

NOTES HERE AND THERE.

SOME of the best newspapers in Canada have begun to go mad on headings. The craze, in its incipient forms, has been manifest during the past year or two. Instead of reserving large type for exceptional events, we get them every day now. The United States-Spanish war excitement is responsible for daily hysteria in Canadian papers and all sorts of eccentricities in the setting and arrangement of matter.

Perhaps it looks foolish to place one's judgment in opposition to some of the brightest news editors in the country, but I cannot help thinking that the type-exaggerations now disfiguring the pages of leading dailies are grotesque. These numerous, wild-eyed headings confuse the reader. The wording is often a secondary consideration, so that the space is filled up. The waste of valuable room is enormous. The public evince no signs of appreciation. The effort to sensationalize the press is in the wrong direction. These are some of the objections that occur to one in connection with the outbreak of the new disease. Surely there is a recognized rule in the style of headings and arrangement of news, and it is not a mere matter of opinion. If a paper has good news, intelligently arranged, sufficiently displayed, with a well-written heading, the surplus energy left after attending to the essentials should be devoted to getting later and better news than your rivals. But supposing the goal of ambition becomes the presentation of news in an eccentric form, where is the craze going to stop? A New York paper used up the whole front page with headings recently. Another used up two columns' space with a heading of four words. Is that enterprise? The English papers are not models, because they neither display their news properly, nor give it a good heading. But the United States papers go to the other extreme, and both extremes are bad. That, at least, is my humble opinion.

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A good feature with Canadian dailies of late is the cutting down of the House of Commons reports. Once upon a time the party organs used to wade through columns of rubbish simply because the politicians talked it. We are getting to know the politicians better and to appraise them at their true value. The Ottawa Hansard will soon become, as The Congressional Record has already become at Washington, the sole depository of the aimless nonsense and vulgar abuse in which some politicians indulge. The other day the House of Commons was the scene of a debate on whether ginger ale or beer formed the staple at the midnight suppers of a few members! Such episodes bring parliamentary bodies into contempt, and the press can do good service in exposing the buffoons who are chiefly responsible.

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The Canadian Press Association has again endorsed a special cable service for Canada. The cost will be too great say some. The present service is certainly very cheap. It is also well in line with public opinion in the United States. As it is specially cabled and prepared for the market, it seems right and proper that it should be acceptable to the United States papers. They have practically no interest in: (1) The news of the British possessions the world over; (2) the institutions and legislation of Great Britain; (3) the party politics of England and Scotland; (4) the affairs of Europe as they bear upon the interests of the British Empire. Only incidentally, not systema-

tically, do we get news of this kind. But are the Canadian people interested? Well, just try them.

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It appears that the women journalists of London do not write legibly. At least, so the proofreaders say. It is also charged that not five out of ten know how to spell "ecstasy." These and other facts were raised at the recent dinner of the London Association of Correctors of the Press. At this same meeting some pretty good mistakes of the press were remembered. One of the best was a slip that horrified Dean Stanley. He was writing of Jerusalem, under the pedantic name of Jerus, and this is how the passage turned out: "We saw the setting sun gilding the landscape as we topped the summit, and our eyes were met by the glorious sight of Jones." In Canada the women journalists spell well, especially adjectives. In fact, the worst spellers I have known on the Canadian press are men who labored under the disadvantage of a university education.

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If every copy of a newspaper is henceforth to pay postage the free list will be more closely scrutinized. The local exchanges, between papers in the same zone, will not be affected. Some of the larger newspapers, like The Globe, Mail, Star, etc., the exchange lists of which are pretty extensive, may be expected to curtail. The effect all round can hardly fail to diminish the number of exchange copies sent out.

Assuming this expectation to be correct, the question arises: Will the curtailment of the number of exchanges be a wholly unmixed evil? No one denies that it is convenient to have exchanges, or that it is interesting to know what our contemporaries are saying. But the fact is that the freedom with which newspapers exchange has led to a certain amount of personality in editorial tone which should be avoided. Editors carry on controversies, good-humored or ill-tempered, as the case may be, with their contemporaries, and the public seize on editorial quarrels as one proof that the press is irresponsible, vindictive and trivial.

I think the general tendency of editorial controversy with other papers is bad. It injures the prestige of the press. While badinage or abuse may afford some amusement or exercise to the editors' wits, the practice becomes a nuisance. If the abolition of the exchange lists would work a cure, I think it would be cheap at the price. The way in which some Canadian papers slander one another now is perfectly sickening.

C.

THE DIVER WAS DROWNED.

A few days ago something got under the head gates of the water-power for the Canada Paper Co.'s mills, at Windsor, Que., so as to prevent them from closing the gates. A diver, named William Gilker, was sent from Montreal, and went down to locate the trouble. After being down about twenty minutes without giving any signal, the men attending the air pump became alarmed, and sent word to the superintendent of the mill. Supt. Dooley at once wired to Montreal for another diver. A special train was sent with four experienced divers, but before they reached Windsor the body was discovered and taken out. It is thought he must have got fast between the rafters and head gates, thus rendering him unable to give the signal to regulate the air, nor could he be pulled out until too late.