

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

A Continent's Drama

WHILE the newspapers are busy printing silly despatches describing the escapades of a lunatic or sensational accounts of murders and suicide, the real drama of the continent is being overlooked. Not wholly, because many wise men are reading carefully the fragmentary despatches from Washington, where Woodrow Wilson, professor and president, is slowly but surely overturning the precedents of half a century. The United States tariff, monarch of its kind, is tottering to a fall. High Protection is stricken with old age, and cannot defend its offspring.

Not that it really matters much, except in theory and in sentiment. Under a reduced tariff, the people will not have much more and "the interests" not much less. But it is interesting to note the downfall of a theory for which men have fought honestly and sincerely. It is equally interesting to witness the ardour of the Knights, equally honest and sincere, who erect a new theory in its stead.

The new condition of tariffs will materially affect Canadians—it may be of more importance to them proportionately than to the people of the United States. First, it prevents any talk of higher customs duties in Canada. Second, it means the end of the reciprocity measure which convulsed the Canadian people in the summer of 1911. Third, it spells a readjustment of our commercial relations with our nearest and most important neighbour.

Canadians should ponder and study the situation and try to forecast the future. The ancient policy of United States trade, since 1868, with its note of repression towards Canada, is being abandoned. The opportunity which many Canadians have desired is at end. If there is value in it, our commercial intelligence must find it. The scenes are shifting, and the actors must have clear eyes, active minds and swift feet.

Who is Non-Partisan?

NON-PARTISANSHIP does not imply that a Conservative must vote Liberal, or that a Liberal must vote Conservative. A Conservative may be non-partisan and still vote Conservative; a Liberal may be non-partisan and still vote for Liberal measures. The non-partisan is one who can see some good in the party to which he does not profess adherence as well as in the party to which he is nominally attached. More important still, he will try to have his own party adopt a national attitude on national questions.

A prominent man in North York, where Hon. Mackenzie King was an unsuccessful candidate at the last general election, asked the writer the other day if non-partisanship meant that Mr. King would support the Borden naval policy. Certainly not. But if Mr. King were to become a non-partisan in regard to the navy question, he would be working hard to bring the leaders of the two parties to see that a non-partisan or bi-partisan settlement of this question is in the best interests of the nation. There are men in parliament, some Liberal and some Conservative, who have used their influence in this direction. They are none the less good party men on that account.

A fine example of non-partisanship has been given by Lord Loreburn, ex-Lord Chancellor, recently. He came out with a suggestion that the Irish Home Rule question should be discussed at a friendly conference between the party leaders. He believes that the peace and prosperity of Ireland are of paramount importance, and that the triumph of the Liberal Home Rule measure should be secondary. Lord Loreburn in this matter is a non-partisan Liberal.

Cities and Their Extensions

LAST week the suggestion was made on this page that Ottawa should apply to the Legislature for permission to purchase the lands adjacent to its borders as "farm lands," do its own sub-dividing, and take the real estate profit to provide for roads, sewers, sidewalks, school-houses, police-stations and other suburban necessities. This is the German system. Commenting on the suggestion, the Ottawa Free Press says it comes "too late"

because there are no areas around Ottawa which can be bought as "farm lands."

The objection is superficial. If the Legislature gave permission to expropriate, it would no doubt lay down a basis on which values would be ascertained by the commissioners who would decide the values. Where lands have neither sewers, sidewalks nor transportation facilities to which they have contributed in taxes, the city of Ottawa should obtain them as "farm lands" plus a reasonable allowance for improvements. In other words, Ottawa would pay for their present value, not their speculative value after settlement has begun. Other lands already held by small owners would be assessed especially for the improvements contemplated and would be subject to any changes which would be made in the plan of streets, driveways and parks.

Again, if a large land-owner refused to sell his land to the city, he can be brought to his senses by buying land farther out and withholding light, pavements, sewers and waters from him or his assignees. This sort of punishment is a common practice in Europe. They do not believe, over there, that compactness is a necessity in city building. Boston is another example where good suburbs

A New Serial

NEXT week we shall commence our new serial story, "The Red Virgin," by G. Frederick Turner, an English novelist. The heroine is a woman ruler of the slums in a central European monarchy—a woman of exceptional character and remarkable mental strength. To Canadians, the story is interesting because it pictures a life which is in such striking contrast with that on this continent, and explains why European problems are so different from Canadian. Further, it describes the sort of civilization from which many of our newer citizens are taken, and hence will tend to increase our sympathy for these undeveloped people. The Red Virgin fought to save lives and prevent suffering in her limited slum circle; her work must be continued in Canada.

One of the leading characters is a militant suffragette from England who goes to Wiedenbruck for a holiday. Her meeting with the Red Virgin teaches her that down-trodden humanity needs more than an extension of the franchise.

The story is full of thrilling incident and compelling adventure. King Carl dies, his son is a minor, and there is a riotous struggle over the regency. Fritz of Friedrichsheim and Herr Saunders are the men whom the author elects to play the major parts, with Cyril of Wolfsnaden as the villain.

Watch for the first instalment next week.

are separated from the main city by undeveloped districts.

The object is to prevent speculators turning into their private purpose the increment which should go to the city to be expended for the general benefit of the public. In Canada, because it is a new country, we are doing everything possible to rob the public for the sake of making millionaires. This is a silly, puerile stage which the cities of Europe passed by many years ago.

Private Religious Funds

SHOULD a church congregation hold property in a city without paying any taxes or without paying any portion of its "increment" to the city? The question is not new, but the form has been brought up to date. Would an increment tax on church property be fair, even if regular city taxes were admitted to be inadvisable?

This question is suggested by reading in the Montreal papers that the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame received from the city \$617,350 for a piece of property required for a street extension—St. Lawrence St. from Notre Dame to the wharf. Perhaps the property was well worth what

the reverend Sisters got for it. Perhaps the street extension was necessary. But is it fair that a religious corporation should hold property for a hundred years without taxation and then sell that property to the citizens who have created the increased value at a tremendous figure?

Both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have profited tremendously by the increase in value in their civic holdings. The Roman Catholics have profited more than the others because of their private hospitals, convents, schools, and other religious and semi-religious organizations, and their policy of owning a great deal of real estate. Would it not be fairer if these religious bodies paid, say, fifty per cent. of the increment in the value of their property in lieu of taxes?

France faced this question some years ago and confiscated all church property. Such action would be shocking to our sense of justice. Nevertheless, the religious bodies and semi-religious corporations are acquiring vast wealth through their ability to hold land without paying taxes. Unless this policy is changed by argument, the day may come when it may be changed by agitation, which would be unfortunate.

Fall in Wages

THE coming winter will see a general fall in the rate of wages. The "scale," being an agreement between unions and employers' associations, will not be affected, but many men will hire at less than the scale, and some who have been getting more than the scale will find their wages dropping to scale level. This will occur because there will be less employment this winter than for several winter seasons, and because wages have risen abnormally in recent years.

This fall in wages will be severely felt by many individuals, but on the whole it will do good. The working men have been getting such high wages that they have grown careless. They are not as conscientious in their work as they once were, nor are they as prudent and unprodigal. They have shared in the prosperity of the employers and the financiers, and have acquired much the same reckless disregard for money and its value. Readjustment is as necessary for the working man as for the merchant, the manufacturer, the banker, and the investor.

Steadying Down

M. R. H. V. MEREDITH, manager of the Bank of Montreal, returned from an extended trip through the West to remark that he found "a steadying down all around." A record crop, fully harvested before the frost, has relieved the tension and the pessimists have again turned into optimists. If the optimists have learned the lesson, all will be well.

Eastern holders of Western real estate should sell promptly whenever they see a profit, even if that profit is small. There are thousands of farmers and mechanics who hold Western town-lots on which they will find it difficult to make a profit. These should sell whenever they can, even if it means a sacrifice. Holders of inside property will do much better and should hold for a genuine advance.

The steadying down process should also be extended to Montreal and Toronto. In both these cities suburban property has been overdone. The prices of 1912 will hardly be duplicated before 1915. In both cities there are enough subdivisions on the market to provide building lots for the next ten years, and still leave a tidy surplus of unbuilt home-sites.

Cadets and Scouts

SOME Methodist supervisors of Sunday-school work have passed a resolution saying that the scout movement should be kept distinct from the cadet movement. This is good advice. It would be unfortunate if a broad movement, such as the boy scout movement is, should be narrowed by military ideals. If boy scouts, using the term in its broadest sense, have been invited into western cadet camps by officers of the militia, then these officers should be cashiered.

Certain writers in local papers have professed to see something offensive in the S. S. and Y. P. S. resolution because it says that the scouts should be kept under "the highest moral and religious supervision." This is quite correct; there is need for this with small boys. The cadets, being older, may require less moral supervision, but it must still be a feature. The resolution is offensive only to those who are super-sensitive or themselves lacking in morals.