

THE CANADIAN COURIER

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

BY

COURIER PRESS, LIMITED

181 SIMCOE ST.

TORONTO, JULY 1ST, 1916.

Our 50th First of July

THE DATE ON THE COVER of this issue marks the beginning of the fiftieth year of Confederation. Twelve months from to-day we shall have rounded out the first half century of our life as a nation, so far as an Act of the Imperial Parliament could make us. Under the terms of the British North America Act, as wise a piece of legislation for overseas dominions as ever was framed, we did as much as might have been expected in the first forty-seven years of that period to give ourselves at least the physical semblance of a nation. Quite as certainly since August 4, 1914, more has been done by Canada, when most of the common business of nation-making was reversed, to make this country a united people with all other overseas dominions in the Empire. Before this year rounds out a half century of confederated Canada we may find ourselves much further along the road than we are to-day. In the meantime quietly we observe, without exactly celebrating, our fiftieth First of July. What we pay respect to is a political fact, not a popular struggle. That which gives the political fact its deepest significance just now is a far greater struggle than that which the other half of North America will celebrate on Tuesday of next week. For the due observance of this day of days in our national calendar we have no need of cannon-crackers. Our field-guns are booming along the French front.

Curzon as Governor-General

WHETHER RUMOUR IS RIGHT or wrong, Earl Curzon of Kedleston might make a very good Governor-General of Canada. Canadians of all conditions of life will be sorry when the Duke of Connaught returns to England, but in Curzon they will at least find an interesting personality. He is one of the half-dozen or half-score men who are usually on hand in England for important appointments in far parts of the Empire. Since he left the Governor-Generalship of India, in 1905, he has been comparatively idle. It would therefore be the less surprising to see his great capabilities turned to account as the King's deputy in this country. Earl Curzon is the opposite to a Little Englander. He is one of those who believe in Empire and works for it. He is a man of decision and, at times, guilty almost of being enterprising. He is the man who, when things were going none too well in the South African war, took it upon himself as Viceroy of India to despatch Indian troops to Africa. A weaker man would have hesitated to part with these troops at a time when India was resting none too easily on nights. A more cautious man would have consulted with the London authorities and sent his aid too late. These qualities, admirable in those circumstances, might not be so useful here. For fact he would have a hard man to follow.

The "Round Table"

THE ROUND TABLE movement has come out in the open. Lionel Curtis, one of the leaders, spoke recently, as such, in Hamilton and in Toronto. His book, "The Problem of a Commonwealth," is to be issued to the general public under his name. Let us add: it is an important book and should be read by all thoughtful Canadians.

The Round Table is likely to play an important part in Canada as well as in other parts of the Empire in the near future. Its history and purpose should be understood. It was started by Englishmen of the stamp of Viscount Milner, Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr, after the formation of the Union of South Africa. These men, of the intellectual Empire builder type, were apparently moved by the story of the British in South Africa—in whose troubles, by the way, Germany played a much larger part than the public suspects—to consider the whole problem of organizing the British Empire. They believed in the inevitability of war with Germany and sought to do something toward organizing the whole British

Empire. Being wise and experienced men, they chose quiet methods, avoiding the danger of starting a mere popular propaganda, eschewing anything that even faintly resembled dictatorial manners toward colonials, appealing chiefly to the young and thoughtful men. They emphasized the fact that they laid down no policy, had no fixed theory how the Empire should be organized, but instead placed what data they could in the hands of the members of the "segments"—there are, or were, many segments or groups in Toronto alone—and asked them to discuss it, criticize whatever tentative suggestions came before the segments, and offer counter-suggestions. The data given the members of the segments was in the form of historical memoranda on various phases of Empire history or Imperial problems, such as the government of the backward people, and so on. The Round Table Quarterly was another instrument for spreading knowledge of current history in the various parts of the Empire.

Not a Secret Society, But---

THE ROUND TABLE has been accused of being a secret society. The implied criticism was unjust. The society did, however, show quite inadvertently a distrust of common public opinion. With profound good sense it sought to reach the young and idealistic men, trusting that seed sowed on that ground would bear more fruit than seed scattered broadcast before the uncertain winds of common public opinion.

This much should be clearly understood, however. The Round Table movement, in spite of its efforts to give unbiased information and encourage absolutely free discussion, is not without its prejudices. Round Table men, as a rule, may be said to have been in favour of a cash contribution to the British navy, and they tend to-day, as Mr. Curtis' public utterances indicated, to support "centralization" of the British Empire, i.e., the handling of foreign affairs and matters of offence and defence by a central authority in London—presumably the Cabinet of an Imperial Parliament, to which Canada and the other colonies would elect representatives.

Inopportune Discussions

DESPITE THE GOOD QUALITIES of the organization, protest should be made against the public discussion of schemes of Imperial centralization until the war is over. In this connection, Mr. Curtis is open to censure. Many thoughtful and loyal Canadians hold very strongly against the centralization idea. Many who are now fighting in the ranks of our Expeditionary Force oppose centralization bitterly. Only too great a number at home in Canada distrust centralization, but refrain from opposing it openly for fear their opposition might be misconstrued as anti-British and unpatriotic. We join with these in condemning the raising of the issue at present. Mr. Curtis may urge that the time is opportune. For the popularizing of his propaganda it is indeed opportune. But if we judge Mr. Curtis and his associates rightly they desire the safety of the Empire before the popular acceptance of this doctrine. And that is precisely the end they will not achieve by advocating centralization now. The counter-doctrine to centralization is "nationalism," not Mr. Bourassa's kind, not of the Sinn Féin variety, certainly not anti-British and not unmindful of the need for preserving the happy relations of the English-speaking countries, and improving that relationship for the lasting benefit of all parties. But "nationalism," either as an alternative or a corrective of centralization, cannot to-day be given a fair hearing. And until it gets a fair hearing the question of organizing the Empire cannot be settled.

The less sober advocates of centralization will choose the obvious retort that if nationalism is honest and not anti-British, it can declare itself as well now as later. More thoughtful men will admit the delicacy of the subject and the need for cool argument. So good an Imperialist as Lord Milner declared once that a sound Empire could be expected only out of sound nations. Canada has to-day barely achieved national consciousness. What she has achieved must be consolidated before the common Canadian—and the strength of the Empire will depend ultimately on the devotion of that common Canadian—can be asked to comprehend, for example, an Imperial parliament.

Readjustment there must be, but centralization achieved in a rash moment will wreck not only itself, but the Empire it would preserve. Sentiment drew Canada into this war heart and soul. Had it been ordained by written words that we should enter it—the will would have been much less gracious and happy. Let sentiment, with the correction of out-

standing injustices, serve until we are older, cooler and therefore better able to judge just what is to be the permanent basis of our relationship.

Divorce Laws in Canada

THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION, at its recent convention in Toronto, deplored the uneven bearing of the divorce laws of the country on the various classes in the Dominion. Being a somewhat costly proceeding, a divorce is practically out of the reach of any but well-to-do Canadians. The poor are thus encouraged to endure their domestic infelicities, if they have any, as best they can. This condition should be removed. If the cost of divorce proceedings in Canada is intended to act as a deterrent to rash litigants, it is the wrong sort of deterrent. Generally speaking, domestic unhappiness means more to the poor than to the rich, because the poor have fewer distractions. Moreover, according to American statistics, the poor are not the ones who get into domestic trouble most easily. The facts are rather the other way.

He Knew the Soil

WE ARE ALL ultimately farmers. Because a majority of Canadians sit on the grandstand six months every year watching the professional farmers extract their annual increment of national wealth from the soil and the weather makes no difference to the fact that in our primal instincts we are all agrarians—or ought to be. The trouble is that when a lot of us get away from the land to the town we take good care to clean our boots for good of the last relic of the soil and begin to play being gentleman.

The late C. C. James, who died suddenly in a street-car near St. Catharines last week, was a man who in the guise of a perfect gentleman of culture carried with him always a conscience passionately devoted to the interests of the soil. As Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario Mr. James reached his high-water mark of citizenship in this country. He was the most devoted servant of efficiency year in and year out that the Ontario farmer ever had. Under political Ministers of whatever temperament, or lack of it, James was the non-political, unwearying student of farm science and economics. There was no wheat-aggregate too vast and no microscopic scale-pest too small to get past that lynx-eyed, almost poetically passionate devotee who smoked strong cigars in his office, had the finest collection of Tennysonian in Canada, and always kept his boots on the ultimate soil. All we farmers, potential and otherwise, will miss the work and the active brain of C. C. James, who in his way did a man's work to keep the moral and practical problems of the farmer in the forefront of common economics and national consideration.

Americans and War

WAR with Mexico—any war in which Americans fight as Americans—will do our excellent friends to the South a world of good. It is a horrible process, but we wish it on Uncle Sam as wholeheartedly and with as friendly intentions as a good friend wishes a sobering pail of cold water on an inebriate brother. There is too much feminism in the United States; too much individualism—spelled with a capital "I"; too much wife-and-child government in the homes. We don't believe in people of one country preaching at another, especially when they happen to be countries so neighbourly and with so much in common as Canada and the United States. But since the war has brought out of Canada a bigger expression of what makes nationhood worth while than we ever had in time of peace, we believe that a chance to look a real war square in the face will do that country no more harm than it did us. Too big a capital S in Success is a bad thing for any people. When along with success there is an overplus of sentiment the case is considerably worse. The United States has become both too successful and too sentimental.

If these things indicated a higher respect for or a better appreciation of women, children and the home, we should refrain from lamentations. But they represent, unfortunately, no such thing. They indicate rather the decline of the male instinct in Americans, the softening of masculine fibre so that it more nearly approximates that of the opposite sex, being moved by emotion rather than reason, swayed by sentiment, not judgment.

And war, to people in this condition will be, as it has been to others, a sobering and inspiring influence. Every sacrifice, however bitter to the individual, is a legacy of nobility to the mass. In the case of our American cousins a crown to their other virtues.