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Topics of the Day

SENSATIONAL indeed were the incidents last week in connection with the Hon. H. R. Emmerson, Minister of Railways and Canals. A Fredericton paper gave expression to the rumour that he had been turned out of a hotel in Montreal because of the character of a woman companion. Because of this allegation, Mr. Emmerson tendered his resignation to Sir Wilfrid Laurier who accepted it and sent it on to His Excellency. Libel suits have been instituted against three newspapers, and Mr. Emmerson hopes to prove that he has been defamed.

It is reported that the basis of the story lies in the fact that two ladies got into some trouble with the management of a Montreal Hotel, and knowing that Mr. Emmerson was stopping there appealed to him to protect them. These ladies are said to have been the wives of New Brunswick friends of the Minister and themselves the victims of circumstances. All the parties concerned eventually left the hotel because of the trouble.

However, the matter is before the courts and the true story will no doubt be brought out. Mr. Emmerson cannot accept an apology and a retraction even if they are made. His reputation must be cleared. Judging from his remarks in the House, he fully expects to prove his innocence though it may incidentally be shown that as a man he has weaknesses such as other men have.

Some of the papers friendly to Mr. Emmerson seem to think that there was no need for his resignation—at least, not until he had been proved guilty. In this they have the judgment of the Premier against them, Mr. Emmerson's own feeling, and the best British precedent. The man who is afraid to resign a portfolio until charges made against him are cleared up, is not the type of man of whom we make heroes. In this country, public men are too tenacious of office and are loth to lose any small post to which they may have been assigned. It is an unmanly spirit and one which should be discouraged. That Mr. Emmerson acted so promptly in handing in his resignation is much to his credit.

It may appear later that Lord Aylmer is another Canadian loth to part with a public office. It is claimed that he was appointed Inspector-General for two years only and that his term expired with the close of 1906. It was arranged that he should be succeeded by Colonel Vidal, Adjutant-General, to whom a promotion was due. Colonel Vidal is well up in years and will shortly have to retire, and it was felt that he should be promoted before retirement in order to give him a larger pension. His

salary is now about \$3,000; as Inspector-General it would be \$6,000. As the retiring allowance is based on the salary drawn at the time of retirement, it is obvious what a difference the promotion would make to Colonel Vidal.

The retirement of Lord Aylmer was arranged and approved by order-in-council, but his friends are now protesting that this was forced upon him. This may be quite true, but the interests of the militia must be considered as well as the private interests of even so estimable an officer as Lord Aylmer. His retiring allowance will be thirty-fiftieths of \$6,000, he having served thirty years. Now \$4,500 is a respectable pension for a Canadian militia officer. There is no reason why he should stand in the way of promotion for other officers when these had been given to understand that the term of Inspector-General was limited to two years. Lord

Aylmer was sixty-five years of age on March 28th. His birthplace is Melbourne, in the Province of Quebec.

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British warships are now on their way to America to participate in the naval display which will be part of the ceremony when President Roosevelt opens the Tercentenary Exhibition at Jamestown, Virginia. The English settlement at that point antedates the settlement at Quebec by one year; but it has always been a moot point whether that at Port Royal is not entitled to the honour of being the first white settlement in North America. Jamestown was no doubt the first permanent settlement of Englishmen.

The British fleet now on its way consists mainly of the First Cruiser Squadron under command of Rear-Admiral George Neville, C.V.O. His flag-ship is the Good Hope, a picture of which appears on the cover of this week's issue. Among the other vessels are the Antrim, Argyll, Devonshire, Hampshire and Roxburgh, two of which are also pictured

in this issue. Admiral Neville is well known as having been twice around the world with H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. For a time he was in command of the naval forces at Melbourne, Australia. He has commanded the Dolphin, Dido, Australia and Mars.

After their visit to Jamestown, the squadron will visit Halifax. The cruisers will also visit Quebec, but the battleships will hardly come up the river.

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The City of Toronto has secured from the Ontario Legislature permission to have its citizens vote on a by-law to buy out the Electric Light Company. The fight over this point has been keen and hard. Up to the present, the advocates of municipal ownership have shown the best judgment, and for the moment at least, the corporation interests are beaten.



REAR-ADMIRAL NEVILLE,
Now on his way to America.