

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

The Breeders of Strife.

BREEDERS of strife came in for hard knocks last week. Premier Roblin got after the demagogues in an able address to the young Conservatives of Winnipeg. Mr. R. J. Yonge, of Montreal, formerly secretary of the Manufacturers' Association, condemned the breeders of strife in an address to the Canadian Club of Montreal.

Said Mr. Yonge:

"We have still left some politicians and some newspapers who try to set our east against our west, who try to set the workingman against his employer, who try to set our French-Canadian brother against his English-speaking brother. How serious the crime of a public man or a newspaper in this great Dominion who would sow seeds of dissension between the provinces and the races! Let our Canadian idea be so big as to leave no room for that; that we at once say to that newspaper or to that public man that he is out of touch, that he is out of accord with the people of Canada and their idea."

Mr. Yonge also deprecated the Quebec tax on firms from other provinces who wished to do business in his province, and hoped that all such provincial provincialism would soon be swept away. And Mr. Yonge is right. I hope Premier Gouin and Premier McBride will both listen to these words of wisdom.

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Eliminating the Middleman.

MR. HUGH BLAIN, president of the Dominion Wholesale Grocers' Guild, told that body last week that it was a shame for any one to try and get rid of the middleman. The wholesaler is a necessity to the retailer and the manufacturer who goes direct to the retailer or the public is a bad man.

Mr. Blain probably believes what he says, but few of us will agree with him. The manufacturer who sells his goods direct to the retailer or the consumer is a public benefactor. We cannot afford to pay the three profits—the manufacturer's, the wholesaler's, and the retailer's. It makes our food and our clothing too dear. It means high prices for the necessities of life.

The wholesale dry goods merchant has almost disappeared. Few people go into the retail dry goods business now unless they can buy on a sufficiently large scale to buy direct from the manufacturer. It is also true of boots and shoes, of silverware, of ready-made clothing, and of automobiles. It will soon be true of groceries.

What the country needs, especially in the larger centres, where the cost of living is high, is the large grocery store where goods are bought direct from the canners, the bottlers, the sugar refineries, the makers of package goods, and the importers of fresh and dried fruits. The wholesale grocer has served his purpose and, like the dry goods jobber, must go into some other line of work where he will be more useful. This will, of course, mean a lessening of the number of retailers, a substitution of one retail grocer for several retail grocers. But these corner-store men will find plenty of useful occupation in other lines of human endeavour.

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Prohibition and Politics.

TEMPERANCE advocates had some busy days in Toronto last week. The provincial temperance organization discussed the question of forming a third party distinct from the two political parties and working entirely in the interests of prohibition. It was decided not to do so, but simply to have a special political organizer to work on behalf of temperance candidates on both sides.

This question of a temperance party is an ancient one and the solution seems hard to find. The temperance people find it difficult simply because, in their zeal, they forget that temperance reform is only one of the nation's many problems. Drunkenness is not the only national evil. Consumption, insanity, the breeding of criminals, the social evil, unhealthy factory conditions, impure drinking water and unscientific disposal of sewage—these are questions quite as important to the moral and social welfare of the community. The man who thinks prohibition of the liquor traffic would remove all the ills of Canadian humanity is as foolish as the single-taxer, who thinks the adoption of Henry George's

theories would make the world an Eden.

Intemperate indulgence in alcoholic beverages is disappearing. The drunkard is rarer than at any time in the history of the country. Illicit distilling and illicit selling have been almost entirely eliminated. Education has increased the number of total abstainers and also of people who use liquor sparingly and medicinally. And I cannot see that much of this undoubted reform is due to the temperance fanatic—it has been accomplished in spite of him, rather than with his aid. People like Mrs. Shaw-Buskin, who last week proclaimed that drunkenness was a mental disease and should be treated as such, are the real reformers.

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The Mother and the Cigarette.

WHILE the temperance organizations were bandying words with the political leaders in Toronto, the Women's Christian Temperance Associations had representatives at Ottawa asking for legislation to prohibit the manufacture and sale of cigarettes in Canada. Mr. Borden was courteous but frankly definite. He indicated that this was a question for the mothers, not for the state. He pointed out that, according to his observations, the control of the parents over their children was declining. He laughingly declared that no law prohibiting the manufacture was necessary where his mother exercised control. "I would like to have seen any of the children of my mother smoking cigarettes at ten or twelve years of age."

The law should not be expected to be father and mother and Sunday school teacher to the child. This is paternalism gone mad. Such laws might be put upon the statute books, but they could not be enforced. There are too many laws now which cannot be enforced. The moral character of our children must be moulded by the parent, not by the state.

Cigarette smoking by children should be prevented by parents and teachers. The laws which prevent the sale of cigarettes to youths mark the point beyond which it would be foolish for the state to go. Thousands of men smoke cigarettes because they prefer them to cigars or pipe tobacco. To deprive these men of their cigarettes would be an interference with personal liberty which no community would tolerate.

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Recklessness in Vancouver.

VANCOUVER is anxious to keep out the Sikhs, fellow British subjects from India. Perhaps it is as well for the Sikhs that they should be forced to go to some other part of the Dominion. There are thousands of good people in that city, but there are some who are dangerously near the evil line.

The language used in the paper controlled by our good friend, Mr. Stevens, M.P., arch-enemy of the Sikhs, may be cited as example number one. No self-respecting Sikh should live in a city where such extravagant and inflaming language is printed and published.

Number two is the language of Mr. Stevens friend and colleague, J. W. Hawthornthwaite, M.P.P. At a recent meeting, he defended the tearing down and destruction of a Union Jack, in the following language: "The moment the majority of the working people—the only useful people—decide that they don't want the old rag, they have the constitutional right to tear it down and make a mock of it—to wash some of the blood stains out of it." Not content with this he assured his hearers that they had better not get their teeth into a Vancouver policeman or they might die of blood poisoning.

There is a strike of some kind on in Vancouver and the headquarters secretary of the Industrial Workers of the World wired Mayor Finlay of Vancouver as follows: "The entire organization supports Vancouver workers in their efforts to maintain free speech. The rights of the members of this organization will be enforced in spite of all the corporation lice holding political jobs in the Dominion of Canada. Free speech will be established and maintained in Vancouver if it takes twenty years. Hold you personally responsible for any injury inflicted upon members of this organization by Cossacks under your control."

If these are samples of the character and spirit

of the organized labour which controls affairs in Vancouver, then the Sikhs should go elsewhere. They might escape the influence of Mr. Stevens' *Call* and Brother McConnell's *Saturday Sunset*, but they would certainly be subjected to a great strain if brought under the blighting rays of J. H. Hawthornthwaite, M.P.P., and his anarchistic associates.

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Leaving the Dear Old Farm.

OUR venerable Senate has been considering the movement of the people from the farms to the city. Senator Power wants a committee to investigate the whole situation. Such a body could do no harm and might do some good. It would at least give us some real information on this subject—facts and figures for Canada, the United States and Great Britain. It is not a peculiarly Canadian problem. It is an Anglo-Saxon problem. For aught I know, it may be a world problem.

On Wednesday, February 7th, on a homestead in the township of East Wawanosh, County of Huron, there was a family gathering to celebrate the golden wedding of Mr. and Mrs. John Agnew. Nine sons and daughters were present—all raised on this dear old Wawanosh farm. There was Dr. Thomas Agnew, from Wingham town nearby; Robert Agnew, dentist, from Alberta; Dr. William Agnew, Dayton, Ohio; James Agnew, dentist, Dayton, Ohio; Dr. John Agnew, Crestline, Ohio; Miss Hannah Agnew and Miss Millicent Agnew, nurses, Philadelphia; one daughter living at home and another married to a neighbouring farmer. Doesn't this explain some of the movement from the farm? The boys and girls are being educated off the farm. If these boys, magnificent specimens of Canadian manhood as I know them to be, had been educated as scientific farmers rather than as doctors and dentists, the population of Huron County had been larger and its agricultural production greater.

There are thousands of such families in Ontario, with sons scattered through the West and through the United States. They are scattered because the Ontario educational system is a flat failure or a magnificent success—whichever you wish to label it. If it is best that those young men should have been educated into professions and some of them lost to the country, then Ontario's system of education is a great success. If it were best to have given these farmers' sons a good agricultural education and kept them farmers, then the Ontario system has been a decided failure.

If the Senate committee will tell us whether this movement is good for Ontario and Canada, or whether it is detrimental, then we shall know what to do. Are our universities and colleges doing destructive or constructive work? Are our high schools taking young people off the farm to the detriment of the youth themselves and to the detriment of the nation generally? These are questions which as yet have not been authoritatively answered.

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A Universal Problem.

THIS problem of keeping the people on the land is not a Canadian problem only. It is universal. The *Irish Weekly Independent* of Dublin, in a recent issue, tackles the subject from the Irish point of view. It says, "This education is fast begetting a contempt for work in the factory and the field. The farmer's son, the shopkeeper's son, the tradesman's son, the labourer's son is turning his back upon the occupation of his parents. Everybody now seeks to become a clerk or a government official."

The Irish editor is not opposed to education, but has only contempt for "the absurd notions" which modern education puts into the minds of young men and young women. He cannot see why young men of education should spurn farming, shopkeeping or even the workshop. "Intelligence must be applied to our industries of every kind if they are to succeed."

If farming, cattle-raising, fruit-growing and dairying are to succeed in Canada, the class who are to engage in these activities must be trained for their work. Nova Scotia, Manitoba and British Columbia pay some attention to the teaching of agriculture in the public schools. Ontario and the other provinces do not. Ontario is especially backward in this respect.

Hon. Mr. Burrell is arranging to "aid agriculture" throughout Canada. Would he not be better engaged if he were arranging to "aid agricultural education." The first reform would be a distinction between the educational programme of the country school and that of the town or city school. Farmer's sons and daughters should have subjects and textbooks suited to their particular needs and teachers who know the difference.