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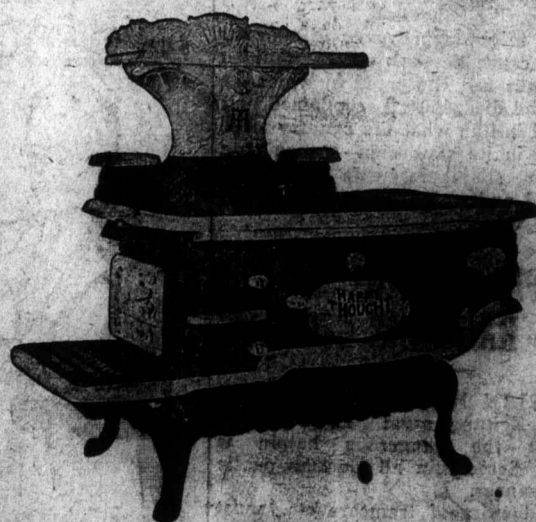
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ADAM BECK, HUMAN DYNAMO

By W. A. GRAICK

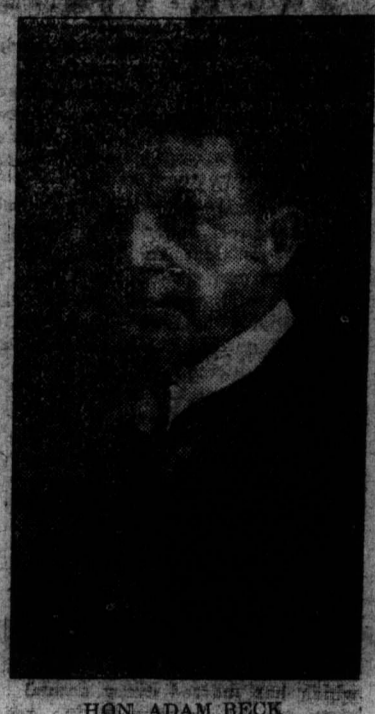
According to the composite decision of the readers of a certain Toronto newspaper, the Hon. Adam Beck, Chairman of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission, ranks high among the ten Canadians who would be most missed should the country be suddenly deprived of their services. He follows in the list such notabilities as Borden, Laurier, Strachan and Mackenzie—but leads the rest of the field. This little "straw vote" is most significant. It confirms an opinion which a good many people have been forming of late, that Adam Beck is a force to be reckoned with in Canada's national life; that his is a strong personality and that for one reason or another, he has come to be regarded as a popular idol.

Son of a German

Circumstances have had a great deal to do with the Hon. Adam's ascent to this pedestal of public approval. One might trace his whole career on the single circumstance that as a youth he exhibited particular facility in putting a keen edge on saws. Born in 1857, the son of a German iron founder, who established the village of Baden, in Waterloo County, in 1837 and made it a sort of humming-centre of industry, he was early apprenticed in his father's foundry. Here he doubtless learned among other accomplishments how to sharpen saws, for when the industrial fabric of Baden, so patiently built up by father and sons, became involved in financial disaster that was none of their causing, he seized the opportunity to start the manufacture in Glueph of veneers and thin lumber, removing to London, where he presently began to put his skill to use in making cigar boxes. By degrees the cigar box business grew. Other plants were erected wherever cigar manufacturing was carried on and as the industry expanded, its owner found himself becoming wealthy. Wealth afforded those opportunities for public and social service, which Mr. Beck has utilized to such good purpose. Had he not enjoyed abundant means, as well as the needed inclination, he would hardly have devoted himself so assiduously to the work of electrical development, to the calls of philanthropy or to the enjoyment of raising and exhibiting thoroughbred horses, as he has been able to do—and not, of course, it was all evolved from that boyish facility in putting a sharp and true edge on saws.

Before the Public

For the first few years after Adam Beck set up in the manufacturing business in London he was looked upon as nothing more, or weighty than a smoothly-groomed, sport-loving individual, who was probably clever enough at his chosen occupation to make a fortune, but without any qualifications for social service. However, appearances were deceptive, and many people got a surprise when he stepped out as a candidate for the board of the Hospital Trust. The London Hospital was in need of re-organization, and at that particular time interest was focussed on the question as to whether non-pay patients should be subjected to treatment from the students of the Medical School. Mr. Beck took as his platform the rights of poor patients to equal consideration with wealthy patients. There was strenuous opposition to his candidature and one London paper voiced its opinion in the frequently repeated parody, "Go way, Beck, and sit down." But Mr. Beck did not eliminate himself from the contest and was elected. Thanks largely to his efforts the Hospital was reformed and is now a well-managed institution. From the Hospital Board Adam Beck stepped in 1902 directly into the mayoralty and for three years occupied the chief magistracy of the city. This circumstance gave him his



HON. ADAM BECK

introduction to the important work for the province of Ontario with which his name will ever be associated. As mayor of London, he was called on to participate with the representatives of other municipalities in conferences looking towards the securing cheap power from Niagara. The project interested him. He saw its value to the province and in due course evolved the legislation which brought into existence the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Once again on a larger provincial platform the mandate went forth, "Go way, Beck, and sit down" and once again Beck was irrepresible. In May, 1906, he surprised incredulous capitalists, who scarcely deemed his action possible, by moving through the Legislature, the famous Power Bill, a piece of legislation of his own drafting, which has been the basis of the present Hydro-Electric system in Ontario.

Loyal to Home City

The Power Minister's work as chairman and presiding genius of the Commission is too well known to require elaboration. For six years he labored strenuously without any remuneration other than the thanks of applauding throngs of citizens, who cheered him to the echo when he officiated at the turning-on of the "current" from the Falls. But in the intervals of his work for the province and his labors in connection with his own expanding business, he still found time to serve his home city. There is a splendidly equipped consumptive sanitarium near London, which owes its existence to the good offices of Mr. and Mrs. Beck in connection with it. There is a farm and on this farm the founder of the institution has placed a complete electrical equipment for agricultural and domestic purposes, for the introduction of electrical energy on the farms of the province is one of Adam Beck's favorite objects. Again, and decidedly characteristic of the Beck spirit, is the development of London's water supply. The Forest City suffered for years from an inadequate and unsatisfactory water service. Various plans were devised for its improvement, including the sinking of artesian wells, but there was long much uncertainty as to what was best to be done. It was just such a situation as Adam Beck relished, for it afforded him an opportunity to exert his energies. He went to Brooklyn, the great authority on artesian wells and got full information from him. Convinced that a similar method of supply was possible for London, he offered as a private citizen to conduct the experiments and secure the water. If he succeeded the city would finance the undertaking; if he failed he would himself bear the loss. Mr. Beck then brought an expert from Petrolia to sink the wells and, after spending \$10,000, obtained thirteen flows of fine water. For something like \$28,000 London was furnished with a highly satisfactory water service.

A Popular Speaker

Of a truth Adam Beck has travelled far since the day fifteen years ago when he first stood up on a platform in London to accept the Conservative nomination for the Legislature. On that occasion the aspirant for political honors was actually tongue-tied, if one is to believe certain reports. He could not frame a sentence and the silence became embarrassing. Then a man in the audience broke the spell by crying out, "Speech in Deutsch, Adam." The nominee regained his composure at this and in his mother-tongue announced his acceptance of the honor which had been bestowed on him. He made a hard fight for election, campaigning with all his accustomed energy, but that time his opponent was too strong for him. It was not until four years later that he captured the seat. Today the bravely

tongue-tied candidate has become a strong and forceful speaker and one of the most popular men in public life in Canada. He has captivated the fancy of the people not by reason of the possession of amiable qualities, for Adam Beck is a most independent-minded individual and a respecter of persons; but because of what he has done. As the champion of public ownership, a man who has caused both government and opposition to swing round to his policy, he has risen above the popular conception of a party politician and has rendered services that is not to be measured by any party advantage it may have given.

His Love of Horses

The love of horses, which is a predominant characteristic, owes its origin to another of those circumstances which have drawn Adam Beck into most of the undertakings with which his name has become associated. One day twenty years ago, he held a consultation with his medical adviser. The young manufacturer, hard at work, day and night, was feeling the effects of too close application and lack of exercise. His digestion was all at fault and his system was run down. The doctor recommended horseback riding and suggested that he should purchase a horse, which he could take out for a canter in the morning and use later in the day, in connection with the carting of his factory products around the city. The afflicted maker, of clear hoken, was obedient to his physician's prescription and is said to have purchased from one of his customers a big animal sixteen hands high. He was probably never concerned about the beast's ability to haul heavy loads of boxes than its adaptability to saddle work. At any rate he came back to the doctor some days later, pretty stiff in the joints and badly shaken up. The medical man simply laughed and told him to substitute a nice little mare for the big equine. The submissive patient did as he was told and bought a bay mare to which he became greatly attached. Ever since, Adam Beck has gone for his ride every morning and, as most people are aware, has developed into one of the best known horse fanciers in Canada, whose stables have sent many winners to the arenas in London, New York and other cities.

Ontario's Minister of Power

Ontario's Minister of Power personifies the little, for there is a dynamic force about him that keeps him forever at work with ceaseless energy. As one of his intimates puts it, "Adam Beck would blow up, if he did not constantly have some big job on hand." He is a restless spirit, forever on the move. He cannot sit still, but must be moving about, poking the fire or calling up friends on the telephone all the time. Without a telephone he would be a lost spirit. To conceive of him sitting down and reading a book is next to impossible. Indeed, there is a well-founded report that he has only read two books since he left school. One of these, a novel, was absorbed while he was travelling to the coast with the late Sir Edward Clouston some years ago, but details about the other are lacking. He undoubtedly owes a great debt to his wife, for a better matched couple it would be hard to find. Mrs. Beck, who was a Miss Orlaway, daughter of Mrs. P. D. Croas of Hamilton, is a charming and accomplished woman. Equally with her husband, she is a lover of horses and has shared with him the honors of many a contest in the ring at horse shows in London, New York and Toronto. Besides being a skilful horsewoman, she possesses a splendid voice and is a trained singer of rare charm. She also supports Mr. Beck, wholeheartedly in his hospital work and has been a leader in good works among the women of London ever since she came among them. Though regarded as leaders of society, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Beck have any patience with the frivolous side of life and themselves lead very sensible rounds of existence.

The Becks have a fine large estate in London called Headley, where the Beck stables are situated. Lately there has been some talk to the effect that the family intends to leave London. This rumor has probably originated in the announcement that Mr. Beck has leased a house in Derbyshire, England, where Mrs. Beck and her daughter are to spend the winter. There can be little doubt that to people of their turn of mind, life in England would be very delightful and it may not be beyond the possibilities that some day the Minister of Power will take up his permanent residence across the Atlantic. But at any rate he will finish the big task he has undertaken before he hands over its management to his successor. It would not be like Adam Beck not to carry through to its end what he has set his heart upon accomplishing.



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Why the

DONALD and Nurse Zoë. Nurse was under the big oak tree, curled up on a shawl on the ground, for his eyes heavy with sleep for his nap.

Not that he liked to sleep. But then, you recall, he encountered the queer old man of the Woodlands with him on pleasant jaunts to the animals—when he was only when asleep. Presently, Donald dozed. Land of Nod and then—where—sprang up the Old a queer old man he was his hands—trousers and wrinkled skin. "Good afternoon, my boy." "Come, sit on this magic world all away to the kangaroo in the far corner. I have a most interesting tale to tell you about kangaroos—were you?"

And in less time than it took to open and close your eyes had carried them gently to deposited them through on the earth," said Donald. "The Kangaroo was disporting. "Once upon a time, there was any such creature on the earth," said Donald. "The Kangaroo was disporting and walling a me to help him. As you Donald, I was the king of things there, and they all to settle their disputes and their wounds."

"Well, the Kangaroo look like kangaroos do now. No, indeed. Now, you see, little, short, weak fore-legs long, powerful hind legs enough to kick out with a man's strength. Besides, that thick, tremendous tail, out to such a small point. "But at that time, Donald, kangaroo's hind legs were no longer front ones; and his tail the size of that of a rabbit then he was a swift runner he did not hop along, in great leaps, as he does now. "Oh, oh, oh, Mr. Old Man Woods," wailed the Kangaroo. "Remember even now how I was a little, please, please, get that Sweetumble!"

"What?" I exclaimed. "Sweetumble?" "The Kangaroo stopped, dried his eyes and put his little pocket handkerchief to his eyes and for some days all over had them—and looked surprised. "Sweetumble!" he said. "Don't you know a Sweetumble you see one, Mr. Old Man Woods?"

"No! I do not!" I replied. "Well, I'm afraid, I believe you do, either now or then." "Come with me, please—show it to you," he declared. "I was so amazed I could scarcely to my feet to follow him. "Sweetumble! Could it there was something new in it, something that I knew about. Well, hardly. Of course, what a Sweetumble is, and the Old Man's eyes led regularly for a moment as he chuckled over the bland expression that had settled little Donald's face. "There, he continued presently, 'don't remember, Donald, for you never hear of a Sweetumble, least see one!"

"After a while Kangaroo by the side of some very tall and pointed trees, with one short, stubby little foreleg. A Pa I've got the nicest kitty. As gentle as can be. One that is always ready To play each day with me. I put him in my carriage And wheel him all about. And though I often jolt him He never will jump out.