



MR. WILLISON has been renewing his youth by shying a few bricks at the Senate. That was one of his favourite boyish occupations, as those will remember who got to know him first as the prose-poet of "the hired man" and the jester-in-chief to the Liberal Opposition at Ottawa. When he first went down to the Capital, he could never visit the Senate without laughing right out in church; and he persuaded even the serious "Globe" to let him tell the joke in its columns. He finally got the people laughing at this Home for Political Incurables, and had not a little to do with the education of the Liberal party on the subject which resulted in the adoption of the "reform the Senate" plank in the Ottawa platform. As he grew older himself, however, he seemed to gain some respect for the Old Man's Home; and there were those who fancied that he might at last come to the conclusion that there was more than a joke to be got out of the Upper House. But rumour has it that he put the proffered "lotus" from him a few years ago, and chose rather the arduous and exciting path of independent journalism; and now, at all events, he is trying his aim once more at the rusty Plug Hat of Confederation.

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It is not at all likely however that Mr. Willison will dislodge the Senate. The politicians are too fond of their House of Refuge. When politicians, as politicians, like a thing, it bears a charmed life. Let the men on both sides of the House of Commons agree in desiring anything under the sun—even if it be under the world also, to use a classic figure—and the chances are a million to one that they will get it and keep it. The people are a poor thing when weighed against the united politicians. They are like a man who should try and lift up the measuring rod of a pair of scales by standing upon platform—after the connection between the two had been broken. Our dual party system is constructed on the principle of a pair of scales. The one party balances the other; and the people decide which shall be uppermost. But if the scales are broken, as they are in effect when the two parties refuse to balance each other, then the people can pile upon the weighing platform as unanimously as they like, but they will not stir the measuring rod.

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The politicians on both sides of politics love the Senate. They do not see how they can keep house without it. It is the only "rotten borough" they have left. It is the only "safe constituency." Even East Toronto has been known to turn down the Tory candidate, and Oxford has rejected a Grit. But the party in power can always elect its candidate to the Senate. The party out of power does not think of running one, but it waits patiently until its turn in power comes, and then it will begin to manufacture Senators. The people may reject a tool of the Government but it has no need to worry—the Government will put him in the Tool House. A rich man may want to buy his way into Parliament, but may fear that the law will catch him if he tries to accomplish his purpose by buying votes. Still he need not despair. A few good subscriptions to the party funds; and he joins the Millionaire Club. A leader lags superfluous on the Provincial stage. He is carried by a form of political euthanasia to the Vaulted Chamber. A faithful party servant in the Commons clamours for promotion. He lacks the training to be made a judge; he is not fit to be Lieutenant-Governor anywhere; he dislikes work too much to take a customs' collectorship. So he is translated to the Senate. It is the escape pipe of the political boiler; and the people might as well make up their minds to pay for it until the end of time.

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Still there ought to be some way by which the people could render effective the agreement they feel for many of the suggestions of just such men as Mr. Willison. Mr. Willison does not care two straws for either party, so far as I am able to judge. Consequently he is in a position

to give good advice on matters in which party bias affects the vision of most of us. And there are other men in whose clear vision a lot of the people believe, without being able to take advantage of it in any practical way. Mr. Ross, of the Ottawa Journal, may not be so free from party feeling as Mr. Willison, but most of us would rather see him in Parliament than any half-dozen ordinary members who might be mentioned. More independent journalists in public life would be good for the country. There are no better men in the Ontario Legislature than George Graham of the Brockville Recorder and Hugh Clarke of the Kincardine Review. Both of these latter are noted for the original and practically independent view they take of public questions, though of necessity, Mr. Graham has been somewhat restrained of late by the shackles of office. A Parliament of Journalists would go farther toward giving the people what they want than ten Parliaments of politicians. They have to give the people what they want in their papers, or they will run out of cord-wood before the winter is half over.

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I would like to see a political organisation started in this country with a few road-breakers in it. I would nominate J. S. Willison for English leader, and Henri Bourassa for French leader. P. D. Ross would be my candidate in Ottawa; "Billy" Maclean would be given the position of "scout"; John Ross Robertson would be implored to come out and redeem East Toronto; J. A. Macdonald would be taken on probation if he would "come out from among them"; Hon. Adam Beck would be kidnapped if we could not get him in any other way; Hugh Clarke and George Graham would be recruited from the Legislature; and every Canadian Club would be empowered to nominate—and elect—one member. Such a party would cure the Sleeping Sickness which has fallen on the two Ottawa organisations within twenty-four hours.

A Horse-Shoe for Luck

AN odd custom of great antiquity still prevails in the town of Oakham, in Rutlandshire. Every peer of the realm passing near the castle, which was built by Walkelin de Ferrers, is expected to deliver a shoe from the foot of one of his horses or to pay a fine in default. The fine usually takes the form of an ornamental horseshoe, often surmounted by the coronet of the peer presenting it. The total number of shoes at present in possession of the local authorities is three hundred, and among the most valued are those presented by Queen Elizabeth, King George IV., Queen Victoria, and Queen Alexandra.

WHEN HE RETURNS

An After Dinner Joke.



Canada's Premier is being dined to the limit, and our Cartoonist thinks he may look like this, if he remains too long in London.