

of a vast, interesting land whose mere geography is just beginning to be obvious. The schoolboy who has headached over the rivers and the coast waters and the mountain ranges of Canada might be taught a very lively lesson in Canadian geography if he could sit in the gallery of the House with his teacher and see the men that Canada sends from the furthestmost boundaries to discuss matters of government.

Perhaps the United States Congress is a spectacle more heterogeneous, from a large number of small states. But the House of Commons is quite as interesting a collection; not perhaps as types, of which we have fewer than the United States; most obviously engaging because first of all it is the most remarkable bi-lingual parliament in the world. Immediately you single out the Premier as the most distinctive man in the House and also as the most consummate master of French and English in any Parliament. Leaving out of count his Ministers for the present you look for the French members, most of whom are on his side of the House; the unmistakable atmosphere of the parish and the *habitant*, the priest and the river-front farm, the bush-runner and the town lawyer—happily focussed in these two score or so of men who are the solidest single interest in the House, the most seldom heard in debate and often the most eloquent when they are.

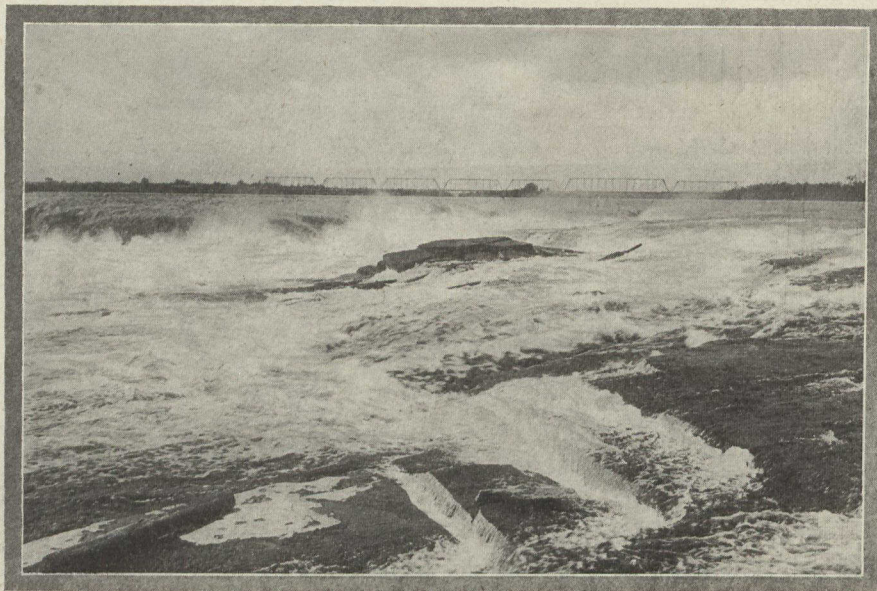
But if the members of the House spoke half the languages of Europe they would be scarcely more cosmopolitan than they are; gathered from mountain and prairie, from mining camp and lumber woods; from the cultivated township and the fur post; the Ontario manufacturing town and the fishing village down on the Atlantic; from the Yukon and from Cariboo; from the Bay of Fundy and the Gut of Canso; the commercial metropolis and the hamlet. There are men in that House who deal with millions of money and men who have driven dogs; old-timers from the lumber camps of the north shore and downy-faced youths who never even slept over-night on a farm; men from the ranches and from the canyons; some who know the chinook and some who have never been within eyeshot of a real mountain; men who represent the little Englands, Scotlands and Irelands and Germanys of Ontario, and those who are elected by the polyglot communities that hail from most of the countries of Europe to the wheat lands of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The social and industrial basis of Canada might be reconstructed from the House of Commons; its manufacturing and its mining, its lumbering and its agriculture, its fruit farms and its cattle ranges. Men there who know primarily the plains; cunning in the trails of the fur post—able to wear moccasins with dignity; men who see mountain peaks every morning—except when in Ottawa; men who own steam ploughs on the prairie and have redskins for neighbours in the hills.

There is that eclectic character to the Canadian House which would be much less noticeable in the Imperial Parliament; not in the mere professional vocations so much as in the vast number of things many of the members have turned their hands to before they settled down finally to one or more occupations in some part of Canada. The average M. P. in Ottawa is an experimental, finding-out individual who in the mutations and shiftings of communities in a new land and in an era of expansion has tried his fortunes at a great variety of things. I should say that the members of the Commons were as capable a body of citizens as could be found in any country under the sun.

The casual critic who had never seen a parliament would reflect that these men have a marvellous responsibility in a great land; that the problems with which they are called upon to deal are of such large and constructive interest that no man of all the two hundred and twenty should find time a drag on Parliament Hill. In this the closing year of the first decade of "Canada's century," it must be patent to every member of the House that in ten years the nature and business of government has so multiplied and extended that many of the concerns of politics are of almost imperial interest. As a mere matter of business expansion the Parliament of 1910 is to that of 1878, as a department store to a cross-roads country store. The actual business of Parliament is enough to keep every member in Ottawa hustling and thinking and working for the common good and the glory of his country every minute of his time in the Capital, which is at least a practical phase of patriotism.

### Patriotism and "Scoundrels."

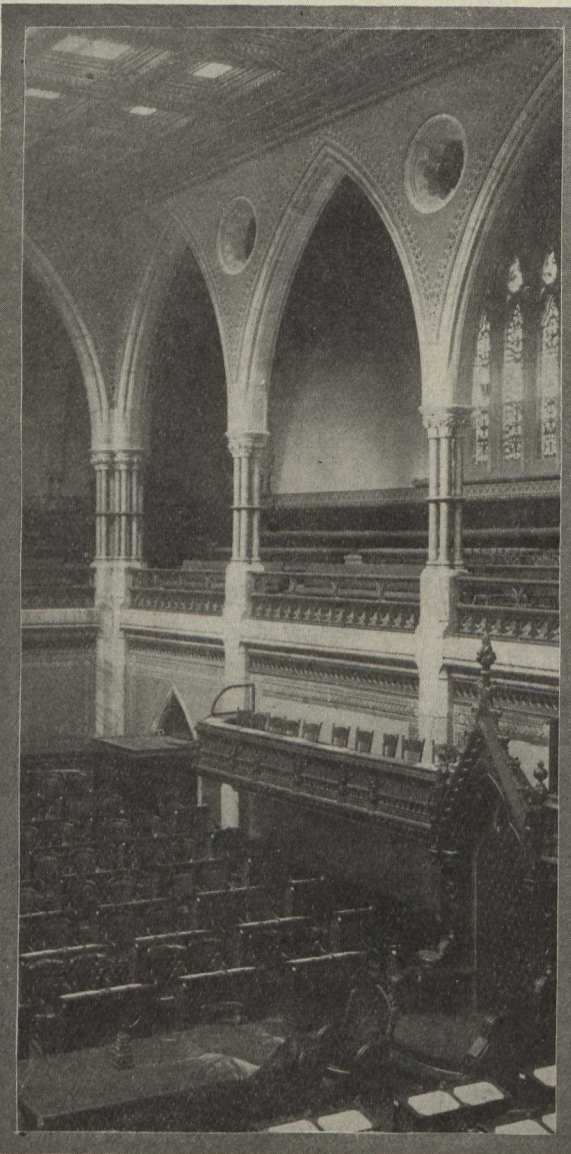
An old cynic has said that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." One might spend a few hours in Ottawa, however, without suspecting that in the case of a percentage of members it is anything worse than the casual diversion of a bored



Chaudiere Falls—Where Ottawa gets its nature-music and its water-power.

man. But there is another phase to the picture; and it is expressed by a typical debate in the House of Commons.

By a sort of irony the first voice I heard in the House was Mr. Foster. From his customary seat beside the leader of the Opposition he was delivering—mainly to the Premier opposite—a highly Fosterian speech. The tones were clear and the voice was loud. The cadences fell with a highly certain stroke. As to gesture and attitude, the speech had most of the elements of an oration. The member for North Toronto and ex-Minister of Finance was obviously in earnest—as a patriot



Interior House of Commons, from the Opposition Benches; the Speaker's Chair; right front desk to the left opposite is the Premier's; right front desk to the left on this side, Mr. R. L. Borden's; next, Mr Foster's; Press Gallery above.

should be. Now and again in consonance with the deadly strokes of his vowels, his right hand descended categorically upon the left; now he put a hand on each desk across the aisle and leaned dramatically across the table while he looked with searching analysis into the face of the Premier who, having peculiarly locked his fingers, regarded him astutely—as he has done many an hour before.

From the oft-repeated allusions to the First Minister it was evident that the speech was of broad national interest. The more earnestly the Premier regarded the speaker the more dramatic Mr. Foster became. Applause from the Opposition benches was loud and frequent. When the speaker turned to face his own party, the desks rattled a volley. But over the Government side there spread a sort of transitory sneer. Evidently the speaker was accusing the Government. The ablest debater in the House was acting in the capacity of arch-critic. His moral sense was roused. The morality of the entire Opposition was roused. It was a fighting episode. To one who had never heard of Mr. Foster it would have seemed that a prophet had arisen in Israel. The sentiments lauded by the Opposition were of a lofty character. The country's interests were being assailed. There was an enemy at the gate. The Government and the Prime Minister were

exhorted to be up and doing while yet it is called day. And to the uninformed onlooker it was evident that a great moral issue was at stake, and he felt quite uplifted that such a bit of real drama had been his first glimpse of the parliamentary stage.

So abstruse was the look of the Premier; so impassioned the words of the speaker. It was not the Navy Bill and the separatist bogey. It was not the German scare. Neither was it the surtax and our relations with the rest of Europe. It was not the maximum tariff and our manifest destiny as an integral part of the American continent.

In short there was nothing in the Empire or in Europe or in the international relations of North America that caused this eruption of moralising oratory from Mr. Foster. The cause was purely Canadian. It was even narrower; it was party. The spectre that Mr. Foster was trying to banish had plainly been evoked by the Government—and it was big enough to have become a fundamental issue. It had corrupted the springs of national and political life. The time had come for Israel to set her house in order. Good government demanded it; the Opposition clamoured for it; the people from sea to sea were waiting anxiously—for a moral regeneration.

When Mr. Foster sat down it looked as though the only thing for the Government to do was to make a confession through the Prime Minister and by a resolution abolish patronage.

Did six members passionately and simultaneously arise from Government benches to rend their garments and put on sackcloth and ashes? Nay, verily. Coolly and calmly Mr. Hugh Guthrie, member for South Wellington, rose from the front benches; armed *cap-a-pie* with documentary evidence which for days he had been collating from Hansards and from correspondence of departments. For much more than an hour he spoke; and the burden of his clever and finely destructive speech was to show—that whatever might be the infirmities of the present Government regarding the patronage system, and they were few indeed—the whole spectre of patronage had been far uglier in the day when Mr. Foster was Minister of Finance. He read letter after letter to prove that Mr. Foster was himself a past grand master in the art of patronage; that in the ancient days the prophet himself had been one of the destroyers of Israel; and that it ill became him or any of his to cast the first stone at the Liberal Government, who had indeed, as he could show, done much to mitigate the evils of patronage.

Thus ended Mr. Guthrie—apologist. The tables were turned upon Mr. Foster. Did the member for North Toronto sink into his seat and hide under the brim of his Christie hat? Nay verily. He had a wintry smile and a satisfied chuckle. He had launched his bolt. He had ripped up the seams and had precipitated three hours of trouble. Hansard would be his witness—and Mr. Guthrie's also. It was evidently the first concern of statesmanship, to discover scoundrels, past and present, in the party opposite.

Which so far as ordinary observation goes is a good share of the parliamentary business at Ottawa.