

# REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

## Mr. Winston's Somersaults

WINSTON CHURCHILL is a somersaulter of no mean achievement. Last June he made a speech in favour of colonial navies for patrol purposes. These were his ideal. By November he was championing a centralized navy to which all the Dominions would contribute. Wonderful mind, that; quite resembling some of those we have in this country.

Another case. When he brought down his naval estimates in the British House, he emphatically declared that the three Canadian ships would be "extras." Now he changes his mind and says Britain must lay down three more dreadnoughts to take the place of the three "refused" Canadian ships. Delightful somersault—evidently made for political purposes.

If the right honourable gentleman is a fair sample of modern British statesmen, then truly there are many Canadians in high political places who are fully fitted to sit at table with His Majesty's best.

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## Oxford and Toronto

WHEN a distinguished graduate of the University of Toronto, who is also a member of the Senate, expresses grave doubts as to the intentions of those who are filling the chairs of the University with Oxford graduates, the occasion gives rise to thought. Would the "centralists" who are trying to prevent the Dominions from flying Dominion flags, from having Dominion navies, Dominion treaty-making powers, and Dominion consuls in foreign capitals—would they go so far as to try to influence the universities?

Theoretically it does seem possible. Considering what the empire clubs, the overseas clubs and leagues are trying to do, and the generous donations which are being handed out for ultra-imperial movements, it is but reasonable to suppose that some one would think of the universities. And why not? If the propaganda is right, then why should not all sorts of influences be used on its behalf?

While some of us may believe that centralism is wrong and will ultimately be proved to be deleterious to proper empire-building, it does not seem possible to deny the centralists the same freedom as is demanded or desired by the decentralists. Their arguments must be met by better arguments, their strategies by better strategies. This must be a fair and open fight.

At the same time, there seems little ground for belief that President Falconer would be a party to any such movement within the University of To-

WHOSE PARTISANSHIP?



The Montreal "Star" publishes this cartoon, with the words, "Why let this block the path?" Agreed unanimously. But is the partisanship all on one side?

ronto. In University College, nine of the twenty-eight professors and lecturers are from Oxford. In the whole staff of 115, twenty-five are from British universities. In these large percentages Mr. Gordon Waldron sees a political purpose. Yet, it may be simply the result of a lower standard of salaries among young Englishmen than among young Canadians.

There would seem to be more danger of such a movement being found in McGill than in Toronto, for Principal Peterson is an outspoken centralist. In any case, the situation is worthy of consideration, and Mr. Waldron's dignified suggestions may provoke a discussion worth while.

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## Universities and Politics

WHILE Mr. Waldron is on this tack, he might investigate and publish the reasons why party politics have been introduced into the Literary Society at the University of Toronto. This society is the largest within the student body and the most influential. Why has it suddenly thrown the precedents of more than a half century to the winds and divided itself into two camps, Liberals and Conservatives, as they do at Oxford? Can this movement be traced to the presence of the Oxford influence?

As the Liberal party of the Literary Society is said to be numerically the stronger, it is just possible that the Liberals forced the division. It is not usual for a minority to introduce a game at which they know from the beginning that they will be beaten.

Mr. Waldron wants the university to correctly represent the common people, their views and their aims. He should therefore go farther in his investigation, and find out the reason for this new move in university politics. The public will be interested in his findings.

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## Sir George Reverses

WHEN Sir George Ross made his successful attack upon the Naval Bill and led the Senate majority in their practical killing of that measure, he deeply insulted the government supporters. His old Conservative enemies took occasion to say all manner of rude things about him. They recalled several of his forgotten weaknesses and wickednesses.

But lo, all is changed. Sir George has reversed his engine. He split the Liberal vote in the Senate and enabled the subsidy to the Ontario Government Railway to be carried by the Speaker's casting vote. Sir James Whitney will get two million dollars to cover Ontario's ancient claim for a subsidy for this pioneer road. The Conservatives are pleased, especially those of them who are interested in Sir James Whitney's political success. And again, Sir George Ross is in favour.

All of which proves that the day's verdict is often an unjust one. Few men's reputations amount to much when judged by certain single actions. The real reputation and the real merit of the man can be found only after investigating a series of actions and weighing years of service. It is in such manner that we should judge our enemies. We always treat our friends thus, overlooking their little omissions and their occasional mistakes. Therefore, if we desire to be fair, our enemies should have the same grace extended to them.

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## Defining Immorality

A FORTNIGHT ago, Colonel Denison, Toronto's police magistrate, fined a number of actors and actresses who took part in presenting a new play named *Deborah*. The actors appealed and Judge Morson has reversed the magistrate's decision. In doing so, he set a new standard, comprising several divisions. In the first place, he decided that he must see the play, and a special performance was given for his benefit. In the second place, he lays down the rule that in judging a play, it should be taken as a whole. Singling out isolated passages and separating them from their context is unfair. And, thirdly, a play must be judged by comparing it with other standard plays and operas. In the main, however, the decision was reversed on the ground that the censor had passed

the play and hence the players were not liable to prosecution.

*Deborah* is intended to teach the evil of suppression in connection with the sacred state of motherhood—that a woman is entitled to fulfil her destiny in this respect. It shows the danger of not allowing her to do so. The difficulties which convention and circumstances put in her way are indicated. Unfortunately *Deborah* took the law into her own hands and suffered severely. But this lesson is also clearly taught. Therefore, it seemed to Judge Morson, to the censor and to most of the dramatic critics that *Deborah* was a legitimate drama.

The lesson of the incident is that if well-meaning citizens desire to keep the stage clean, they must be sure they understand the meaning of "immorality" before they take action. There is much immorality on the boards to-day, but the problem play is not necessarily immoral. The reformers would do well to turn their attention to the more frivolous plays where sensuous dancing and equally sensuous music are furnished by actors and actresses who deliberately and consciously make the sensuous appeal. The players who put on *Deborah* were not in that class.

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## Valuable Homesteads

A FEW days ago, Parliament discussed the rights and wrongs of a homestead granted in Prince Albert which is said to have been immediately put on the market for something like a hundred thousand dollars. There is a serious row on in Edmonton over another homestead picked up one morning by a butcher and said to be worth \$8,000. Why should these valuable pieces of land be given away, instead of being sold at auction?

Our homestead law was framed to induce farmers to settle on the land and produce wheat. But in the two cases mentioned above, the Department must have known, or should have known, that these lands were too valuable to be used as farming lands. Indeed, each piece had been withdrawn from the homesteading class and then suddenly released. Surely this proves incapacity and weak administration.

This is not a political issue. These same practices have been going on for years. When certain valuable tracts were opened up, men and women have stood in line for days to get a valuable homestead. If the prospective settlers knew the lands were valuable, the land agents must have known. And the jockeying that has taken place at some of these land rushes has been disgraceful.

Why should not all these lands be placed on the same basis for selling as is adopted by the railways? Let the government sell them for what they are worth to bona fide farmers. This Edmonton fight between a butcher and a Calgary real estate operator as to who owns a quarter of section 13, township 66, range 23, west of the fourth meridian, one mile from Athabasca Landing, should convince the Dominion Government that the West has passed the "homesteading" stage. The public domain has grown valuable. Let the lands be sold, and the money used to build bridges, roadways, and other public utilities in the districts in which the lands are situated.

MOTHER'S APRON STRINGS.



This cartoon also appears in the Montreal "Star," with the words, "Will he remain in this position while his Younger Brothers are out helping their mother?" Of course he will, so long as the leaders of both parties think more of party advantage than of Canada's reputation.