

## Titles in Canada

The man who does anything does it with the expectation of recognition.—Take away the natural means by which the honor may be bestowed and you throw him back on the love of wealth and power

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

This is an important question, and it is far from being settled. Popular opinion will undoubtedly continue to approve the action of the Dominion government in discountenancing hereditary honors. We are pretty well agreed, now, and it is likely that we shall come to be still more unanimous in declaring that every fish shall hang by its own tail and every tub stand on its own bottom. Each man's life should stand in the strength of what he does and not what he inherits. His life is his own, so let him make or mar it. He cannot inherit his father's character, so let him not try to clothe himself in his father's reputation.

But there still remains the vast and ever-pressing question as to the public recognition of public service and eminent merit. It is a far more important question than some appear to think. No screaming about democracy can prevent the people from honoring them whom they admire and love. Democracy is a good deal more than an envious sentiment for equality. "I am as good as you are, and a damn sight better," is the true utterance of the disposition which is often loud and heated in its denunciation of titles. If it is thought that by preventing any Canadian being called Sir, or My Lord, that distinguished abilities and ministries are to be ranged and reckoned with ignorance, prejudice and envy, the sound sense of the Canadian people has been misjudged. The fact is that our people will demand and will find some way in which they shall set the stamp of renown upon those whom they greatly admire.

The real problem is to find a way in which the choice of the people can be wisely guided and suitably expressed. Every person will admit that the present method, by which a group of men in Britain, using the name of another man, and none of whom know intimately the affairs of Canada, select the prospective knights, baronets and peers, is unreasonable and blundering. The fact, too, that it is all done in secret lends color to the suspicion that influences of a sinister sort have been at work. Some other and better way must be found if there are to be any Canadian titles at all.

But why any Canadian titles at all? Because it is impossible to prevent them, and because it is undesirable to prevent them.

It is impossible, as any one can see by putting his head over the fence and witnessing what goes on in the United States, where titles are supposedly forbidden. There is no land on earth so full of titles. Every lawyer is likely to be called Judge. Every school teacher is likely to be called Professor. The temporary political appellations become permanent, so that once an Honorable always an Honorable is the rule. In some states any man who looks the part or lives in a house with two chimneys is called Colonel. The giving of titles rests on an irresistible impulse in humanity. Let us proclaim that there shall be no official titles in Canada and we shall have in their place a crop of unofficial titles.

It is undesirable to forbid titles, because they provide a natural and valuable means of rewarding merit. Merit unflinchingly seeks reward. The man who does anything does it with the expectation of recognition. It saddens a father when his children fail to be grateful for his care of them. It saddens any man when his neighbors show the same ingratitude. Gratitude is the natural flower of unselfish service. Forbid the plant to produce the flower and you wrong and discourage such service. Men will strive for money, or for power, or for honor. Take away the natural means by which the honor may be bestowed and you throw them back on the love of wealth and power. In these commercial days anything which will act as an alternative to gold should be welcomed.

In every generation there is born into any population a certain number of highly gifted persons. These constitute one of the chief assets of the population. The march of progress is led by these geniuses. They will, being human, infallibly seek their pay, and many of them will infallibly collect it. If you have nothing but money to pay them with the whole tone of the life of that population is lowered. We need some alternative wage-sheet.

There are certain times when the popular demand

for public honor is undeniable. It is so now in regard to military services. We approve and use the D.C.M., the D.S.O., and the V.C. These are instances of useful conferring of titles. The problem is to find some similar method of requiring similar services in civil life.

Mr. D. C. Harvey, writing in the Grain Grower's Guide, puts forth the suggestion of a Canadian Order of Merit, on the lines of that order in France. He recalls the history of its foundation, when the revolution had swept away the old titles, and the need of some public recognition of merit to take their place was felt. The suggestion is well worth considering, but it involves the breaking of one of the more vital bonds which hold the Empire together. If we desire to continue to be British subjects we must keep up living relations with Britain. The difficulties of any governmental co-operation or union are so great that it is probable that generations may pass before anything worth while is accomplished in that direction. The mere calling of our statesmen to consultation in

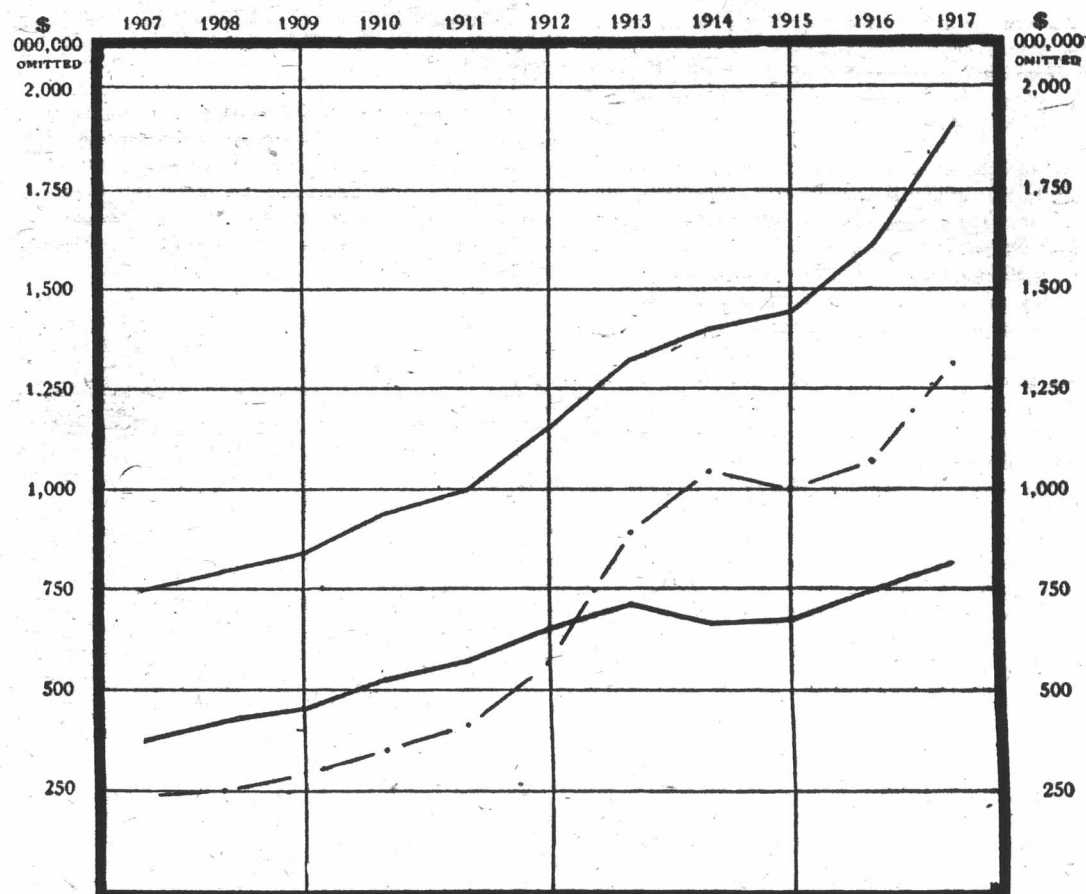
London means practically nothing. Where then is the identity of life throughout the vast Empire to be found? Surely, in such things as an Imperial nobility in things which make their appeal to the hearts of British subjects everywhere and do not provoke controversial economic and political problems. If there may not be a central fountain of legislation there may yet be a central fountain of honor. If we may not obey any power seated in London, we may yet revere some power whose throne is there. And, doubtless, some such desire lies back of the birthday lists of honors which are issued. The blunder has been in the attempt to saddle an outworn and unjust system, which badly needs revising even in Britain itself, upon such a land as Canada. Let the system be renewed, vitalized, brought up to date, made to apply sanely to all parts of the Empire, carrying the approval of the thoughtful citizens of all the daughter-peoples, and we shall have a most serviceable bond of Empire.

Democracy cannot work without leaders. Humanity needs an aristocracy. The average man demands that someone shall stand before him whom he may revere and follow. It is the baser side of human nature that repudiates this fact. It would be wiser for us, as a Canadian people, if, instead of traducing the unfortunate victims of a system which has worked poorly, to say the best of it, we should set ourselves to devise some better system, in order that there may be a wholesome vent for the wholesome desire of many humble and grateful hearts to give honor where honor is due. Our inventors, discoverers, explorers, statesmen, poets, artists, and sages deserve it from us.

### FIRE INSURANCE IN CANADA

Amount of Policies issued during the Year

(To accompany The Canadian Bank of Commerce Monthly Letter No 31)



### LIFE INSURANCE IN CANADA

Net amounts in force

