.

### EARL GREY'S VISIT

And while Mr. Oliver has gone to the far North-West, our popular Governor-General has gone on his visit to Hudson's Bay. That his report will have much to do with the future development of Canada goes without saying. It is a sign of the times in Canada that what, until quite recently, have been considered barren and unprofitable regions are now being exploited and their true value to the nation being made known. The Canada most of us have known has been a little Canada; that which we are now beginning to know is a much greater Canada; but the Canada of the future is beyond the imagination of the most optimistic to-day to conceive. And all this provided we are true to those righteous principles without the practice of which no nation can thrive.