

THROUGH A MONOCLE

GEORGE GRAHAM'S ELECTION.

IT isn't often that I talk politics in this column. For one thing, I don't think that the Editor half-likes it. He strikes me as being constantly nervous for fear my "politics" will not agree with his "politics"; and, when we do agree, I suspect him of wondering how it is that he has "got in wrong." But I do not know that I should pamper the delicate nervous system of the Editor too much. Why shouldn't he have his worries? All the rest of us do. So I am going to talk politics on this occasion; and, if he doesn't like it, he can get back at me in his own department.

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THE politics I am going to talk is that I hope that George Graham will be elected by a big majority for South Renfrew. Now I am not a party man. If I had been an elector of Brockville, I would have felt it my duty to vote against George Graham at the last elections. I won't go into the "whys" and "wherefores" of that; for I will be doing well if I get South Renfrew politics into the paper without a fatal collision with the opinions of the Editor. But I just mention the fact to show that it is not as a "hide-bound Grit" that I am "hurrahing" for Graham this time. I think I am doing it as a good citizen.

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IN the first place, the Conservative party goes into this election under a shadow of dishonour, which may be too small to be noticed in politics but which would rule it out of any "sporting event" in the country. I wouldn't want to play golf with a man who agreed to "bar stymies," and then insisted on counting the first one he laid me. It isn't so much that I would object to letting him have his "stymie" as that I prefer to play golf with gentlemen. Now there was more than a "gentlemen's agreement" between the local leaders of the two parties in South Renfrew to permit George Graham to have the seat

if Mr. Low resigned. There was a written and signed agreement. It has been published. I do not know whether all the Conservatives on that agreement are fighting, tooth and nail, for Graham's election; but I would think much better of them and their party if they were.

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STILL I admit that they are in an awkward position. They are probably conscientious opponents of the political policy which Mr. Graham represents, and would be voting against their convictions if they supported him. On the other hand, they did agree to let him have the seat and they profited by that agreement; and surely a man is bound to deliver—if he can—the goods for which he takes pay, even if he does not like the principles of the person to whom he has sold them. Then Mr. Graham's election will not give his party a majority in the Commons, though it must be admitted that it will improve the chances of that party to get a majority at the next general elections.

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OF course, no one defends the original transaction as being any too honourable. It should never have occurred. No group of men should get together and try to barter away the franchise of a constituency. It was quite as immoral as the "saw-off." But two breaches of honour do not cancel each other. Again, it is quite true that these men could not bind the rest of the voters of South Renfrew; and it is equally true that they could not bind the Ministers at Ottawa. Still it is altogether likely that, if they lived whole-heartedly up to their agreement, they could prevent effective opposition in South Renfrew and pretty effectively paralyze interference from Ottawa. It was, in fact—to repeat a phrase we have already employed—very like a "gentlemen's agreement"; and its repudiation by the men whom it professed—at least by inference—to bind, must be regarded with that feature of the case in mind.

THEN I have another reason for wishing to see George Graham elected. He is the sort of public man whom this country needs. We are the losers when such representative leaders of opinion are out of public life. Mr. Graham is clean, capable, public-spirited, effective in Parliament, popular with the people. I do not believe that he is a bigoted party man. I do not think that he would try to legislate against what he genuinely thought to be public opinion. Moreover, he brings to the consideration of national issues that rarest of qualities—good humour. Now that is a priceless gift to a public man. It keeps him from becoming so enamoured of his own opinions that he will bow down and worship them in public. It enables him to appreciate the fact that there are other people in the country whose opinions may possibly be worth hearing. He is a better REPRESENTATIVE man than the victim of a tremendous solemnity who is always mistaking his prejudices for decrees of Providence.

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GEORGE GRAHAM will make the Opposition stronger; and a strong Opposition is the best guarantee we can have for a strong Government. I venture to say that Mr. Borden will be delighted to see Mr. Graham in that vacant seat next Sir Wilfrid—it will solidify his own ranks and make his task of leader far more simple. But it is not from a party point of view that I would like to get this question considered. It is from the point of view which would rejoice to see the Conservatives of South Renfrew "purged" from a position perilous to their honour, which would like to see the House of Commons richer for the presence of one of the best of our Parliamentarians, and which would like to see our public life sweetened by the retention of one of the exceedingly few "humourists" who have consented to grace it. Has it struck you how few "humourists" have drifted into politics? Sir John Macdonald was the greatest of them, and the most successful. Then there were "Joe" Rymal and Dr. Landerkin—both Liberals. Nicholas Flood Davin was another—a Conservative. George Graham is almost alone in this rare excellence to-day. I hope that South Renfrew will give him back to a country which laughs too seldom. I would then like a constituency to give us George Ham—or why not put him in the Senate? THE MONOCLE MAN.

HALIFAX SUFFERS FROM A SERIES OF FIRES

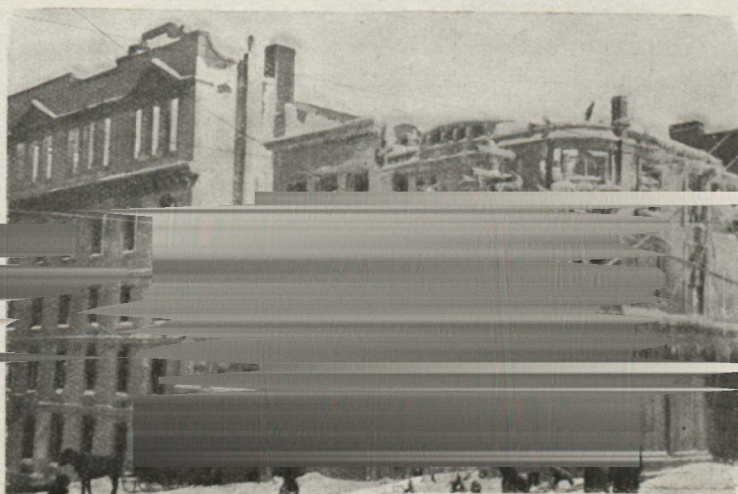
During the past six weeks, Halifax has suffered severely from fires. The Ronnan Block was gutted, the King Edward Hotel burned to the ground, together with half a dozen buildings, the Herald building and eight or nine other structures destroyed and the St. Pierre house and other structures burned. The fire loss for six years was under \$500,000. Four times that amount has been lost in the fires on the shores of Halifax harbour during the past forty days. The army, navy, joint Halifax and Dartmouth fire departments and Woodside fire department did splendid fire-fighting work.



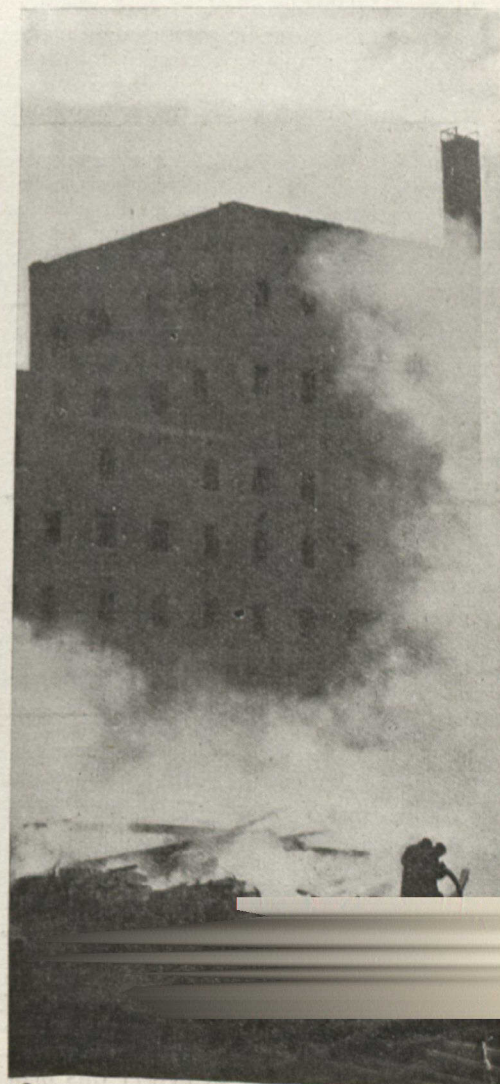
Ruins of the King Edward Hotel.



After the fire on Barrington Street.



Ruins of the "Herald" office and other buildings.
Photographs by H. W. Hewitt.



Warehouse ruins and gutted sugar refinery