



# REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS

ONE evening last week, when addressing the London Board of Trade, the Hon. Mr. Lemieux made the statement that the population of Canada was now 6,600,000, an increase of 23 per cent. since the census of 1901. In the past ten years Canada's foreign trade

## WILL THIS PROSPERITY CONTINUE

had grown from 234 to 571 millions. Domestic trade, judged by the amount of currency in circulation, had developed at almost the same speed.

During the past few months there has been a set-back or lull, and people have been wondering whether the prosperity of the past ten years will continue. The present quietness in trade seems to be traceable only to financial conditions—less money for loan purposes. So far as immigration is concerned there is no question as to the immediate future. In the ten months ending January 31st there were just about fifty thousand arrivals from the United States, or 1,675 less than during the same period a year ago. The total immigration for the same ten months was 191,208, being a 42 per cent. increase. So far as foreign trade is concerned January was also a satisfactory month, since imports decreased and exports increased. In regard to loans from abroad, money has been coming in freely and Canadian bonds sold exceedingly well in London in January and February. If the wholesalers and retailers were carrying stocks of merchandise which were too heavy, there has been a considerable adjustment in the past six months. Several Ontario factories which have been closed for a couple of months have again commenced operations. Farm produce, with the possible exception of hogs, continues to bring excellent prices.

Viewing the situation in this way, it would appear that Canada is likely to have a fairly good year. Much depends on the harvest, but not so much as some people would have us believe. Railway building, financial conditions, the world's prices of agricultural produce, and other features of the general business situation make up a total which renders the difference between a fair and a bumper crop of comparatively little importance. Canada is such a large country now, that a fair annual harvest is almost a certainty.

THERE are some honest people in Ontario and elsewhere who have protested against the views of the "Courier" staff in regard to public and municipal ownership. The attention of all of those who have disagreed with us is respectfully directed to the recent events in connection with Niagara Power. The two sides are

## REASONABLENESS BEING ACQUIRED

coming together and reasonableness is being exhibited. The men who started out to secure cheap light and cheap power for the province were inspired by high motives. There was every prospect when they began their work, that a few private individuals hoped to make much personal gain out of franchises granted by a somewhat hopeful government. These members of the power commissions wanted to see the Province of Ontario become a cheap spot for manufacturing and a comfortable country in which to live. They desired to take such steps as would prevent either a just or an unjust monopoly from depriving the people of something to which they were fully entitled. And these men have been successful.

At the moment, they are being accused of failure by some hysterical journals and politicians, whereas the truth is that they have succeeded but in a way somewhat different from what they had anticipated. They have succeeded in two ways. They have educated people as to the real cost of light and power, and the public can never again be deceived. In the second place, they have taught the capitalists who are engaged in the business of producing and distributing power and light, that it is folly to fight against an enlightened Government and an aroused people. Mr. Beck, Mr. McNaught, Mr. Ellis and the others who have been leaders in the campaign of the past three years have every reason to be proud of their success.

True, in their enthusiasm these gentlemen may have placed

their ideals and ambitions too high. They may have neglected to fully consider the immense property rights which, rightly or wrongly, had been brought into existence because of previous public policy. They desired to wipe the page clean and start over again. Many of us would like to do this in our private lives and in many departments of public administration. Unfortunately this is humanly and morally impossible. When a government once grants a charter to a company conveying certain rights that charter is irrevocable except after some form of impeachment.

The net result in Ontario is that the Government, the Commission and the Electric Interests are coming together to devise some plan whereby present investments may be protected and public rights preserved. This is the position which the "Courier" has always advocated. It is the attitude which has been taken, with certain differences in detail, by leading newspapers such as the Toronto "Globe" and others. It is the attitude which has been taken by the best informed capitalists and the least demagogic publicists.

The great fight which has been carried on in Toronto and through the Province was perhaps necessary in order to bring out the truth. The differences of opinion which have existed were perhaps inevitable. Further differences may arise, yet it seems at the moment as if common-sense had prevailed and that a working arrangement will be made, whereby Ontario's good name as an investment field will be preserved and whereby the various municipalities will get their light and power as cheaply as it is possible for a paternal government to give it to them.

**D**ISTINCTIONS between faddists and scientists are hard to define. The men who invented the steam-engine were scientists or faddists, whichever you wish. There have been cases where prominent scientists said certain things were impossible—gasoline engines and electric motors, for example. These two inventions were worked out to a great extent by faddists and finally the scientists accepted what the faddists had made possible.

To-day all sorts of scientific and unscientific faddists are at work. A Canadian has invented a light portable storage-battery which is said to make electric vehicles and electric cars as cheap and as successful as gasoline motor-cars. Another Canadian is working on a flying-machine which may possibly be a success. On the C.P.R. and I.C.R. experiments are being made with gasoline and oil motor cars, while in the United States gasoline motor cars for railway use are rapidly coming into recognition for suburban runs. Electric locomotives are also being used by some of the larger railways and the St. Clair tunnel is now sacred to this form of engine. The gasoline and electric railway cars are having a great fight for supremacy.

Over in Michigan, there is a man who believes that a railway train may be drawn by suction fans operated by gas or electricity. These fans suck in the air and create a vacuum. The air rushing from behind gives the motive power. An air-ship seen last year in Canada and elsewhere was operated in this way, though not very successfully.

Smokeless powder is to be followed by the noiseless gun, if one is to believe what the newspapers are printing about Mr. Hiram Percy Maxim, son of the inventor of the Maxim gun. He was engaged in working out a "muffler" for gasoline engines for motor-car use and the thought came to him that the invention which would hide the noise of a gasoline explosion would also destroy the noise made by a shooting weapon. Further experiment proved his surmise correct. This possibility staggers one. When a shot can be fired without smoke or noise, killing one's enemies will be a comparatively easy and safe performance.

From all these occurrences, the conclusion is inevitable. Faddists, scientists and inventors have much to do with human pro-