

# THE CANADIAN COURIER

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## Hiding! In Ottawa!

SOMEWHERE IN OTTAWA there is a genius, hiding. The much-touted Ross Rifle was fast fading to its doom. Sir Douglas Haig was certain sooner or later to support General Alderson's view of the weapon—so?

So the genius conceived the idea of suppressing the Ross Rifle before Sir Douglas sent his report, and the newspapers were advised accordingly. Nothing could have been neater.

What now should be known is this: Who was the genius? Why has he been tied up all this time? Could he be hired by the week or by the job to clear up various other administrative messes? If Barnum were alive—but no. Let Ottawa keep him. The need is great.

## The Lordly Lansdowne

BRITISH STATESMEN need look for nothing but disapproval from the colonies—we are a colony and always will be until Canadians remedy the matter—over their continued bungling of the Irish problem. Apparently Lloyd George had everything on the way to mending when Lord Lansdowne “undid his face.” Lord Lansdowne used to be Governor-General of this country. Though we fortuitously survived his departure he was not a bad Governor-General. In England, however, it seems that he “has a great deal of influence.” Ask any well-informed Englishman, and, even though he hates Lansdowne, he will assure you Lansdowne is a very great force in British public life. Fortunately for us in Canada we are not so easily made victims of old men of the sea. The British Sinbad and the Irish Sinbad, too, for he is somehow ‘round the necks of both countries, should speed the political undoing of Lansdowne and his ilk. Was it not an impecunious ancestor of Lansdowne's (Richard Earl of Pembroke) who mended his fortunes some time in 1100 A.D. by going to Ireland, marrying an Irish girl and getting hold of untold acres by be-devilling the simple Irish? This was no really glorious foundation for the heritage the present Lansdowne holds. But since he does hold it, he should consider it the greater demand for his loyalty to Ireland. It should make him the more keen to help the unhappy country to its feet. But has he ever served Ireland? No. He has galloped round the earth on various high missions for the British Empire. Mere Ireland, the Ireland that mended his ancestors' fortunes and gave him what he could never have got by his merits in the hard world of business—he ignores till she comes near getting peace, after all these centuries. Then the great gentleman extends his hand to snatch it from her if he can! A lordly spectacle!

## The State of Liberalism

THE LIBERAL CONVENTION at Ottawa last week did everything and therefore little. No social or other reform in any way applicable to Canada was left out of the discussion. The breadth of the convention's outlook seemed to indicate a lack of point. Perhaps this was on account of the war. Many things worth saying cannot or should not be said until after the war. Mr. Bourassa has been getting into trouble—and he deserves it—for mentioning some of them now. But when the war is over and no question of our affection for our progenitors can be seriously raised, the Liberal party will have ample work to do to fight centralization of the Empire. We can depend upon it that the Conservatives will propose joining an Imperial Parliament, or something of the sort, and it will be the part of sound Liberalism to fight such a project—the most dangerous project a loyal subject could tamper with.

Meantime it is worthy of note that though the Conservatives seem weak in men the Liberals, too, seem weak. Were the opportunity to present itself to-morrow it is doubtful if the Liberals could take

full advantage of the Government's weaknesses. Save for Sir Wilfrid, it is woefully short of leadership.

## Traditions

WHAT SO PATHETIC as the aristocrat who allows the glorious traditions of his ancestry to hang round his neck like a millstone, keeping him from moving like a free man, doing and thinking like a self-reliant creature. What?—but the democrat who abandons traditions for futurities and sails, without ballast, into unknown waters!

Traditions have their use. But of the two men, the democrat holds the greater hope of usefulness. For good traditions belong to whoever chooses to be inspired by them. British statesmanship has more truly inherited Greek political ideals than the Greeks themselves. May not any nameless wonderer take the inspiration of Napoleon? Or Livingstone? Or Lincoln? Or the central figure of the New Testament and make it, or make all of them his own by sincere imitation? The whole world is the heir to a noble act or an inspiring life. While the mere lineal descendant of greatness is apt to be absorbed in the thought of his own blood's nobility, stultified by the burden of his past! His whole view of life is warped by the fact that his ancestor did more than he has the courage to hope to do.

## A Little More “Pep”

SOMEDAY THE WORD “PEP” will be put in the dustiest dictionaries with a laborious explanation (in italics) that the word comes from “sauerkraut” or “ice-the-apple,” or some other appropriate root. At all events it will no longer be slang, but will enter into the most elegant and profound discourses of the learned. For our part we should like to see this witty little word—witty because brief, and highly descriptive—come into its own earlier. It should be honoured among words. We used to have to say—gumption, ginger, enthusiasm, zeal, alertness, vim, quickness, and “go” to make our meaning clear. Even with all those words we hadn't really an equivalent for “pep!” “Pep” means lively intelligence—but who would say: “Ho, there sergeant! Put a little lively intelligence into that squad!” No. We say: “Where's the Pep, Bill?” and Bill understands at once.

One of the consolations of this world is the fact that language is made by common human beings and it is only the tight-laced pharisees of learning who, in time, preserve it, analyze it, classify and abuse it. One of these fine sunny centuries some calm scholar will write an essay on the “Pep-iatization of the British people.” Thus is good language always ruined. But by that time the genius of the race, the common folk who, thank heaven, refuse to wear mental corsets, will have swept on to still greater etymological heights and found, if possible, a better than Pep! And the scholars of that day will call it—slang! And wrinkle their noses in lofty disdain.

## Interlopers

LOUD CANADIAN APPLAUSE should have greeted the British member of parliament who inquired of the British Prime Minister recently whether Mr. Asquith could not prevent “the dumping of superfluous politicians from the colonies” in Great Britain. He referred especially to Joe Martin, the British Columbia will o' the wisp, but undoubtedly he had in mind Sir Gilbert Parker, Sir Max Aitken and Mr. Donald Macmaster, also. It is unfavourable comment on a so-called “representative” system of government that British constituencies are given to absolute outsiders—Canadians! Are there not real Englishmen enough to go round? Or have Englishmen lost the desire to share in their own government? Not one of the Canadians in the British House, save Bonar Law, who is not a Canadian except by deplorable accident, has amounted to anything in that House. Joe Martin has made himself a sort of nuisance and Parker has confined himself to giving large-sounding interviews to resourceless newspapermen on vague Empire topics.

If Great Britain would gently intimate that hereafter Englishmen are to represent Englishmen it would increase our general respect for the British Government and remove the lurking suspicion in some people's minds, that the members of the House of Commons are, after all, mere dummies, and that British electors haven't wit enough to resent outsiders being foisted on them by the party machines.

Furthermore, a Canadian, no matter how much money he has made (he usually makes it in Canada) shows only a yellow streak when he quits Canada

for London. Canada made him. He should render whatever political service he can to Canada—nobody else. So far we don't seem to have lost much. But the custom is wrong-headed. Is it possible that R. B. Bennett, whom Sir Max Aitken invited to “come on in—the English are easy!” has suddenly developed a sense of duty to Canada FIRST, or is he, too, only biding his time to go and live with pretty Dicky McBride et al, in London?

## Mr. Sheridan's Mistake

J. CLERC SHERIDAN speaks boldly when he says in the course of an article in the Nineteenth Century that the Dominions will expect, even insist upon Imperial Federation after the war. We infer from his words that Imperial Federation is the reward we are to get for sending our men to France.

We disagree with Mr. Sheridan. Let Imperial Federation wait and wait a precious long time. Only a few fuming patriots want it. As for rewards—that is not what Canadians are fighting for.

## Brains

IT IS SURPRISING what passes for brains nowadays. People seem to have about as accurate a notion of what constitutes “brain power” as a cat has of ethics. The chief faker is the university product with a cranial cavity littered up with the weirdest kind of junk, worthy of an industrious magpie or treasure-hoarding crow. The intimate knowledge which these gentlemen display concerning the personal habits of the Greeks astounds the foolish and bedevils the unread. The facts of history and the facts of literature are their stock in trade of conversation. No wonder, when the average university graduate comes down town to earn his living he has a painful time of it. There is more real brain power in our warehouses, offices and factories than could defeat off-hand the combined wit of all the fourth year men in all our universities, plus most of the professors, lecturers and presidents. A good Jew ragman usually has a better developed sense of logic than a second year student. Go to our churches and hear the illogical and often incoherent twaddle that passes for inspired teaching. Set a university staff to buy a set of steam boilers for a heating plant and they will be outwitted in the simplest business arrangement.

The trouble is that too few people stop to think what a brain should be. It shouldn't be a storehouse of all the litter of the ages. It shouldn't be a public library card-index system. It shouldn't be the abiding place of cultured echoes—echoes of everything that sounds “polished” or erudite. The best kind of a brain has two qualities: the capacity to weigh, to value, to estimate properly as Plato observed (but in vain so far as modern teaching seems to go) and the capacity to beget ideas by the mating of facts and thoughts by the coupling of ideas. Ah! says the Professor of the Humanities, where is this model brain to get its facts except by profound reading and teaching? Not at all. The modern printer has learned to turn out such marvellous compendiums of information, so excellently indexed and cross-indexed, that he who runs may indeed read. Thus a graduate with a general knowledge of the trend of history and the broad meanings of certain problems, may rid the work-room of the mind of ninety per cent. of its old lumber, reserving the space, instead, as a good carpenter keeps his loft clear for the joining together of timbers, for thinking. Heaven send more thinkers and fewer carriers of lumber.

## History and the Future

PATRIOTISM CAN'T BE taught by reference only to history. The young Canadian, especially, must be taught to look to the future even more than to the past. The past teaches us our mistakes and the mistakes of the other nations. The future teaches us our responsibilities.

Some nations, like some men, are overburdened by their past. It might with some truth be observed that as a nation grows older and its traditions mount higher and higher, the nation pays less attention to its future and more to its past; spends more time being proud of itself than considering its future. Thus its past is sometimes a menace to its future, a greater menace the greater its glory.

Our past in Canada is glorious enough, but our future is overwhelming. The young Canadian should be schooled in the problems of our future and its immense possibilities. This is the great essential. We do not think of this sort of thing often enough. Let us look forward, not backward.