

THE WEEKLY ONTARIO.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 1917.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

The editor has returned from a tour of more than eight hundred miles, all within the province of Ontario and he now takes his pen in hand to inflict a few thinks and observations upon the unfortunate reader.

Our tour, briefly speaking, was from Belleville to Toronto, thence to Muskoka, through the Muskoka lakes and on to Parry Sound to Ottawa and from the capital city back to Belleville. Several brief side trips were also made.

Throughout this considerable tour we found the crop outlook nothing less than magnificent. In all our experience we have never seen an agricultural prospect more fair to look upon and more filled with richness of promise. The single exception of corn will greatly benefit by these later days and nights of true midsummer heat. To find July half over and every living thing in the way of vegetation still clad in a vivid shade of green is an experience that seldom comes to the natives of Ontario. High temperatures and an average rainfall that is none too plentiful make drought the normal condition of Ontario summers. But this year, no matter whether we examined vegetation in the skillfully tilled farming lands of the county of York, in the coarse sands over the Laurentian rocks of Muskoka or the rich bottom lands of the Ottawa valley, the prospect was everywhere the same—greenness and luxuriant growth on every side.

East and north of Toronto the crops were somewhat later than in the Bay of Quinte district, due to excessive rainfall in the spring but the promise of abundant yields was quite as evident as it is here. In the Muskoka and Algonquin park section the crops grown are principally hay, oats, and potatoes. For cereal production this great territory is ill adapted. But the potato seems to thrive, even in the midst of the unfertile sand. The strong growth of tops gave evidence of ample yields of tubers to be expected later on.

Stretching from the Lake of the Thirty Thousand Islands easterly across Ontario, crossing this county, on the southern side, just thence passing the St. Lawrence through the Lake of the Thousand Islands and on into the Adirondack region of New York, is the great Laurentian formation of North America, preserving common geologic and scenic characteristics. The tourist passing through the Muskoka lakes could easily imagine that he was travelling among the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence. The same rock-bound shores, the same precipitous, wooded islets are everywhere features of the scenery. Look in any direction that you will as you make your tortuous way through Lakes Muskoka, Joseph and Rosseau there is a vista of satisfying beauty.

An enthusiastic American lady in the party, who was doing Muskoka for the first time, exclaimed that the lakes resembled Killarney but were much finer.

As a summer resort Muskoka has been decidedly the thing for many seasons past, but this year Muskoka is somewhat in the dumps. The summer hotels arose and flourished by dozens, many of them, well appointed and pretentious in architecture. But the war, prohibition, high cost of management and supplies, an abnormally cool season, the counter-attraction of touring by automobile have combined to make those once crowded centers of recreation, pleasure-seeking and frivolity, somewhat sombre and quiet in appearance. Since September the sixteenth, nineteen sixteen, three beautiful summer hotels have gone skyward in the form of smoke presumably because the spirits had departed. The hotels that remain are not regarded as Class A risks by insurance underwriters.

At Gravenhurst, a town of 2,000 inhabitants, we found only one commercial hotel in operation and even that was not conspicuously busy. Prohibition has had a sobering effect in more ways than one.

At Parry Sound we discovered a condition of affairs that was even more strange. Parry Sound is a very busy place with important shipping and lumbering interests and munition plants near by have made it extravagantly active and prosperous, notwithstanding the fact that it is a bustling hive, with well over 6,000 inhabitants it now contains no hotel where the humble wayfarer can obtain a meal. Two former popular hostilities furnish rooming accommodation but have abolished both bar and cuisine. The boniface of the "Mansion" house informed us, in a lugubrious tone, that the advancing prices of food and the cut-throat competition of the Chinese "eats," had made his once flourishing table d'hote a luxury and a

tyrannical money-loser. But as several of the restaurants were unusually clean and inviting places of refreshment the hungry traveller had small complaint to offer.

In normal seasons we are told that Americans are very greatly in the majority among the Muskoka resorters. This year Americans are pretty busy at home and are not doing so much travelling as they were prior to the entry of the United States into the war.

Although Muskoka is several hundred feet higher than Belleville in altitude, the days are almost as hot as we are finding them at home. But while the days may be sizzling hot, the nights are almost invariably cool and refreshing, hence the man with "nerves" may enjoy slumber without being parboiled or stewed.

We find upon inquiry that very few in this section have ever toured Algonquin park. At the risk of being tedious we will devote a few words to description.

Algonquin park is a tract of land very nearly in the form of a square with almost sixty miles to the side. It has been set apart by the government of Ontario as a game and forest preserve and as a play-ground for man for all time to come.

Algonquin park occupies the highest land in older Ontario. Within its confines a half-dozen important rivers have their source. More than a thousand beautiful lakes are hidden away among the hills.

Across the park from east to west a single track railway threads its winding course. John R. Booth, Ottawa's veteran, millionaire, lumberman, was the promoter of this pioneer line, primarily because he wished to gain access to the vast wealth of timber that could not be floated out on the diminutive streams. The railway is now owned and operated by the Grand Trunk system and the company provides a capital service. Leaving Parry Sound (Rose Point) at six o'clock in the morning the journey of 263 miles to Ottawa is completed at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon. A more interesting or picturesque route it would be difficult to discover on the American continent. When the line reaches the height of land, the roadbed is just 1607 feet above sea-level. Towering above the roadbed are rugged wooded hills, rising almost to the dignity of mountains. Their summits are occasionally more than 3,000 feet above the surface of the sea. For more than 200 miles this ever changing and ever interesting panorama of mountain, hill, lake, streamlet and forest extends. For half a hundred miles the railway follows the tortuous valley of the Madawaska, at first a tiny creek and later a powerful river forming the center of the landscape. The Madawaska passes down from the height of land by a series of rapids and cascades, as wild as its own environment, as beautiful as the dream of a landscape artist.

Algonquin park has been made a sanctuary of wild animal life. Since its creation in 1893 it has been illegal to carry fire-arms within the limits of the park but permits are regularly issued to fishermen. The beavers have become so numerous that last fall the government found it necessary to kill off two thousand of them. We saw two freshly made dams, well plastered with mud crossing a little stream that paralleled the railway. The red deer are multiplying by thousands. The conductor informed us that frequently he saw them in the evening grazing in groups near the track. They had lost all fear of passing trains and scarcely raised their heads after they recognized the roar of the locomotive. They were still, however, shy of campers. The black bear has also multiplied extensively in this favored haven. At night time they are often found prowling about the Highland Inn, on the lookout for kitchen refuse.

The geologic formation of all the district is Laurentian, with glacial drift overlying. The huge hills all along the route, are, generally speaking, masses of coarse gravel. The rocky ledges seldom appear. The original forests were magnificent in development. Pine, spruce, black birch, hemlock, tamarack and black ash seemed to find here a congenial home. A few sections still remained where the forest primeval flourished. But practically everywhere the forest giants had given place to sickly poplar shrubs. Forest fires have finished all that the rapacious lumbermen had spared.

When it has come to dealing with our natural resources, particularly with our forests, Canadians have carried out a policy that has been asinine in its stupidity. Had even the elemental principles of forestry been followed those useless hills of gravel between Ottawa and Parry Sound would still be clothed with their splendid forests of white pine. As it is now, one may traverse nearly the whole distance without seeing a living pine. In only one section, immediately to the north of Hastings county, does any extensive growth of young pines appear. Probably fires from the railway will finish off these before they have a chance to become more than saplings.

In the regions east and west of the Park optimistic settlers have cleared homes for themselves in the more level sections. Their

ventures do not appear to be proving highly successful. Many comparatively new houses were abandoned by their owners. Even in this favorable year the crops looked thin and badly nourished. A year or two of cropping extracts all the humus from the soil and the settlers are then as helpless and hopeless on their patches of red sand as though stranded in the Sahara.

INCORRECTLY REPORTED

Like Hugh Guthrie, M.P., and Fred Pardee, M.P., the editor of The Ontario must complain about being incorrectly reported. The report in yesterday's papers stated that the resolution which was passed by a gathering of Liberal newspaper men at Toronto on Thursday afternoon, in reference to the political situation at Ottawa, represented the unanimous opinion of those at the meeting, with one exception, the exception being Mr. W. Elliott, publisher of The Mitchell Recorder. This resolution was presented after the meeting had been in progress for some time. We were obliged to leave to catch our train before any definite conclusion had been reached or a vote taken. Had we been present we would have been compelled to vote against the resolution as published.

With virtually everything that the resolution contains we are in the most hearty accord. Similar views have been put forward from time to time in The Ontario.

Where we differ from the resolution is in its seemingly indefinite and unguarded support of a coalition government.

Col. Currie, M.P., asserted in the House of Commons on Thursday that the coalition government scheme was being promoted by German gold, the idea of the promoters being to put out of action that grand bulwark of patriotism, commonly known as the Conservative party.

The Ontario has not at any stage of the game been advocating coalition, therefore Col. Currie cannot consistently charge us with having received the German long-green. Or, if we have been bought at a price, we have not as yet begun to deliver the goods.

Among the recent intensely earnest and zealous advocates of coalition have been The Toronto Mail and Empire, The Toronto News, The St. Catharines Standard and a host of the lesser lights of Conservative journalism in Ontario. We would be sorry to believe that all the great and good men at the head of these incorruptible papers had succumbed to the lure of the Kaiser's low-value currency. However, Col. Currie is an honorable man and he probably speaks with authority.

The disappearance of the Conservative party from power at Ottawa would we think, be an excellent move whether it were accomplished by the German mark applied to needy newspaper offices or the Canadian ballot applied to the present majority in the House of Commons.

But for us to propose a coalition, with the possibility of being charged with having received a share of the Hunnish loot, is altogether too bold a proposition for us to entertain. We have not been at all charmed, up to date, with the prospect of a union of forces with Robert the unready and Bob, the rogeriser.

Some of our brother Liberal editors are more optimistic and see great possibilities in such a move. But, frankly, we do not. We would like to know more about terms and conditions and the personnel of the proposed combination before expressing endorsement.

It might be, after the purging fires of an election had done their work, that a coalition with a small war cabinet, as they have it in England, would be a good arrangement.

We believe that the Canadian people are now in such a mood that if they are given an opportunity they will make short work of those who have for the past three years so shamelessly played politics, squandered the country's resources and grafted and profited with the money filched from the pockets of the poor.

When we see the survivors of the great purging that must soon take place we will be in a better position to discuss in an intelligent manner the prospective benefits of a true National War Government.

To attempt to evolve a strong war cabinet out of the elements now holding the reins of power at Ottawa would, in our estimation, be just as futile as an attempt to bombard the moon with peanuts.

NATURE'S WISDOM

Nature is infinitely wise. She carries out a balance of forces that keeps everything beautifully adjusted. Just when some bug comes along and it appears probable that it will multiply to such an extent as to destroy human life on earth, or the food upon which humanity subsists, along comes some other bug or some other force that puts the original bug on the hummer.

Some years ago, man, supposing himself to be wiser than Nature, armed himself with

guns and ammunition and set out to destroy all the bird-life and animal-life in sight. He did his work pretty thoroughly. But he also destroyed the balance of Nature.

The birds, that live largely upon bugs and larvae, being destroyed the bugs had nothing else to do but multiply and replenish the earth. Through the counties of Hastings and Prince Edward, the tent-caterpillar erected his tabernacle in such numbers as to become a public nuisance. The entire destruction of our apple orchards was threatened. The caterpillar's depredations, year after year, have weakened the growth, or caused the loss of multitudes of promising trees. A close relative of the tent caterpillar, the forest caterpillar, was doing business in almost as thorough a fashion in our woods and groves. The maple and beech were the chief sufferers but this particular caterpillar had an appetite that didn't reject the leaf of any deciduous tree.

But, strangely enough, in this season of 1917 the caterpillars of both species have almost completely disappeared. We have personally seen only three specimens this year. We have not followed the course of bugology with sufficient thoroughness to ascertain the reason for the disappearance of this once flourishing race. Possibly some wiser enemy has planned and carried out an almost completely successful Bartholomew's. Be that as it may, they are gone and long may they remain wherever they are now located.

The past winter, with its extraordinary severity and the late spring, prolonged well into the summer, may have had an unfavorable effect upon the existence of bugs and grubs. The potato-beetle is reported very scarce this season. The codling moth that finds congenial shelter in the heart of the apple is also having a hard time of it. The aphid, or green louse, that feeds upon rose-bushes, has not been nearly so numerous this year.

If the long winter did all this for us, we have no reason to regret our augmented coal bills.

How considerate those German-Americans have become when they ask Congress not to send German-Americans to France to kill their own relatives.

The nation that deliberately murdered an innocent nation like Belgium need not balk at anything.

The once proud spud is having its arrogance humbled. At the present rate of downward progress it will soon be willing to associate with people having less than a million dollars in their bank account.

Winston Churchill, the "unsinkable politician," was the man Borden took his orders from when he killed the Laurier naval scheme, and left us to the protection of the Japanese fleet.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

(By Henry Van Dyke)

Home, for my heart still calls me;  
Home through the danger zone,  
Home, whatever befalls me,  
I will sail again to my own.

Wolves of the sea are hiding  
Closely along the way,  
Under the water bidding  
Their moment to read and slay.

Black is the eagle that brands them,  
Black are their hearts as the night,  
Black is the hate that sends them  
To murder, but not to fight.

Flower of the German culture,  
Boast of the Kaiser's marine,  
Choose for your emblem the vulture,  
Cowardly, cruel, obscene.

Forth from her sheltered haven  
Our peaceful ships glide slow,  
Noiseless in flight as a raven,  
Gray as the hooded crew.

She doubles and turns in her bearing,  
Like a twisting plover she goes;  
The way of her westward faring  
Only the captain knows.

In a lonely bay concealing  
She lingers for days, and slips,  
At dark, from her covert, stealing  
Through channels feared by the ships.

Brave are the men and steady  
Who guide her over the deep,  
British mariners ready  
To face the sea wolf's leap.

Lord of the winds and waters,  
Bring our ship to her mark,  
Safe from this game of hide-and-seek  
With murderers in the dark.

Other Editors' Opinions

CONSCRIPTION

The conscription bill seems to become more, out less, severe in committee. Mr. Meighen has added a set of provisions against agitation, which Mr. Laurier justly termed not drastic but Draconian. Persons agitating against the enforcement of the act or impeding its operation may be imprisoned for twelve months, and a newspaper publishing such matter, whether wittingly or not, may be summarily suppressed during the war. These provisions will come into effect at once upon the third reading, and the precious right of free speech will be banned. There seems to be no exemption of election orators, and it is conceivable that not a few anti-conscriptionist candidates may be landed in jail. The Opposition press makes no outcry, deeming it more profitable, we suppose, to let the Government involve itself in all the trouble which it is able to contrive. Opposition to the United States act is only punishable, it is said, when seditious language is used.

Conscription, however, is not to go into force until proclaimed by the Governor-in-Council. When that will be there is no end of speculation. It is said, for example, that if consent to the extension of the life of parliament is refused, the enforcement of the act will be postponed till after a general election. Mr. MacLean, of Halifax, remarked in debate that it was generally understood that the act would not be put in force until a united effort of voluntary enlistment had been made.

The parties are jockeying for the inside track in an inevitable election. The Premier would be glad of a coalition, which would destroy the Liberal party and array the people in two racial groups. He continues, hopefully, to seek coalition for the moral advantage of the pose of patriotism above party. The Liberals seek the same advantage by encouraging the Premier's advances, but holding to terms which he cannot accept. At the last moment the evil shadow of Clifford Sifton falls upon the scene. His Winnipeg Free Press clamors for a union of the English against the French-Toronto Sun (Ind.).

COALITION

A coalition at Ottawa would mean a union or merger of the Conservative and Liberal parties and the formation of a government drawn from and supported by both. The aim of the promoters of coalition is to put an end to parliamentary opposition and so withdraw government from the influence of public opinion. They aim, it is said, to make complete the exclusion of the people from government during the war and the period of reconstruction, by extending indefinitely the life of the present parliament. The scheme involves incredible assumptions. It assumes, for example, that one of the great parties will consent to destruction and that government in Canada will derive from a moribund parliament authority for vast enterprises of coercion without the accord of every substantial element of the electorate. It assumes, too, erroneously, we think, that the people will submit to exclusion from the solution of the problems of the railways and of taxation.

Assuming that parliament and the people consented to coalition, what advantages would it offer? The war is now carried on by one party, while the other looks on, offering suggestions and criticism, on the whole just, and above all aiding the government to resist corruption and incompetence. How would these services be performed if an end were put to parliamentary opposition and the people were excluded from government? Who would guard the public treasury against the powerful forces which are working for the suppression of popular government? —Toronto Weekly Sun (Ind.).

TRENTON'S BIG CELEBRATION

All is in readiness for the big celebration in Trenton on Wednesday, August 8th, under the auspices of the Firemen. The diamond at the park has been rolled for the big baseball game between Belleville and Trenton.

CASUALTIES

Wounded:—R. R. Dongan, Newburgh, killed by A. F. Coe, Harrowsmith, killed by G. L. Johnston, Plotsburg, killed by Mr. E. L. Orser, of Winnipeg, is the great of his daughter, Mrs. Ralph Hubbs.