

FROM WEEK TO WEEK

"Spectator's" Discussion of Topics of Interest to Churchmen

MUCH has been said in recent years on the concentration of our population in the larger cities. A cry has been raised that every effort should be made to keep a larger proportion of our people on the land, and, presumably, in the towns and villages. There are, no doubt, many reasons why our larger cities grow with abnormal rapidity and the rural and semi-urban population remains stationary or diminishes; but we doubt if sufficient attention has been given to the effect of the financial policy of our banks and trust companies. This policy is to facilitate the establishment and extension of industries in the cities and to make industrial growth in the smaller centres of population almost impossible. The power of initiative placed in the hands of the local bank manager is practically nil. His recommendation of a loan to a local industry, for expansion, has to be submitted to headquarters, where the transaction seems trifling, compared with the great investments of daily occurrence which absorb attention. It is dealt with on the basis of what is supposed to be sound business at the moment. There appears to be no statesmanship that thinks of the building up of the country as a whole. Growing towns mean diffused business. They mean the making of the country round about more attractive and profitable for the agricultural class. They mean the development of a larger type of citizen. They mean a wider distribution of wealth. Men who handle trust funds ought to have these things impressed upon them. They ought to be imbued with sufficient patriotism—a higher sense of justice to their clients—to take these matters into consideration. It is all very well to seek the deposits of citizens who reside in the country and the town, but is there no sense of responsibility towards those communities from which that money is gathered? The whole trend of banking business in Canada seems to be the concentration of enormous capital in the hands of a few men, whose policy seems to be to support big business and let smaller concerns shift for themselves. Is it any wonder that cities should grow with unwonted rapidity, while towns that ought to emerge into cities, and hamlets that have all the resources to fit them to become towns, are neglected? While this is going on, the country is treated to high-sounding dissertations on "financial stability," "adequate reserves," etc. The writer is not pleading for the throwing overboard of our great industries in the urban centres, but he is desirous of seeing a broader and more statesmanlike sense of responsibility developed among the men who have come to control the finances of the country. We say "control," tentatively, for, after all, the ultimate authority in these, as in other matters, lies with the Government, and finally with the people.

Little has appeared in the Canadian press regarding the proceedings of the Lambeth Conference. The Church in England is usually not slow in giving to the public a report of its public acts. It is to be hoped that the representatives from the Dominions and foreign countries have not modified this excellent practice. No doubt the discussions and conclusions of the Conference will be as valuable months hence as they are to-day, but they lose materially in public interest. A hundred will read

the reports of what is in progress for one that will read of what happened a few months ago. Mention has been made of a unique service or session at which Bishops and priests of the Eastern Church were present as honoured guests. Churchmen, generally, would like to have a clearer presentation of the purposes in the minds of our Bishops, who seem to attach special importance in these fraternizing efforts. So far as "Spectator" can see it, it is a case of goodwill and ecclesiastical fraternity, all on one side. We have noticed no important assembly of the Eastern Church calling into their presence priests and Bishops of the Anglican Church to do honour to them on equal terms. Has there ever been a public and authoritative acknowledgment of the validity of Anglican orders, by that Church with which we claim communion? Are these public ceremonies, in which we pay reverence to Bishops and Patriarchs of the East, a declaration on our part that we are satisfied that they have not only fought a good fight, but that they have kept the faith? The crumbling of the whole ecclesiastical authority and influence within the nation, of a Church that was supposed to hold the people in the hollow of its hand, needs careful examination. Why should we rush into its arms? Fellowship within the Church Catholic, of all its members, is a natural and a normal ambition, but are we justified in assuming that valid orders covers everything? "Spectator" hopes that the Lambeth Conference will insist upon some basis of mutual understanding and official acknowledgment between these two branches of the Church, that will raise our extension of courtesy to the Eastern Church to something more than sporadic effusiveness on the part of individual priests and Bishops. The Church of which we speak seems to have a healthy capacity to receive homage. Is it ready to reciprocate without reservations?

The new issue in the marriage law of the Province of Quebec is a very serious one indeed. It goes far beyond the point raised in the famous Hébert case of some ten years ago. The marriage of two Roman Catholics by a Protestant minister may in law be binding, and in equity probably ought so to be, but there is always in such a marriage the consciousness of the evasion of ecclesiastical duties. The contracting parties are making use of the clergyman in the accomplishment of that evasion. As a consequence there is little excuse for a clergyman knowingly to solemnize such a marriage. The marriage of a Protestant and a Roman Catholic is quite a different matter. Of course, we know that any religious ceremony conducted and completed by any but a Roman ecclesiastic is not regarded as valid by the Roman Church. When, however, the law of the land confirms this position, the Anglican Church and all other non-Roman Churches are legally disfranchised. If an Anglican and a Roman Catholic desire to marry, and there is no other impediment, the Anglican Church must stand upon its rights to officiate or be forever stultified in the eyes of men, and of its own conscience. To act otherwise, is to submit to ecclesiastical terrorism. Here is a case that must be fought out in the highest court of the realm. Here is a case of a mixed marriage

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