

A Montreal Judge on the C. A. A. Convention

(Selections from report to Montreal C. A. A. by Judge Surveyer)

Vancouver prides itself on being a convention city, and it certainly neglects nothing to live up to its reputation. Its natural beauties are only rivalled by the hospitality of its citizens. Dr. Allison, our national president, in response to the welcomes of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and the Mayor of Vancouver, described it as "a city of roses, raptures and rain." Fortunately, we did not see it under the latter aspect.

After the address of welcome, Dr. Allison delivered his presidential address, in which he dwelt lengthily upon Book week. (Dr. Allison's address was published in full in *The British Columbia Monthly*.)

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I have spoken at length of the President's address because of its comparative importance. Much to my regret, I must dwell more briefly upon Dr. George H. Locke's address on the Influence of Canadian Literature on United States Literature, delivered the same day at the Canadian Club luncheon. He dealt mainly with Haliburton's "Sam Slick," which paved the way for later humorists, from Mark Twain to Leacock, with Roberts's animal stories, which antedate those of Kipling and Seton Thompson, and with Ralph Connor's type of fiction.

Arthur Heming, of Toronto, discussing the question: "Can Canada support the Canadian Author?" answered it by a distinction: "The Canadian author may keep on living and working in Canada, but he has to sell also to the New York and London markets." Our Mr. Leslie Barnard, although he is not like Mr. Heming, an illustrator as well as a writer, can give the same answer, while our national treasurer, Robert Watson, feels that he cannot yet give up his regular work and trust exclusively to literature to procure him his daily bread.

A two-hour boat ride to the Wigwam Inn, on the north arm of Burrard Inlet, closed the day's proceedings. There, after dinner, we had, in addition to a musical programme, a paper by D. A. McGregor: "The Author and the Editor," and another from Vancouver's humorist, P. W. Luce, explaining why the dandelion should be Vancouver's favorite flower.

On the second day, the shelving of the amendments to the Copyright Act was explained, in the absence of Mr. Burpee, by Mr. Leon J. Ladner, M.P., the sponsor of the bill, who also held out hopes for the future. The nature of the amendments sought has already been explained here.

At the Women's Canadian Club luncheon, Mrs. John W. Garvin (Katherine Hale), spoke of "Colour Contrasts in Canadian Poetry." "In Canada," the speaker said, "we are just at the beginning, but later poetry is going to touch Canada more than it has ever done in the past; and we should all be proud and grateful to those few poets who touched the soul of the nation with poetry."

Dr. McLean, of Winnipeg, spoke on "Environment and authorship," and said, among other things: "A flat country cannot produce poets, painters, or novelists, and when scenery is lacking the only resource is to fall back on human nature," which is hard on Winnipeg and Toronto, and also on the Dutch painters.

The most interesting part of the afternoon session was certainly the reception given by Mrs. L. A. Lefevre at "Langravine," the beautiful home which inspired her: "A Garden by the Sea." If Dr. McLean is right, Mrs. Lefevre, who found poetry in the ice palace of Montreal in 1887 (when her poem won the first prize), will find in her wonderful surroundings a constant source of poetical inspiration. Mrs. Lefevre is now in Europe, but it is the hope of all of us who were her guests at Vancouver, that it may be our Branch's privilege to entertain her on her return, and show some of the gratitude which she has earned.

In the evening, the dinner took place. The list of toasts was unusual. After Charles Mair, that veteran of Canadian literature, now a resident of Victoria, the readers and writers of all the provinces were toasted in succession; then "relatives and neighbours," namely, "the old land" (which the proposer, Dr. A. F. B. Clark, said should have been "the old lands," so as to include France"), and "The United States."

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The Saturday afternoon was taken up by an automobile drive up the Grouse Mountain Scenic highway; but in the evening a reception was given the visiting authors by the Vancouver Poetry Society at the home of Mrs. Annie Charlotte Dalton (she has just published "The Ear-Trumpet"), who read a paper, "Troubadours and Bards," where she expresses the following thought: "If the sole purpose of the Authors' Association were to bridge the gulf between Eastern and Western Canada, its value would still be incalculable."

A supplementary Convention number of the *British Columbia Monthly* contains Mrs. Dalton's address, as well as those of President Allison and Doctor Locke and a brief report of the proceedings entitled: "Literary Notes," by Roderick Random. These, and the notes and reports in the "Bookman," constitute a fairly complete memento of the doings of the Canadian Authors in Vancouver and Victoria.

I feel it my duty to add that although I was the only French-Canadian there present, French Canada and its literature were not forgotten, and, to quote Mrs. Davies-Woodrow, "throughout the Convention, tribute was paid to the French section and attention directed to the very real body of literature that is being produced in French Canada." The applause which greeted me on my rising to speak at the banquet, was not meant for me, I know, but was intended for Montreal and particularly for French Canada. That which approved of Dr. Clark's correction "To the Old Lands" was unmistakable.

On the whole, those who were privileged to take the journey to Vancouver—it was a matter of great regret that Mr. Murray Gibbon and Mr. Chicanot were, for different reasons, prevented from proceeding farther West than Lake Louise—have kept a very pleasant recollection of what they saw and heard, and of the hospitality of the Vancouverites, and again I may be forgiven if I quote once more Mrs. Davies-Woodrow, who expressed her feelings towards Vancouver in the following words:—

"So loth am I to leave your loveliness,
That this last hour has torn my heart
in twain:
One half returns to its accustomed
haunts;
The other half forever must remain.

"My spirit-self will haunt your forest
ways;

The birds will sense my presence
'neath your trees;
The wind will find faint footprints on
your sands
Where I have dreamed beside your
murmuring seas.

"Chill-fingered clouds will touch me as
they pass
Like ghosts across your highest moun-
tain-crest;
And God will find me, at the end of
time,
Upcurled in sleep upon your sun-
warmed breast."