

Public Opinion

READING.

(Leslie's Weekly).

Reading! Everybody wants the best of everything. It is a sign of a high standard of living. In the end the best is always the cheapest. Nowhere is this more true than in what one reads, yet many who demand the best in everything else read trash. "Everyone is influenced by what he reads, especially young people," said Mr. Chester S. Lord, the eminent journalist, in addressing the Kansas Editorial Association, "and cheap reading must of necessity breed cheap thinking and cheap expression of that thought—and consequently cheap moral conduct. It is in this direction that the sensational press and the cheap literature of the day have their chief influence. Cheap literature produces cheap mentality and consequently a cheap people." Newspapers are not valuable chiefly as literature, but for their portrayal of life. So greatly do they vary in the picture of life which they present, that one's mentality may be judged by the sort of periodicals he reads and supports.

MAKING CITIZENS.

(Chicago Tribune).

The opening of thirty-seven schoolhouses in Chicago as community centres for the winter months is much more significant than the kindly philanthropic thing it seems. It will accomplish more than the entertainment of some thousands who suffer boredom in stuffy apartments.

In any city with a population so various as Chicago's, where we have the material for whole Swedish cities, whole Polish cities, and whole Italian cities, citizenship has to be bred. The alien is only technically a citizen when he takes out his naturalization papers. To become effectively a citizen he must be naturalized by understanding the community in which he lives. It is this function which the community centres can be made to serve.

Opening the schools and other public buildings to the public at large is an aid in the making of American citizens.

CANADIAN PROSPERITY.

(Christian Science Monitor).

Canadian prosperity, it is true, has been brought about partly by war orders, but these constitute only a fraction of the nation's new industries. They have been most helpful in showing the country what it can do toward supplying its own needs. The war orders have tested the country's supply of raw material and the skill of its mechanics. When the war orders shall have stopped, Canada will be prepared to go on with the production of manufactured articles on a scale that it could not have attained in many years without the instruction and experience that have come with the demand for munitions. The war has cost Canada dearly, but the experience will not leave the country without some valuable compensation, especially in an enlarged knowledge of itself.

RURAL SCHOOL FAIRS.

(Windsor Record).

Rural school fairs are growing in popularity. In 1912 the department started out with 25 school fairs. In 1915 there were 234 school fairs conducted through Ontario, embracing 2,291 schools, practically one-half the rural schools of Ontario, taking in 43,386 pupils who grew their grain and vegetables on over 51,000 plots, and among them the department distributed some 6,868 settings of eggs, aggregating over 75,000 eggs altogether.

THE SPIRIT OF NEW ZEALAND.

(Christchurch, N. Z., Press).

New Zealand has never wavered in her determination since war was declared, and she is unlikely to waver now, when the best blood of her sons is being shed to maintain the ideals the Allies are fighting for. The New Zealand casualty lists since the capture of Flers are a renewed pledge that there shall be no faltering. The blood of these sons will cry out from the ground if there is any sign of weakening in our task.

MAN POWER.

(The English Review).

Better a country of barracks than what the shirkers would make it—a country of cemeteries.

If we aspire to regulate the balance of European power in a sense favorable to ourselves, which in brutal truth means our continued existence as a world empire, it is as a nation in arms we must pursue the fight to a finish. Today it is men, not money or armaments, that our nearest ally lacks, and it is man power that we must contribute if a premature and inconclusive peace is not to be forced upon our valiant friends under conditions which they would regard as detestable. For unless Britain can maintain for another two years or thereabouts an uninterrupted flow of man power to the western and southern fronts our valiant neighbor across the silver streak will find it humanly impossible to maintain the struggle which has in the last two terrible years involved the depletion of the flower of her manhood.

This was whispered many months past; now it is being openly discussed wherever thinking men get together, whether in dugout facing the unspeakable Hun or snatching a few hours' leave in the bosom of their families.

"Men; more men," "England must send more soldiers," are the common expressions of opinion in the fair land where already so many of our khaki clad heroes sleep.

CITY MANAGER PLAN.

(Canadian Municipal Journal).

A combination of the commission plus city manager would seem to be the ideal. It would eliminate what is regarded as the principal objection to the straight city manager scheme, namely, the fear of one-man power. With the commissioners acting as a group through one controlled executive, the whims or fancies of any one man would be neutralized by the combined judgment of the other members of the commission. Furthermore, if any one member of the board happened to be selfishly interested in the passing of certain acts the passing of every act by the group makes it impossible for any one to put such deals over. In this way the manager would become servant and executor rather than boss.

PROFITEERING UNLIMITED.

(Toronto Star).

Everybody appears to be agreed that something ought to be done in Canada about the excess war profits which some men are making, while other men are away fighting and falling in defence of the country and the future welfare of the race. Everybody feels that it is wrong that a few persons should be permitted to pile up large fortunes in a hurry out of the life and death needs of the armies that fight. Elsewhere, much is done in the way of taking over for public uses the excessive gains of profiteers.

LEADS IN BACKWARDNESS.

(World's Outlook).

Honduras excels any other republic on the continent in one respect—backwardness. Every little while a revolution tears down any slight prosperity that may have been built. Parents train their sons to become professional revolutionists as we train ours to become lawyers or doctors. A debt of a hundred millions burdens the country. Polygamy is common. Many a man has four wives to support him, he doing nothing, unless a wife, especially needing help, wishes to hire him at a good wage. Perhaps standards would be higher if life were harder. But where breadfruit weighs down the trees and a grain of corn planted on Monday will sprout four inches high by Friday, there is not much incentive to labor.

SONS OF FREE NATIONS.

(British Weekly).

The valour of our soldiers has been unsurpassed in history, and has won the enthusiastic admiration of the French. Sir Douglas Haig has told us that his troops from all parts of the Empire behaved like veterans. They have proved that the sons of free nations can wage war more successfully than the slaves of a military despotism.

YOUTH.

(From an Exchange; author unknown).

"Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."—Deut. 34.

"Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips, and supple knees; it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions. It is the freshness of the deep springs of life.

"Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of 50 more than in a boy of 30.

"Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals.

"Years wrinkle the skin; but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

"Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair—these are the long, long years that bow the heart and turn the greening spirit back to dust.

"Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and at starlight things and thoughts, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing, childlike appetite of what next, and the joy of the game of living. You are as young as your faith, as old as your fear; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your despair.

"In the central place of your heart is an ever-green tree; its name is Love. So long as it flourishes you are young. When it dies you are old. In the central place of your heart is a wireless station. So long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, grandeur, courage and power from God and from your fellow men, so long are you young."

HOLLAND ADOPTS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

(Ottawa Citizen).

Holland has adopted proportional representation as the method of electing representatives to its second chamber. The measure was passed unanimously. P. R. has similarly been approved of unanimously by the British parliament for Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Denmark are other European countries where P. R. has been adopted. It is promised by the president and the prime minister of France for the chamber of deputies after the war. There is also every possibility of this important electoral reform coming in Great Britain. The Proportional Representation Society of Canada has a big educational work ahead of it; but signs are not wanting that P. R. is coming in this Dominion too.

CITIES ON WHEELS.

(Saturday Evening Post).

City people fuss more or less to get pleasant homes and offices; but such incidents of urban living are rapidly becoming unimportant in comparison with means of locomotion.

Fifty years ago, for example, New York street cars collected forty-three fares a year for each inhabitant, and that was probably much above the average cities. Last year Gotham street cars—operating on the surface, in Subway and on Elevated—collected three hundred and fifty-six fares for each inhabitant. Virtually every man, woman and child took a ride every day in the year. The total number of fares was almost two billions. To this must be added the occupants of a hundred thousand or so automobiles that ply ceaselessly up and down the island, millions of passengers in busses and taxicabs, and the considerable army of commuters on the railroads.

The figures simply confirm the impression that one gets by ocular sense—of a vast community in perpetual gyration. A closer investigation would show that, with the exception of infants in arms, positively nobody in New York, except while asleep, ever remains more than two hours in the same place. In other American cities, as a whole, the average may be two and a half hours.

This explains various phenomena of American life that foreigners deplore, such as the generally ephemeral character of our art and our slight interest in public affairs. We do not sit still long enough for sustained thinking and feeling. In view of our transitory habits, it seems absurd to bother so much about sanitary places of business and the architecture of dwellings, and then to tolerate the means of conveyance the typical American city offers.