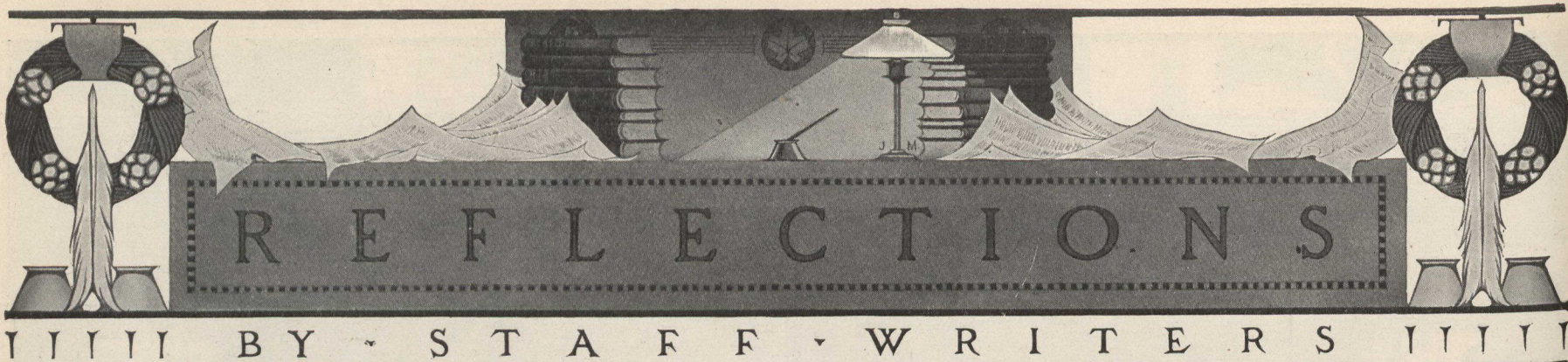




ANNUAL MILITIA CAMPS

THE Government has cut the appropriation for the annual militia training in two. If they would keep it cut in two, they would be wise. The most wasteful item of the militia department is the annual camps. The city corps drill at their headquarters twenty-four nights in the year. Two night drills count as one day, and thus they get in their twelve days of service. They cost the Government nothing for transportation, and nothing for maintenance. Hence they are much cheaper than rural corps.

The Rural corps could be trained at their company headquarters at small expense. If each captain were to get his company together "on the village green" for twenty-four nights, the rural soldier would get as much drill as he gets at an annual camp. A body of drill sergeants might be maintained and sent around to the various companies to give instruction for three or four consecutive nights. The colonel of each regiment could visit each of the companies and do the inspecting. Much would be gained by the natural public interest of the community in the public drills and the rural militia would then attract much better recruits.

The Militia Department is very much alive in some directions; in others it is very much behind the times. The annual camp is out of date and should be abandoned. A man's ability to hit a target at five hundred yards is now the test of a soldier, not his ability to form fours and present arms. In ability to shoot, the Canadian militia is not as good as it was ten years ago. The school cadet corps is perhaps the best present feature, and their excellence lies in the readiness of these youngsters to learn how to align the sights on a rifle.

The annual camp is useful to train colonels and embryo generals, but the method is too expensive. This training can be secured at much less cost. Economy and common sense would indicate that the annual camp is out of date.



MR. BORDEN'S OPPORTUNITY

MR. R. L. BORDEN came out last year for nationalisation of railways and found that he was in advance of the sentiment of his own party and the general public. Because of this, he has probably found it advisable to modify his position. If he intends to maintain the position that railways and other public utilities should be controlled for the benefit of the people as well as for the benefit of the stockholder, he will make a strong protest against the issuing of the new C.P.R. stock at par. If he is not in earnest, he will leave the fight to Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P., and allow the Hon. John Haggart to plead for unlimited freedom for all stock issues.

If the C.P.R., instead of issuing common stock at \$100 a share, paying seven per cent. interest, were to issue bonds at four per cent., it would effect a saving of three dollars per \$100 per annum. In other words, on an issue of \$50,000,000, it would save \$1,500,000 annually in interest charges. But the C.P.R. does not propose to save so much money. Under its charter, freight rates cannot be regulated by Parliament until it pays a ten per cent. dividend; and its directors are determined that such a catastrophe shall not arrive too soon.

Again, by issuing the new stock at par, \$50,000,000 worth of stock will bring only \$50,000,000; while if the same stock were sold at auction it would bring \$75,000,000. The public will again ask why the C.P.R. directors propose to lose that twenty-five million dollars. The answer is the same. There is no sense in working to increase a dividend to the point where freight rates must be reduced.

The only person to-day who can prevent the C.P.R. throwing away a million and a half a year, is the Leader of the Opposition. The Government is not likely to do it, although the Minister of Railways would no doubt oppose it if he had the power. It is a reform which only Mr. Borden is in a position to accomplish. An Opposition Leader,

fresh from defeat at a general election, is under no obligation to any influence, except to the public whom he wishes to impress. Here, therefore, is his opportunity. The C.P.R. has become one of the greatest railway corporations and one of the most profitable in the world. It has no need to water its stock. It is the last corporation in Canada that should be allowed to "cut a melon." The whole future of freight rates in the West depends upon the course of conduct now followed. Mr. Borden can do no harm to the C.P.R., but he can accomplish great things for the people of the West. Has he the courage?



THE GREAT QUESTION IN THE WEST

PROBABLY the greatest question now confronting the people of the Wheat West is the Elevator question. The grain is being grown, the railways are providing the cars fairly satisfactorily, but the loading of the cars is costly and subject to vexatious delays. The cars must be loaded from a "loading platform" built and maintained by the Dominion Government or the railway companies, or they must be loaded through an elevator. The loading platform costs nothing; the elevator charges amount to ten and sometimes twenty per cent. of the value of the wheat. There are in the three prairie provinces 1,334 elevators, with a storage capacity of forty million bushels. The amount of money invested by elevator companies is somewhere between seven and ten million dollars. The farmer must pay interest on this investment and also the cost of maintenance and management. Hence his protest against privately-owned elevators.

The loading platform is only a make-shift, although at certain seasons of the year it is perfectly suitable. In 1907-8, to August 31st, twenty-two per cent. of the grain passed into the cars over the loading platform. Last fall, the amount increased to thirty-three per cent. There may be a further increase, but the loading platform can never wholly supersede the elevator.

Recognising this, the farmers of the West have been asking the three Provincial Governments to establish public elevators with low charges. The three premiers have looked into the question and have decided that it is impossible. The difficulty is a constitutional one. To do this successfully, it would be necessary for the Governments to acquire and maintain a monopoly of the elevator business, and the establishment of such a monopoly is beyond provincial jurisdiction. The Dominion Government alone has power to regulate trade and commerce, to control national railways and to regulate weights and measures. Therefore only the Dominion Government could establish a public owned elevator monopoly such as the Western farmer desires. The Dominion Government could, of course, delegate its authority to the Provincial Governments in certain respects, but there would be difficulties even in this direction. The B. N. A. Act might be amended so as to meet the situation, but this also would be difficult.

Under these circumstances, the grain growers of the West are facing a problem which will keep them busy for some time to come. No doubt they will find a way out. They are progressive; they are determined. Progressiveness and determination usually win. Without doubt the subject will come up for discussion during the present session of the Federal Parliament.



CHURCHES AND TAXES

MUCH has been said for and against the exemption of church property from taxation. There are no direct taxes in Canada other than municipal rates; therefore the question is one which confronts only municipal authorities. In practically every municipality church property is entirely exempt, even from school taxes. Other exemptions, which are the result of special by-laws, usually apply only to taxes other than school taxes. Church property is the only class of holding which does not contribute to the local educational funds.

In the Province of Quebec, the Roman Catholic church gets its