

The Toronto World

A Morning Newspaper Published Every Day in the Year.

MAIN OFFICE: 33 YONGE STREET, TORONTO.

TELEPHONE CALLS: Main 252—Private exchange, connecting all departments.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

Single Copies—Daily, One Cent. Sunday, Five Cents.

By Carrier—Six Cents Per Week. Daily and Sunday—10c Per Week.

By Mail—Daily Only, One Month, 25c. Daily and Sunday, One Month, 45c.

Daily Only, One Year, \$2.00. Daily and Sunday, One Year, \$3.00.

Cost of foreign postage should be added to above rates.

To the United States, including Postage—Daily Only, One Month, 45c.

Daily and Sunday, One Month, 70c. Daily Only, One Year, \$5.00.

Sunday Only, One Year, \$4.00. Daily and Sunday, One Year, \$9.00.

The World, daily and Sunday, is now on sale at the following news stands and hotels in the United States:

New York: Deaf, The World Building Arcade; Hotelling's News Stand, 128 Broadway; Harry J. Schultz, S.E. cor. Fifth-street and Broadway; Times-square News Stand, 128 Broadway; News Stand, the Knickerbocker Hotel; News Stand, the Manhattan Hotel; News Stand, the Hotel New York; News Stand, the Hotel New York; News Stand, the Hotel New York.

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SENATE REFORM.

Second chambers in a democracy are in some instances an anachronism, in others an inconsistency, and in all a difficulty. Theoretically it is easy to predicate what they ought to be, but it is the hardest of problems to constitute bodies that will even approach the requirements. For if second chambers are constituted by popular election they become really co-ordinate; if they are from their character or become, by reason of the system of election, partisan, they cease to fulfill their purpose in the state. Thus the house of lords today is a mere appendage of the Conservative opposition in the house of commons, and exercises its powers openly for the benefit of that party.

And the senate of Canada is equally a mere appendage of the Conservative opposition in the house of commons, and exercises its powers openly for the benefit of that party.

Neither the British hereditary nor the Canadian senate attempt to discharge the function of a revising chamber, and this is practically admitted by the efforts made after self-reform.

A representative and influential committee recently recommended a drastic scheme for the re-organization of the house of lords.

On Thursday last the Hon. R. W. Scott, the Liberal leader in the senate, gave notice that he will submit a resolution for the reform of that chamber. He proposes that two-thirds of its number shall be popularly elected from districts on an eight years' tenure, and that one-third shall be appointed by the government in power for a like term.

And to equalize the standing of parties in the senate, he suggests that an incoming administration be given power to make additional appointments not exceeding nine.

In explaining the purpose and reason of his action, Mr. Scott pointed out that under the present system the political complexion of the senate had been thoroughly changed since the advent of the present government, and asked how it could be defended if one of the great political parties did not have a single representative in the Canadian upper house.

The party in power was loud in its denunciation of a Conservative senate, and had it ceased, could have set a worthy precedent by making alternate nominations after a reasonable majority of its own way of thinking had been obtained.

But it is evident enough that such a sacrifice of party to patriotism is not to be expected at this stage of the political game.

Mr. Scott's proposal is excellent in itself, the only one of several probably equally possible and reasonable suggestions. Something undoubtedly must be done with the senate, if it is to continue as a second chamber, and discharge satisfactorily the duties pertaining to a revising chamber.

The World does not support the abolition of the senate, because its creation was part of the compact between Quebec and Ontario, and neither Quebec nor the smaller provinces will agree to a proposal of this kind.

But further, The World believes that if the senate can be reconstituted and established in public confidence, there is plenty of necessary and valuable work for the senators to accomplish.

Non-contentious measures, for example those dealing with social reforms, might originate in the senate and receive the careful consideration requisite for their successful operation.

In this way the house of commons could be relieved and enabled to devote itself more closely to the discussion of questions of policy and to exercise more efficiently its financial control.

The senate again might set itself to supervise the working of the Dominion constitution, maintaining a true balance between federal and provincial rights, and in this way keep the wheels of government moving with the minimum of friction.

And it might also be the effective guardian of public rights and our vast national resources.

All this honorable senators could and would do if they will, and as they should. Even a proportion of nominated members may be good if the federal governments were wise enough and patriotic enough to appoint them for patriotic, not partisan, reasons.

SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION.

Canadians, there is no doubt, generally approved the conference of representative self-government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony.

The British Liberal Cabinet certainly took a bold course in granting this at the time it did, but even at the time the weight of argument was decidedly preponderant in favor of the policy pursued.

That self-government must be accorded was admitted, the only point of variance was whether it should be immediate or preceded by a period of imperial tutelage.

It was apparent to every one that the political salvation of South Africa lay in the elimination of racial antagonism, in the appearance of a really national sentiment, and in the realization both by Briton and Boer that their prosperity, progress, safety and future lay in co-operation in a spirit of mutual appreciation and goodwill.

But so long as complete trust was not reposed and responsible government withheld, a grievance remained that fostered the continuance of racial animosity and imperiled, every day it lasted, the prospects of ultimate unification.

A bold policy is often the wisest and this the development of affairs in South Africa will probably again illustrate.

One of the first and most promising consequences that followed upon the action of the British Government was the stimulation of the movement for South African federation, a matter that has been under consideration by a convention of delegates from the various South African states since Oct. 12 last.

The convention sat in session from that date till Nov. 5 at Durban, and from Nov. 25 to Dec. 18 at Cape Town and recently resumed at the latter city.

Although the secret of the course of the deliberations has been remarkably well kept, enough is known to make it certain that the temper of the delegates has been one of exceptional harmony.

According to a report contributed to The London Daily News by Mr. H. E. S. Freeman, a member of the Cape Parliament, Mr. Merriman, the Cape premier, declared the convention had destroyed the prospect of party government at the Cape, because of the friendliness and brotherly feeling shown by the representatives of the two parties towards each other and added that there had not been a single disagreeable incident at any of the sessions.

Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, one of the leaders of the Transvaal Opposition, endorsed this and said with confidence that the convention had made a final peace between two peoples who had been divided all too long.

These affirmations have been repeated with emphasis by General De Wet, who is reported to have remarked: "I cannot say how thankful I am—it is indescribable—that to-day it does not matter what race we belong to—whether we are of Dutch or British origin, or whatever our origin may be—as long as we are South Africans, as long as we have made South Africa our fatherland, it does not matter whether we were born here or came from overseas and settled here. What a difference compared with but six years ago!"

If it accomplishes no more in the meantime than this happy drinking of the waters of Lethe, the obliteration of bitter and painful memories, recent as these are, the grant of self-government that rendered it possible is more than justified.

The only obstacle that seems to stand in the way of general agreement either of unification or federation after the Canadian precedent is the question of a capital.

Cape Town and Pretoria are both put forward and according to a special correspondent of The London Times it is tolerably certain the Transvaal will not agree to union unless Pretoria be preferred.

In this difficulty South Africa repeats the Canadian and Australian precedents and it can hardly prevent, tho it may delay, the rise of the spirit of South African nationality will evoke a sympathetic regard from the Canadian public, who will assuredly, when it comes about, welcome the entrance of a united South Africa into the imperial co-partnership.

TRAVELERS' READY REFERENCE.

Trains leave Toronto daily for Montreal, 7:30 and 9 a.m., 8:30 and 10:15 p.m.

The 9 a.m. has parlor-library-cum-sleeper to Montreal and through trains carry Pullman sleepers.

The 8:30 and 10:15 p.m. For London, Detroit and Chicago, 8 a.m., 4:40 p.m. and 11 p.m., carrying Pullman sleepers; 8 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. have parlor-library-cum-sleeper.

For Niagara Falls, Buffalo and New York, 9 a.m., 4:05 and 6:10 p.m., carrying Pullman sleepers.

The 6:10 p.m. has Pullman sleeper to New York. Remember, the Grand Trunk is the only double-track route to above points.

Secure tickets and make reservations at city office, northwest corner King and Yonge-streets, Phone Main 4209.

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ARCHBISHOP CRITICIZES WORK OF SECRET SOCIETIES

"Nonsensical, Silly Ritual and Frills," Declares His Grace in Sermon to C.M.B.A.

Archbishop McEvay yesterday afternoon preached a strong sermon in St. Michael's Cathedral to one thousand members of the Catholic Mutual Beneficent Association, in which his grace pointed out how the church and the society as one founded on the principles laid down by the Catholic church.

A brother that helpeth a brother is like unto a strong city," was the text chosen from Proverbs, and his grace first pointed out how the church and the society as one founded on the principles laid down by the Catholic church.

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