

# WHAT OF TO-MORROW?

By O. F. Hamilton

C. F. Hamilton, the Toronto News correspondent who accompanied the Borden party on their recent tour did not deal with politics exclusively in his correspondence, as will be seen by a perusal of the following interesting article written from Regina:

Mr. Borden's route has taken him through an interesting region, the northern portions of the two new provinces. Here conditions have changed with bewildering rapidity. The autonomy struggle seems very recent; let us see what has happened since then.

When autonomy was granted in 1905 these provinces, so far as human occupancy was concerned, consisted of: (1) A belt of population extending east and west along the main line of the C.P.R.; (2) three subsidiary belts running northward; (3) a subsidiary belt running southeasterly along the Soo line to the border. The easternmost of the three northerly belts was along the eastern border of Saskatchewan, and was built up on a series of railway lines, some half a dozen number, which were beginning to cut across the boundary from Manitoba and heading northwesterly; the middle belt was along the railway running north from Regina to Prince Albert; the westernmost was along the Calgary-Edmonton line. All were scanty and interrupted, though the Edmonton country spread out at the top into a fairly large settlement.

### The Country Today

Today the tops of all these three north-running belts have been linked by two new Canadian Northern lines, and we see growing up another north-east-and-west belt. There is a great western Calgary-Edmonton-Prince Albert-Regina rectangle; all three northerly belts are greatly reinforced, the southeasterly settlement has become wider and denser.

Come out in another two years' time and you may expect to see the western rectangle cut across by three and perhaps four lines, which will spread out with Saskatchewan as their centre, to Edmonton and one or two towns south of it, and perhaps across to Calgary. You may expect to see the fan of railways which starts from the neck of the land between the Manitoba lake system and the international boundary cutting across to intersect the Prince Albert-Regina-Edmonton belt at sundry places, with Saskatchewan again as a converging point. You may expect to see the south-easterly belt spread out so as to connect with the main line belt.

### New Land

Thus it happens that Mr. Borden and his party could this year go up to Edmonton, across to Prince Albert and down to Regina. The whole region, with the exception of the eastward projection of the Edmonton district and the Battleford nucleus, is new—raw and naked in its newness. Here you see the making of the west. From the bosom of the sombre rolling prairie a house projects itself upward with the architectural appropriateness of a surveyor's stake, as your train lumbers by, a man and woman stand at the open door to gaze at you, he leaning against the door-post, she just fitting under the arm which he stretches across to the other door post; a world of mutual affection and support in their attitude. That is a vignette of the bare and open prairie along the Regina-Prince Albert line. At an old established station in the most northerly wheat district a little supplementary village of huts arrests your attention and you visit it. You dig a hole about two feet in the ground, rear a roof over it and heap the roof with earth; a door is at one gable end and a window at the other. Around is a well trodden path of ground, giving a shiftable air by a litter of worthless fragments of personal belongings. You feel as if you were inspecting a Kaffir location, not the residences of fellow Canadians. No it is not a permanent village though strong built, foreign looking men hang about and women exotic in their strength to endure drudgery, fetch and carry over household tasks. It is a distributing point for the foreign born base camp. There is another phase of the settlement. I have written already of the Galician farmstead, with its air of being owned by a man who lives in the present, instead of like his English speaking neighbor and political subject, of living in the future. That is what the huddled village leads to.

### The New Town

Do you wish to see village rather than rural life? The train pauses in its leisurely rumble at a station in the bushy, semi-hilly, pleasantly varied northern country; a hotel, a general store, an implement shed, perhaps an elevator, a few houses; for the most part unpainted yet, made up the "town". Doubtless every structure is planted on a duly surveyed lot—what would a western village be without its town lots?—and long orthodox street allowances, but they are so few that form and order are indiscernible. As likely as not there is no station and no platform, and the railway equipment is compressed in a switch, a water tank and an agent's house, so that this year the freight must be dropped on the bare prairie. Here in the autumn of 1907, while we of the east are heirs of generations of work, and forgotten

work, our brothers of the west begin the task of subduing Nature. The fight is only beginning; they have but driven in the outposts, and the real struggle is to come. How very, very crude and comfortless it looks; how very, very brave those men and women are. Of course they are living in the future. "Man never is, but always to be blest"; how the old line rings in one's ears as he sees the gallant struggle against some hardship, great risk of fortune, unutterable loneliness and bareness of living. The west lives in the day after tomorrow. Let us prove that tomorrow does not prove unkind.

### Tomorrow's Doubts

For the peculiarity of the west is that the day after tomorrow is perfectly safe, and that all our doubts must be for tomorrow. It is such a wonderfully fluid country. Every one of these tiny hamlets calls itself a town and is certain that soon it will be a city. Perhaps the men you see in these way stations deserve little of your sympathy with the roughness of your lot, for they are assured that they are on the ground floor of a coming city, that they are enduring hardships willingly for a season for the sake of the prosperity that is to come. So many of them must be disappointed. So many of these budding villages must remain villages; so many more must rise to the state of the small town and remain there; so few will be the cities their founders plan.

### A Sample Disappointment

The town of Warman is an example of it. It is the intersecting point of the Winnipeg-Edmonton line of the Canadian Northern and the Prince Albert-Regina line, and it saw visions of bigness, suddenly the Regina-Prince Albert line fell into the hands of the Canadian Northern. Saskatchewan was elected as the divisional point, and Warman languishes. Alas, poor Warman! Put not your trust in railway princes! But in the brief day of its hopefulness the real estate man sold Warman lots miles out into the prairies, and they say that the suburban town lots of Warman and Saskatchewan overlap. The real estate man is doing that sort of thing all over, and so very many of the towns which he exploits must fail to grow up to his predictions. The writer said in his haste the other day that the crying need of the west is to have its real estate men hanged, to which a westerner replied that unquestionably this was so, but that at present they were dying a more lingering death.

### The Early Frost

That brings us to another aspect of the dangers of tomorrow. The fight with nature is just beginning in this northern country, and one of her weapons is the early frost. The writer cannot bring himself to regard this as a permanent difficulty. All the eastern provinces had to fight this in the early days, and it was only discouragements that our fathers established the existence of the mysterious law that general cultivation drives the frosts away. The struggles of Manitoba and the southern prairies are a proverb of today. Now in the day after tomorrow we shall find farming as safely established here as elsewhere, but Nature's fight will be waged tomorrow. Perhaps these men of the northern prairies will have better luck than their forerunners, and escape crop failures and discouragements. Perhaps they will not; that is the secret of tomorrow. Meanwhile there has been a nipping frost this year; the high prices have enabled the farmers to surmount the check, but the situation now is critically dependent upon the next year's performance.

### Fluid Conditions

Here is where the western fluidity of conditions impresses me. A run of bad seasons is so effective in checking development. In a long-settled land a bad year simply is a bad year and nothing more; we cast our financial anchors to the windward, and wish for the morning. Here in this fluid west, a good year here, a bad year there sways the march of the coming millions. Is it going to swarm with fellow Canadians, or is it to remain the home of the goopher? Forecast for me, the weather, and I can tell you.

### Carrying the New Settler

Perhaps you say all this talk is very general; consider this. Settlement on this open prairie, thanks to the land's enticing readiness for the plough, demands no great deal of capital, especially as compared with the settlement in densely wooded Ontario, where the tree chopping farmer, even if he had money, could not for years sink it in implements. Talk about free homesteads if you please, but the fact remains that it takes more comfortably near a thousand dollars to homestead. The majority of the new comers have no such capital. What happens? The people already in the country carry them; in other words they go in debt for oxen, hoes, plows, binders, lumber and the other myriad necessities of the prairie farmer. Now, at present the towns of this country are carrying a heavy burden of new settlers. The farmer of two or three years standing is perfectly safe, and even this year's first crop men have some re-

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sources; but the towns, none the less feel the burden. There is a general halt in all but the little towns where mere necessities of civilised life must be provided. Real estate, that barometer of the west, is on a dead center—holders sticking to their prices, buyers not coming forward. Another bad harvest, even if high prices still balance the farmers' losses, will hit the towns very hard. But who carries the towns? The east. And the east may just as well know that in some respects the west is already stocked up for a part at least of next year's trade.

# C. C. SMITH TO OPPOSE TURRIFF

Well Known Carnduff Man Conservative Candidate in Assiniboia—Turriff's Opposition to J. T. Brown, M.L.A., Will Help Defeat Him.

Carlyle, Sask., Nov. 14.—Following the Liberal convention of last week, the Conservatives of Assiniboia met here yesterday and nominated C. C. Smith of Carnduff, to oppose J. G. Turriff in the coming federal elections. The other names submitted were: R. H. Scott, Alameda; H. Yardley, Estevan; and B. L. Richardson, who would have been an independent standard bearer and endorsed by the Conservatives had a local man not been agreed upon. R. S. Lake, M.P. of Grenfell, was at the Convention. In a very able address the candidate thanked the convention for the honor conferred upon him and expressed his hearty accord with the Halifax platform of Mr. Borden. Mr. Smith then took up the question of grain shipping and expressed his endorsement of the principle of reciprocal demurrage passed by the Minnesota legislature. He pledged himself to introduce legislation along similar lines.

# R. H. FOSTER PROMOTED

Popular Weyburn Official is Now Travelling Grain Agent for C.P.R. Crew Up With the Town

Weyburn, Nov. 14.—While the people of Weyburn are glad that the ability of R. H. Foster has been recognized by the C.P.R. yet they deeply regret his departure from this town. We have been proud of the fact that we had the ablest agent on the C.P.R. system, and now the railway company have decided to give greater scope to his ability. His departure is a distinct loss to the town in business, social and athletic circles, but we hope that in his new field as travelling grain agent, that he will meet with the same success as he did here.

R. H. Foster came to Weyburn in 1899 when the first settlers came and has remained here ever since, though often offered other positions. His success as agent has been marvelous and the cordial feeling existing between the town and the railway is a great measure due to his influence. Popular and straightforward, his opinion on railway matters did much to mould public opinion at this point. While here he was a prominent figure in athletic circles, being a good lacrosse player and a curler. He will be much missed from these circles as "Bob" Foster could always be counted upon to give every assistance and was most liberal in his support of any scheme for the town's interest. His hurried departure prevented his friends from taking any steps toward showing their appreciation, but we are certain that they will take ad-

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