



REFLECTIONS

BY STAR WRITERS

THE Battle of Sydney is raging fast and furiously. General Ross on the one side is leading the forces of the Dominion Coal Co., and Generals Van Horne and Plummer are at the head of the Dominion Iron and Steel

THE BATTLE OF SYDNEY

forces. It is a legal battle of great magnitude, with Mr. Justice Longley sitting as the chief arbitrator. The stakes are high, for the two companies are among the largest in Canada. There are millions involved, and the future of the losing company will be seriously menaced when the decision is given.

There is something of the personal element in it too. Mr. James Ross and Sir William Van Horne are, it has been recited, not on friendly terms. Sir William has stated in the witness box that he has had reason to feel that Mr. Ross is not always fair in his actions, and from Sir William this is a rather strong statement. Rightly or wrongly, Sir William has the public with him to a considerable extent. He has won their regard by great achievements and by long years of kindly treatment of those with whom he came in contact. Mr. Ross is more of a sphinx and has never, directly or indirectly, appeared before the people as a public benefactor. It regards him as a somewhat grasping millionaire, probably because he has taken little trouble to show the other side of his undertakings, his efforts and his ambitions.

This personal view of the two great men will, however, have little to do with the legal battle. The question is one of contract. The Dominion Coal Co. undertook to supply the Dominion Iron and Steel Co. with coal at a certain fixed price. This price was low, because the Steel Company was in rather a bad way. Later, the steel bounties and other developments made better days for the Steel Company and the Coal Company felt under less obligation to be generous. Its market for coal was enlarging and the contract became a burden which its directors would like to have shifted. The Steel Company rejected some of the coal, and thus gave the Coal people an excuse. They quit sending any more coal and then the fight began.

There have been rumours of a settlement but the bad blood engendered by the breaking of the contract and the succeeding struggle for ownership of the Steel Company is probably too much for peaceful negotiations. The battle must go on until one side lies prone and bleeding. The stock-holders in either one company or the other are likely to suffer seriously by the result.

THE fight between the Steel and Coal companies at Sydney is not the only indication that coal is becoming a valuable commodity in Canada. The use of electricity has lessened the consumption of coal in one

COAL AND PROSPERITY

direction, but the rapid growth of population and industry have counterbalanced this saving two or three times over. In Ontario, hard coal is already worth \$7 a ton or more. In the West there is talk of an approaching coal famine. In Ontario, the trouble lies in the grasping monopolists in Pennsylvania; in the West, lack of transportation facilities produces an even worse result. Again, the handling and storing of vast quantities of coal requires much capital, and this again is a remarkably scarce commodity.

It is to be hoped that the West will not have a repetition of the coal shortage of last season. The coal companies, the coal dealers, the railways and the three provincial governments should combine to see that a rather unsatisfactory wheat season is not followed by a winter of hardships. If the prosperity of the West is to continue, all preventable inconveniences must be eliminated by those who have the power to do so. Municipal coal-yards should be well-stocked and even government coal yards should not be outside the realm of consideration. The provincial governments should bestir themselves this month and make absolutely sure that there will be no vain regrets if the winter of 1907-08 proves as severe as that of 1906-07. The West has more people to keep warm this winter than it had last, and the newer the settler the greater the consideration extended to him by those who rule over him.

HOW to reach a painless and pious old age in these days of rapid transit and patent foods is getting to be more and more of a puzzle every day. Notwithstanding the almost superhuman care and ingenuity exercised, trouble manages to greet one at every turn with smiling countenance. With advice of such

REACHING A PIOUS OLD AGE.

widely different and contradictory character as is showered upon one, it is indeed a wise man who knows what to do—or what not to do.

Some say, indeed many say, abstain from liquor and tobacco if you would reach a ripe old age free from regrets and delirium tremens. On the other hand, scarcely a day passes that this counsel is not belied. Look at the records of those well timbered Irishmen—and Irishwomen, too—who have reached the century mark, and what do you find? That many of them smoked a pipe and took a nip out of the bottle until they were gathered in—which would appear to show that liquor and tobacco in moderation are preservatives. The point is a vexed one, however, as not a few abstainers also reach the three figures.

Then look at the warnings that are hurled at one respecting the necessity of eating and drinking only that which is pure. This might almost be called the Bacillus Age. "Beware of bacteria" is the universal fetish. But lo and behold, along has come a scientist who says that it is the presence of bacteria in our food that gives it a taste and that the food would be quite unpalatable without the bacteria! So there you are. Thus do authorities differ and our troubles multiply.

Thanks to the Hague tribunal and the temperance movement, war and liquor are being looked after, but these by no means constitute the sum total of human troubles. What about the everyday common tortures that afflict everybody? What about creditors, dyspepsia, gout and taxes? Are we to get no relief from these? Is no one to look after these things and tell them to desist? What is everybody's business is nobody's business. Therefore let the government take the matter up and appoint a commission to investigate these persistent and extremely exasperating obstructions to a peaceful and picturesque old age.

Again, it has been said by some modern Solomon,