

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

MARITIME union is again to be discussed. The forthcoming census will undoubtedly give such results that the Parliamentary representatives of the Maritime Provinces at Ottawa will be reduced. A re-distribution of Maritime constituencies will be necessary, and it would seem an appropriate time to reorganise the provincial systems.

Maritime union is not a new topic by any means. It was discussed long before Confederation came into being. Indeed, the discussion of Maritime union had much to do with bringing the Confederation idea to the front more quickly than it might otherwise have done. It has been discussed off and on for seventy-five years, and it must be admitted, still seems far from realisation.

That three small provinces should be burdened with three lieutenant-governors, three sets of public buildings and institutions, and three systems of political and judicial administration, seems absurd. That portion of Canada would certainly have more influence in Confederation if it spoke with one voice instead of three. Even were the three provinces united, the resulting province would not be as large as any of the other Canadian provinces, with the exception of Manitoba.

Of course, the decision as to whether the three provinces shall remain separate and distinct, or whether they shall become a large province, must be rendered by the inhabitants of those provinces. The rest of Canada cannot force a union. It can only offer advice which may or may not be gratuitous. There are serious difficulties in the way. The hundred thousand people in Prince Edward Island are proud of their provincial organisations, proud of their practical independence and quite satisfied to remain as they are. The same may be said of the three hundred and fifty thousand in New Brunswick and of the half million people in Nova Scotia. Nevertheless, there are a large number of far-sighted men in each of the provinces who recognise the value of union, and are working steadily to develop the idea. In their difficult task they will have the keen sympathy of the rest of Canada.

FOR a full century Canada has been gradually acquiring autonomy within the British Empire. There was a time when the Canadian tariff and the Canadian postal rates were made in London, and when the general policy of the country was dictated from Downing Street. It is now over half a century since the administration of the post office and tariff was transferred to the Canadian governments. The Confederation Act increased the autonomy. Various acts and conventions since 1867 have still further enlarged that phase of Canadian political life. To-day Canada is practically autonomous.

In respect to copyright, Canada is still in the tutelage stage, in spite of an agitation which has extended over some thirty years. Because of this tutelage a person who registers a copyright at Stationers' Hall, London, gains a Canadian copyright without any direct reference to the Canadian government. For example, if a United States publisher or author registers his production simultaneously at Washington and London, he thereby gains control of the Canadian market. It is not necessary for him to publish his book or other work in Canada. He may do his publishing in the United States or Great Britain, and Canadians are forced to buy in either of these markets. This state of affairs has limited the growth of Canadian publishing.

Now the announcement comes from Ottawa that the Hon. Sydney Fisher, whose department has supervision of copyright, has arranged with the British Government to secure copyright autonomy. A bill is being prepared in England which will give Canada the right for which she has long been agitating. This will be followed by a similar legislation in Canada instituting and defining those rights. When these bills have become law British and United States authors or publishers desiring Canadian copyright must register their work at Ottawa and conform with the regulations laid down by the Canadian government. These regulations will undoubtedly include the necessity of publishing in this country, with the consequence that the publishing business will

enormously increase, with numerous secondary benefits.

To give an example of how unfair the present situation has been, one instance may be quoted. The publishers of *Life*, a humorous paper in New York, have been copyrighting some of their drawings and material in London, and publishing them there. They have not copyrighted them in Canada nor published them there. Yet if any Canadian publisher happened to reproduce one of these comic pictures he was at once served with a lawyer's letter demanding payment, in spite of the fact that he had given credit to *Life* as the originator of the picture or idea. As the people of all English-speaking countries quote from each other with considerable freedom, the action of *Life* has caused much irritation. The chief ground for complaint on the part of the Canadian newspaper man lay in the fact that he had no means of discovering the copyright in advance. When he took chances, he found it necessary to pay what he considered an exorbitant price. Under the new system the copyright register at Ottawa will be his flag of danger, and it will compel the publishers of *Life* and other periodicals and books to make business-like arrangements with Canadian publishers if they desire to monopolise this market. This absentee landlordism in the publishing business is not tolerable.

UNKNOWN IN CANADA



A Newark, N.J. Saloon, which boasts a Free Moving Picture Theatre

THE enterprising American made the moving picture business, and now he is proceeding to kill it. The popularity of the cinematograph theatre in England and Canada was created by pictures with a fairly high tone. Lately the demand for films has increased so much that normal subjects were apparently insufficient to supply the demand, and the most absolutely realistic style of films has been introduced. Western Cowboys who never existed, and Wild Indians also equally non-existent, have been created by actors in the employ of the makers of films. Other equally spurious dramas have been enacted for this purpose, and to-day the moving picture show has become a pernicious influence. Indeed, in New York a regulation has been made to the effect that no child under sixteen shall be admitted unless accompanied by an adult. In Berlin, Germany, children under fourteen are absolutely prohibited. In Canada there are no regulations of this character, and consequently our younger children are in grave danger of receiving false views of life.

The growth of the moving picture business in Canada has been marvellous. In Toronto alone there are forty-two moving picture shows, and seven more are to be opened shortly. This will make one for every seven thousand of the population, or the same percentage as in Chicago, where one might reasonably expect a larger proportion. Even in New York and New Orleans there are fewer, compared with the population, than in Toronto. The Ontario government passed a regulation which prevented the exhibition of the recent Jeffries-Johnson prize fight, and other provincial governments and municipal authorities did the same. So far, the writer is aware no similar regulations have been prepared aiming to prevent the exhibition of equally vicious films of a different nature.

In most of the Canadian cities there is a censorship of the regular theatre, and the regular theatre bill poster. It is high time that this censorship should be extended to the films used by the moving picture exploiters. The fact that Mr. Edison receives a royalty of eight thousand dollars a week on these films, and that the middleman or manufacturers make about eighteen million dollars a year, would not blind us to the necessity for preserving the morals of the community. Undoubtedly the beautiful, the pathetic, and the sublime are well combined with entertainment in some of these shows, but even a small percentage of degrading pictures is sufficient to justify the strictest form of censorship.

In the accompanying picture another danger is explained. Here may be seen the moving picture show used for the purpose of attracting custom to the saloon. Happily Canada is yet free from this device, and it behooves every province in the Dominion to take such steps as may be necessary to guarantee that it shall not be introduced. Prevention is better than cure.

A WOMAN in Winnipeg has been before the police court over three hundred times and the law does not seem to know what to do with her. The incorrigible woman is a great problem. She demoralises the community in which she resides and yet is chargeable only with vagrancy. Surely the time has come when the criminal code can provide a new paragraph which will enable police magistrates to put these incorrigibles into institutions where they may live out their lives without damage to the community.

WHY THERE ARE NON-CHURCHGOERS.

All over the English-speaking world, the question of non-church going is being discussed. It is an old question, but ever new. We would like our readers to discuss it. Send us a chatty letter, giving your views. It must be brief; it must be frank; and it must say something about your own experience. Make it as short as possible, but not too short. Send it soon.