

Fraser Rivers. Down we glide, roll up in front of the hotel, and our motor trip is finished.

Here we connect with the horse stage running to Fort George. At four a.m. the call is given. The passengers hurry down to breakfast. Then, with our new driver, we go down to the river and cross the swift-flowing Fraser by ferry in the darkness. Here waits the towering four-horse stage, and we climb to our places. Two of the passengers sit with the driver on his high, turret-like seat, and there are three on each of the two other seats. I, being a physically fit looking individual, am given a seat on the boot. Here I grip the handles and enjoy a clear view to the southward.

Off we go through the darkness, up grades that tax the four-horse team to the limit, around sharp spurs that slope down sheer into the shadow, and through narrow canyons of roadway walled in by forest. Facing off into space I have no security except my ability to hang on. Through the ruts and pitch-holes, where we jolt at high speed, I am like to repeat the performance of the Chinese suit-case. However, I find I am able to brace my feet in some rope, as a horseman does in stirrups, and I ride comfortably and pleasantly. Two of the passengers at different times during the trip trade with me, but they are soon glad to get their old seats back again.

Dashing over the levels, sliding cautiously down the slopes and creeping up the grades, we go steadily on. Mid-forenoon, and we come to a little stream, and the driver waters his horses. We passengers get down and walk around. Then in a couple of hours we roll up to the log hostelry at Goose Lake. Here we change horses. Here, also, George, the dapper, suave and capable little Jap, has a fine and hearty meal for us. "Six bits," seventy-five cents, it is this time, but it is worth every cent.

Through a long, pleasant afternoon, we review an ever-changing panorama of valley, hill, forest and lake, with here and there a homestead. Up one

long hill we get out and walk, to our own benefit and the relief of the horses. Then as the moon begins to silver the world we plunge down the long grade at the Blackwater Valley and stop in front of a large, rambling log hostelry that promises entertainment for the night. Here another suave "George" feeds us, and we eat at a long table by the light of lanterns swung from the rafters. Then, in the large bunk-house adjoining, we find clean, comfortable beds, and sink for a short time into oblivion.

At three a.m. the call is given, for we have sixty miles to go this last day of the trip. Breakfasting heartily, we walk ahead up out of the valley and then climb aboard our towering vehicle as it comes up. As yesterday, we go on through the darkness, except that like the pillar of fire, the glow of an acetylene head-light moves ahead of us over the road. Eight o'clock comes, and with it the first change of horses and a second breakfast, a luxury of hot cakes and corn syrup.

The roads are icy. In places the sides drop off to sheer depths of hundreds of feet. For going over the ice the driver fastens a sharp steel shoe to one of the rear wheels, compelling it to stay in the straight and narrow path. Otherwise we should have tipped over the side. It speaks well for the drivers of the B. C. Express Company that no serious accident has yet occurred on this line.

In spite of these necessary delays we make good time. Noon finds us only 21 miles from Fort George. Another meal is snatched here. Another relay of horses is put on and we are off on the last lap.

Two hours' brisk riding and the Valley of the Fraser opens up to our right. Soon we can see the Fraser itself. Then the bluffs north of the Nechaco, where it flows from the west into the Fraser, appear. At four p.m. we dash into Fort George, the century-old trading post and new city that throbs with the activity of transcontinental railway building, and our journey is ended.



The Metric System

THE Government is making an effort to introduce the metric system of weights and measures into Canada. Some strong governmental lead will be necessary to bring it about, even in a country which has already accepted the sensible decimal system of coinage. It is a little like "spelling reform" and all other logical changes—easy to argue for but hard to get done. We are all accustomed to the English system of weights and measures. We know what a quart is—what a yard is—what a mile is—what an acre is. But we do not know what a "liter" is, or a "meter," or a "kilometer" or a "hectare." And we do not want to be bothered finding out. All the labour we have put on learning this difficult and arbitrary system of ours would be lost; and men who never went to school would be as well off as we are, if we were now to adopt a new system.

IN order to get a little glimpse of what we look like, we might consider what we would think of a proposition to put our money back into the system of pounds, shillings and pence. When you are accustomed to reckoning in English money, it is a fairly swift and easy process. I know by experience that a few weeks in England makes it seem quite the natural method of counting your change. I presume that you would, in the same way, become accustomed to adding it up, and keeping your books in it. But we in Canada would never think of going back to it. Our decimal system is so clearly the logical method, and is so much easier to learn, that it would be a crime against modern progress to fling this country back into the old net-work of twelves and twenties and twenty-ones. Yet the position is exactly the same. The shilling is quite as logical as the quart or the yard. All that is needed on our part is a little united and intelligent effort; and we will be emancipated from this cumbrous, complicated and purely adventitious system of weighing and measuring forever.

I CAN assure you that it "comes quite easy" to get into the new system of measurement. While bicycling in France, we had to measure our distances by the kilometer, which is a little over half an English mile. But very soon we did not stop to do this little sum when a distance to the next town was given us. We had begun to think in kilometers—just as a student of French reaches a stage one day when he begins to think in French, and no longer instinctively translates into English. In the same fashion, when buying a fluid at the grocer's, and the clerk says that it is so much a liter, you soon get to understand, unconsciously, just about how much a liter will make. And the beauty of it is that you

need learn no other measure. Having learned the liter, you are not in the position of the foreigner in Canada, who has learned pint, and then must learn what a quart is and a gallon. Having learned your liter, all other measures are merely multiples or fractions of the liter.

WE are a great people for short-cuts; and, in time, we will take this one. It is merely a question whether our children or only our grand-children will get the benefit of it. "Spelling reform" is, I venture to think, however, on quite a different basis. To level down the orthography of the English language would be like ploughing up Karnak. It might make the going a bit smoother; but it would utterly destroy the foot-prints of a gigantic past. That would be too high a price to pay for simplifying the spelling-book. No person, charged with the task of making a new language, would make anything like the English—but then no person charged with the task of laying out a new city would copy the topography of London or Paris or Rome. These are splendid growths; and, until we become so utilitarian as to use our grandfathers' tomb-stones for door-sills, we will hardly disregard entirely the sentimental joy of preserving the landmarks of our march upward.

OF course, the way to inaugurate any such reform as the introduction of the meter system, is to inaugurate it. That is, the Government must have the courage to put it in force. It will be of no use to wait until the people themselves do so voluntarily. They will never take the trouble. It is too easy to just go on in the old, familiar, slipshod way, buying our quarts and pounds of things and measuring by yards and acres. Suppose some up-to-date grocer were to announce to-morrow morning that he had adopted the metric system, and that hereafter he would not sell you a pound of sugar, but a half-a-kilogramme of it, would you feel quite easy about patronizing him? Would there not arise a shadowy doubt in your mind as to whether his price per "kilo" might not be a bit dearer than his old price per pound? It would seem to you that the grocer might easily take advantage of the change to unfamiliar measures to shade up his rates a trifle—that, in any event, he might charge the cost of the new weights and measures to his customers. So you would go on to the next corner and patronize a grocer who still sold by the quart and pound.

IF you—with all your superior intelligence, for you must have superior intelligence to read this department—would be so affected, how do you think it would affect the ignorant and the careless, who never heard of the metric system until their grocer

tried to "put it over" on them? Would they not be frightened away at once, and sent flying to the good old honest grocer who still used good old honest English weights and measures? Would we not soon see advertisements in the windows—"Come in and buy where you know how much you are getting. The old weights and measures are good enough for us." No; the voluntary adoption of this reform will never come. It must be by Government action. The new measures must be made the only legal measures. They can be marked with their exact equivalents in the old, so that the house-keeper and the general purchaser can still tell how much they are getting for their money; but nothing short of compulsory use will ever bring them in. And then our children will arise and call us "Blessed"—though a bit slow.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Carl Flesch, Violinist

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

SEVERAL hundred people who like good music more or less got badly fooled last week—when they decided to play a safe role by staying away from the programme given by Carl Flesch and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Flesch is a Hungarian by birth. Last Thursday was his first appearance in Canada as an item in his first tour of America, where he demonstrated himself a big rival to Ysaye, Kreisler and Elman. Flesch got return engagements from every orchestra he played with in the United States, and the Toronto Symphony followed suit, even before they had heard him. The dear public were informed of this through the newspapers before Mr. Flesch came to Canada. But a large number decided to doubt first and regret afterwards.

Carl Flesch may be included in the category of the world's biggest players on the violin. He is an artist of tremendous potentiality. He has a tone almost, if not as big, as Elman's. He has all the repose and self-mastery of Kreisler. He has not, of course, the profound phrase-turning finesse of the superb Ysaye; nor for that matter has anybody else. But he plays the biggest programmes in the world in a big, dignified and compelling style, that never for a moment loses itself in hysteria over the needs of the gallery, and never bamboozles the gallery by playing merely art for art's sake to the people in the two-dollar seats.

His handling of the Beethoven Concerto in D Major was an absolute triumph for Carl Flesch and his magnificent Strad; and in the language of a Canadian violinist who knows Flesch—"What a Strad!" In the first movement he seemed rather cold and formal. In the second and third his Hungarian blood got warmed up and he made the melodic outlines of the Beethoven masterpiece gorgeous with colour and instinctive with passion. I doubt if Ysaye put into those two movements quite the poetic feeling that Flesch gave it. His tone was absolutely pure. He never for a moment forced his Strad to imitate a 'cello or a pair of violas doing a duet. He paid utter respect to the tone values of the piece, and in executing its most difficult passages he remained master of himself by a great power of restraint. There never was any symptom of exhaustion or of hot-headed anxiety to produce a great effect. Flesch believed that the Concerto itself supported by the orchestra was big enough to get its own message to the people, so long as he got out of it what Beethoven put into it and not necessarily any more. In this respect he stamped himself as a true interpreter—not an exploiter of himself.

His old-melody numbers were delightfully and poetically done. Toronto audiences have become familiar with most of these through the work of Mr. Jan Hambourg. Flesch rendered them with a warmth of tone and a quiet dignity of interpretation that made them sparkle with poetic charm. He was encouraged again and again. His first and chief encore was the Schubert Serenade, which he did with the kind of wholesome reserve that some of the big players entirely miss by over-sentimentalizing for the gallery.

Great Actor's Farewell

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson pays his last visit to Canada next week. For the past six months he has been in the United States in a great revival of Shakespeare and other favourites

By JOHN E. WEBBER

COMPLETE happiness in the present tour of this great actor is only tempered by the knowledge that at its close the distinguished actor will retire from the stage altogether and devote himself to an earlier art in which he had already achieved success before adopting a stage career. He is still far from an old man—sixty in years, I believe—but he has decided to retire while his powers are at their ripest and while the memory we keep is still untinged by sadness.

It is also deeply gratifying to note that a stage acquaintance which began none too auspiciously on this side should have ripened into such a warm regard that New York reluctantly said good-bye only after four months' playing. America's farewell tri-