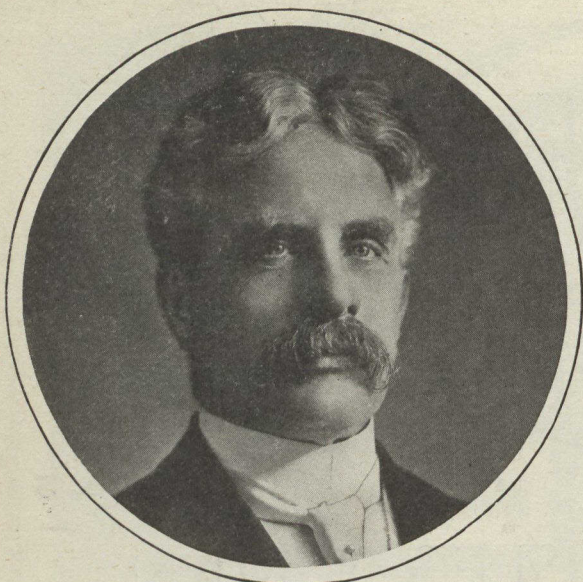
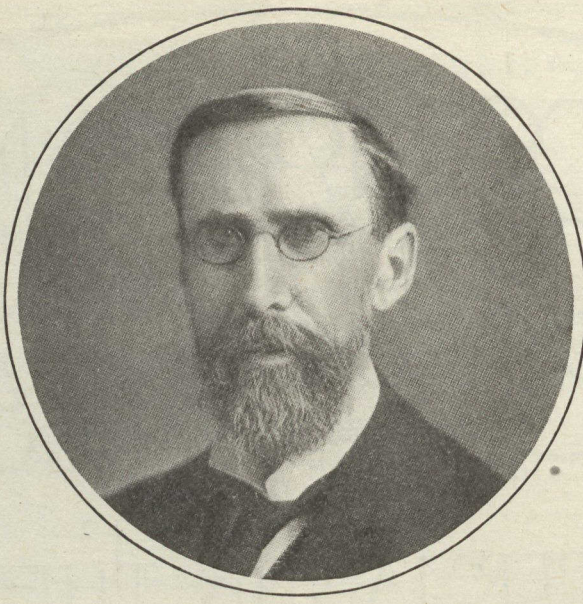
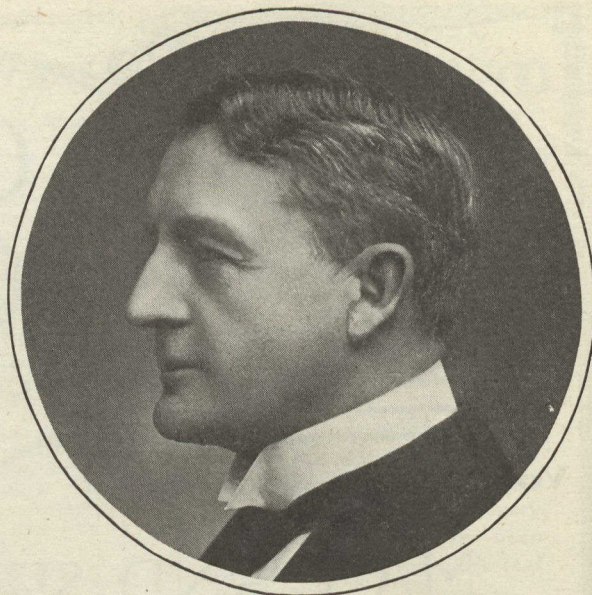




Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden, G.C.M.G.



Hon. Sir George Foster, K.C.M.G.



Hon. Sir Adam Beck, Knight Bachelor.

Knights and Titles

A Casual Survey of Our Near Four Hundred

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

ANOTHER King's Birthday, another list of knights and titles at home and abroad; seven new knights in Canada, at least six of them good Conservatives; two of them cabinet ministers, one a senator, one an M.P., one an Ontario minister, one a judge, one a doctor; also one C. M. G., an ex-member of the Ontario Legislature—

"Oh, what is so rare as a day in June!"

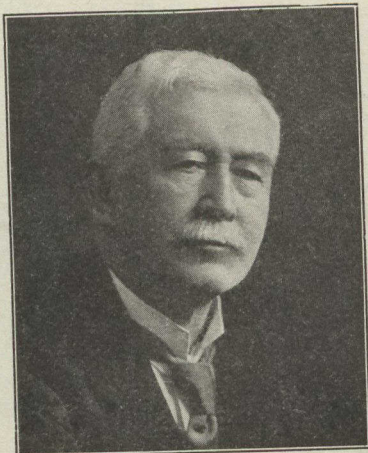
It's enough to make any man glad he is born. Every male child born in the United States, they say, has a chance to become President. In the Democracy—not a republic—north of parallel 49, it seems that almost any male child willing to be privately industrious or diligent in public business, may aspire to a knighthood. Of course we are all democrats. But we all feel a little more loyal to King George when he makes knights of men like Premier Borden, Hon. Geo. E. Foster, Hon. Adam Beck, J. A. M. Aikins, M.P., Senator de Boucherville, Dr. Roddick, and Chief Justice Sullivan. The London Daily Express cynically remarks that only two of the whole lot of titles conferred, both at home and abroad, the Earldom of Lord Kitchener and the G. C. M. G. of Premier Borden, are worth the King's while to bestow. It says that "dull nonentities" have been distinguished.

What nonsense! From our side of the water we know how to value knighthoods. Over yonder knights and grand commanders are as thick as gargoyles on the cathedrals. Here up to the present in a population of eight millions we have about seventy-five knights of various kinds; and that's in a ratio of but one to every 113,000 population. We have also twenty commanders and members of the Victorian order, fifty-five companions of the orders of knighthood (Bath, St. Michael and St. George), forty members of the Imperial Service Order from the civil service, and twenty-one of the Distinguished Service Order from the militia. That makes 136 Canadian decorations in addition to the list of knights.

OF the seventy-odd Canadian knights, Toronto has seventeen, about 23 per cent. Montreal has fifteen. This is a slight discrimination; but of course the King's acquaintance among Frenchmen may be largely confined to Paris and Versailles. Ottawa has seven, which is a very small number when you reflect that Her Majesty Queen Victoria founded Ottawa by placing a finger on the map. Quebec city has six. Winnipeg has five. Nova Scotia has four—not counting Premier Borden and Sir George Foster, both of whom were born in the Bluenose Province, where blue-bloods should have been numerous; for it seems altogether fairer to give a knight's post-office to the place where he belonged mostly when he got his title. Sir Robert Borden belongs to Ottawa now. Sir George Foster lives in and represents Toronto. Prince Edward Island has two, counting Sir Louis Davies, who lives in Ottawa, scarcely enough for so royal a name, but more according to population than the rest of Canada. Vancouver has two, both Conservatives. London, Ontario, has three, though the one Liberal, Sir George Gibbons, tried to convince the Queen's University Science Club, a short while before he got his title, that Canada should be independent. Hamilton has one, which is very low for the city that gave birth to the Canadian Club movement. St. John, N.B., has—just one; but Messrs. Pugsley and Hazen are two good possibilities. Belleville, Ont., has one—sturdy old Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Morrisburg has one; because we still look upon Sir James Whitney as the impersonation of Dundas Co., even though he has a house in Tory Toronto.

The rest of our Canadian knights, whether baronets, G. C. M. G.'s, K. C. M. G.'s, K. C. V. O.'s, K. C. B.'s, or Knights Bachelor, live abroad. This is a practice not to be encouraged. We need our knights at home. If we send them abroad, it must be for some Imperial purpose.

Now, it is quite obvious that a knight must be either a Liberal or a Conservative. Even the House of Lords and the Canadian Senate, its second cousin, are divided on party lines. Only the King and the Governor-General are above politics. If the King happens to pick on a group of Conservatives this



Sir Jas. Roddick, Knight Bachelor.



Sir James Aikins, M.P., Knight Bachelor.



Mr. W. K. McNaught, C.M.G.

year and perhaps last, ten chances to one he selected more Liberals the year before and may do so again. In this way the balance is kept pretty evenly divided. Anyway, the King can't be expected to inquire into the political proclivities of those whom he chooses to honour. Other men may do that. In fact he may seem to be excusable if he doesn't happen to remember having met some of these worthy knights either at home or abroad.

It is a pet pastime of democracy to decry titles. Some people in Canada are so democratic that they fear independence will never come so long as one-tenth of our public men are booted and spurred, and the other nine-tenths are with enforced politeness saying, "Aprez vous, mon cher Alphonse!" They argue that if Canada should cut the painter the Imperial titles now held by our aristocracy will be as useful as bogus bank bills in trade, and that no republican government of Canada would continue to grant titles.

This is a very superficial estimate. Title-granting is universal. It was practised in savage camps and dates back almost to the era of the cave man. A perfect democracy never existed. Two thousand years of popular government evolution in England leaves the King nominal ruler of the greatest Empire the world has ever known. Let a foreigner insult the King and a coal-heaver rises to "swat" him. In an invasion of England, Buckingham Palace would be the scene of the last struggle. By custom, the King confers all titles. The man who gets a title may be seven thousand miles from Buckingham. He may never see the King. But the mounted policeman in the Yukon who would refuse a C. V. O. from King George because he more highly respected the law of the frontier is as likely to be reported by the newspapers as the M. P. at Ottawa who would decline a baronetcy. Nine democrats in ten pooch-pooch a title over on the next concession. But let the title come dangling about the doorpost and see how many of the nine are too democratic to take it. The man who to-day "Sirs" his enemy and winks the other eye, if to-morrow the cables stick a "Sir" in front of his name, at once begins to make a census of all his public or private qualifications for the title. He regards it as a vindication of democracy. For a man may be brought up on a coal waggon and get a title. A knighthood is proof that the King, who inherits his supreme title and can't possibly escape it, is willing to enlarge its scope by giving belts and spurs to a man whose immediate ancestors may or may not have been horse-thieves.

AND for that matter, the two greatest republics in the world glorify titles. France confers many decorative honours upon men who plod up from the peasantry to the front ranks. The United States is swarming with colonels who never smelt gunpowder and judges who don't know the law. The Minister of Militia in Canada bestows an honorary colonelcy in a regiment upon a millionaire who doesn't know a puttee from a knapsack. The Dominion Cabinet makes senators of some men who would have been as much at home in the Roman Senate as a mudturtle on a bough. Our own Senate, with all its strong characters and ineptitudes, is our "colonial" attempt to respect the privileges of title. When we call a man "Senator" he at least takes a rank with an American colonel or judge, and is no longer plain, democratic "Mr." or "Bill Smith."

So that whether we believe that titles are good for Imperialism or better for Canadianism, as long as we preserve the Senate habit we shall never get rid of paying respect to a title. If in the next fifty years Canada should become independent, no doubt we should gravely keep up the good old Anglo-Saxon custom of bestowing titles. Every time we elect a man to parliament or a township council we make him conscious of a distinction. At the same time we are very apt to pay much profounder respect to certain men who have neither titles, rank nor public position. Examining the full list of men more or less cumbered with knightly decorations before and after their names, we find that about twenty of the lot are either millionaires or otherwise wealthy men. The rest are soldiers, doctors, lawyers, authors, editors, railway presidents, judges, bankers, and statesmen. In the list of knights bachelor there is one well-known author, and he lives in London.* There is no resident Canadian author, no painter nor musician, nor sculptor, nor architect. None of our college presidents are knights, though two are C. M. G.'s, and in other days we had two university knights, Sir William Dawson, eminent geologist, of McGill, and Sir Daniel Wilson, scientific scholar, of Toronto. The men to whom France