

TAKE HIM FOR ALL IN ALL



A LOT of people wait until they are dead to be appreciated. Other people insist upon being appreciated on earth. The late John Ross Robertson, founder and proprietor of the Toronto Evening Telegram, belonged to neither of these categories. He did what he set out to do, much of it in the interests of other people, got his reward of gratitude without asking for it and would have kept on doing what he did whether he was appreciated or not, because he believed in being benevolent, in having his own way, in being himself—and at that one of the most uncommon, unconventional and uncontrollable of men. Once upon a time when he started the paper which preceded the Toronto Telegram he sold the papers himself and carried the coppers to the bank in a patent pail every day. No man ever combined the ethics of the penny and the bigness of benevolence better than John Ross Robertson. His paper, The Telegram, represents the power of the cent; the fact that if a mistress wants a maid or a man a job or an owner a lost article, there are so many chances in so many that what is wanted may be got at a cent a word on one of the five or six pages of liners that make the front door to the oddest great newspaper in Canada.

Wise writers talk about publishers who understand this newfangled thing known as mass psychology. They say Northcliffe has that bump in an ultimate degree. Well, when Robertson started the Telegram mass psychology was like appendicitis—it was there but nobody knew anything about it. The Telegram has been a good example of how a pennywise idea can become big enough to dominate a big city. There have been times when the Mayor's office was an annex to the head office of the Telegram, because the near to a hundred thousand people who bought the Telegram represented enough votes one way, but as a rule not another, to put any man in the Mayor's chair that the boss of the Telegram wanted.

With that kind of paper the owner could carry almost any programme he wanted inside his own constituency. The Telegram has never pretended to have more than a dribble of circulation outside of Toronto. Therefore whatever the Telegram told Toronto it wanted, Toronto might be counted on to want whether it suited the rest of the country or not. And as a rule there was no other

part of the country to be considered. The Telegram could whack a Liberal government or a Conservative opposition or a Union Government with absolute impunity, because it had a constituency of opinion and sentiment which it had carved out for itself.

Once upon a time that organized constituency worked out into an unconscious but imperishable monument to Robertson. The Home for Sick Children is one of the finest benevolences in the world. It was made possible by the Telegram, which was sometimes the house organ of the Sick Children's Home. The Telegram also originated the Landmarks of Toronto, a series of papers written by the owner to trace what he knew of the old city that was evolving a new one. "With a fresh black Panatella in his teeth," says a recent writer, "the proprietor of the Telegram sticks his thumbs in his waistcoat and remembers that on yonder corner, now a hole in the ground full of teams and picks and shovels, there was once a family by the name of X—, a grand-aunt of somebody, in which was married to the half-brother of the man whose uncle was chief of police in the year that the old brewery was pulled down to make room for an orphans' home, which would be somewhere about half-way between the year that Mackenzie's rebels marched to Montgomery's Tavern and the year that Col. Denison's father originated the militia of Toronto."

What Robertson has been able to do by way of historical pictures, of which he accumulated and donated to the city a remarkable collection, arose out of the Landmarks. What he did to make himself the apex of the Masonic Order in America, and to further the interests of the Orange Order, was as natural to him as the Telegram or the Landmarks or the Sick Children's Home. In his long, self-centred career he once refused a Senatorship, once a knighthood, and once a public funeral when he might have had a procession that would have made an Orange Walk in the city of Toronto look like a very small thing. Now that he is gone we remember Robertson as one of the last characters in journalism in a class with Horace Greeley, Charles Dana and Gordon Bennett, men who founded bigger newspapers than the Toronto Telegram, but none with a more distinctive character or more unmistakable originality.

THE GERMAN PROPAGANDA MUST GO

WHEN editors and speakers are clamoring for the abolition of the German language, we must remember that the German language press, the German societies, etc., on this continent were not agents of the German Government prior to the twentieth century. Most of the "old-timers" among the German settlers, including the revolutionists of 1848, clung to their native language, supported German schools and churches and featured things German rather than Canadian, or American, but their alienism was peculiarly one of convenience, just as that of aliens of other nationalities. In all fairness we must admit that these people were loyal to their adopted countries, and that they proved their loyalty by rising like one man in defence of the American Union during the Civil War.

These intellectual "Old-Timers" form a sharp contrast to the educated Kaiserites of our day. For one thing, they used English as their language of intercourse. Rudolph Blankenburg, ex-Mayor of Philadelphia, steadily refused to deliver public addresses in German, and more than once he declared: "I like to remember the land of my birth, but I do not intend to conserve, much less to foster, German customs and institutions." As to Carl Schurz, one of Abraham Lincoln's intimate friends, it is known that he was defeated in his candidacy for the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Wisconsin a little over five years after his arrival in the United States owing to the votes of many of his former countrymen, stirred up by political agitators who accused him of being ashamed of his native land, because he used English and resorted to German only when he could not make himself understood otherwise in his speeches.

The German propaganda started as a dream with

Short personal story of how the German language has been perverted on this Continent and why the Press is clamoring for its abolition.

By PROF. RIETHDORF

the coronation of William II. in 1888, and it did not develop into reality until the jovial Prince Henry of Prussia visited the U. S. A. in February, 1902. I saw Prince Henry in Philadelphia with his staff. I saw Admiral Tirpitz, of frightfulness fame, grinning while chatting with American naval officers. Turning to a German next to me I remarked: "Do you not think that they have come to take in something else but the sights?" "Yes," he replied, "That's right." And then addressing another who vociferously applauded the passing show, I asked: "What do you think of that?" "Well," replied he, "they know what they want." I agreed with him; but there was this difference; he felt delighted and I felt sad. I could not get rid of the expression in Tirpitz's face. "Oh, you American fools!" it read.

But whenever I expressed my well-grounded fears and suspicions to Americans, they would say something like this: "You silly boy, get that out of your system, or you will not succeed in this country." That there was some truth in these words I found when I realized that no stone was left unturned, no matter of what despicable means, for the undoing of myself or anyone else hostile to Kaiserism. However, I deliberately preferred to remain on the thorny road which was to separate me more and more from everything German, and lead me to take immediate steps to secure my denationalization.

The stage being set, Prince Henry raised the curtain and acted as toastmaster to celebrate the birth

of that propaganda in dozens upon dozens of German societies all over the United States. Henceforth ex-officers with Hohenzollern aspirations took charge of and began to dominate these clubs. The German Alliance became one of their bulwarks. Organizations of former German soldiers sprang up everywhere, almost as if overnight. Annually they sent deputations to Potsdam to pay homage to the German Emperor as "unsern Abersten Kriegsherrn"—our highest War Lord. Immigration to Canada and the U. S. A. was organized and largely carried on under leaders acceptable to the Wilhelmstrasse. The German churches among us became fascinated by the vision of a new "Deutschland ueber alles." Even the missionary system for the purpose of supplying preachers for the North American continent was reorganized in Germany. Men of the "new school" took the places of "old timers" in the German pulpits. Our German newspaper offices made room for the "new blood," that is, for former German army officers. Thus George von Skal, a Prussian ex-Lieutenant, as the editorial writer of the N. Y. Staats-Zeitung, vaccinated its owner, the late Herman Ridder, with the new virus, and duped and won him over to Germanism.

THINGS German thus began to be fostered in earnest everywhere. Systematically, with a definite design, everything was done to turn the Germans away from Canadian or American ideals. Honest alienism made room for dishonest alienism. There was no longer an honest use of the traditions and customs of our Germans. The German language, hitherto used innocently, was turned into a hostile instrument of the German press and pulpit. No wonder a hatred of that language is found everywhere in America now.