

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MONTHLY

The Magazine of The Canadian West

Publishing Office, 1100 Bute Street, Vancouver, B. C.

D. A. CHALMERS
Managing Editor and Publisher.

With an Advisory Editorial Committee
of
Literary Men and Women.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SPECTATOR
of

BRITAIN'S FARTHEST WEST.

For Community Service—Social, Educational, Literary
and Religious; but
Independent of Party, Sect or Faction.

"BE BRITISH," COLUMBIANS!

Vol. XVII.

DECEMBER, 1920.

No. 3.

PROVINCIAL ELECTION RESULTS.

The day is past, and the die is cast. Just as the representatives of both political parties made confident forecasts of what the results would be, so they respectively (publicly) find cause for satisfaction in what has actually occurred. The leader and members of the Opposition are gratified that the Oliver Government majority has been so far reduced, while the latter hold that they have been vindicated at the polls in being given a majority at all.

Independents, in turn, may find comfort in the thought that each side will be interested in them and in their attitude at critical division times. All the more will this be the case if the election of a new speaker (a likely sequel), and other changes and opportunities that inevitably come with the lapse of time, should reduce the none-too-big Government majority over Opposition and Independents together.

THE B. C. M. ANTICIPATIONS.

As to his forecast, the Wayside Philosopher may be left to speak for himself. So far as the six anticipations given in this column are concerned, as there were twenty-eight candidates for the six positions, it is not unworthy of notice that four (if not five) of those suggested as likely to be elected were really so, though not in the order given. The leader of the Opposition obtained, not first, but the sixth place, whereas the "lady candidate" led in the person of Mrs. Smith. Members Farris, Ramsay and Macdonald were three of the other names on our list, and though Colonel Warden did not get "a place," he was well up.

A THIRD PARTY?—"THE PEOPLE'S"

It looks as if, till proportional representation is in vogue, Independents, in order to have a chance of securing two or more places, would need to form a third party. In such a case they could count on getting a number of the Vancouver seats, as with six, instead of sixteen (outside the old parties) in the field, the likelihood of two or three Independents being elected would be much greater.

Perhaps if Labour and other organizations, which seem set on putting forward candidates of their very own, could agree on candidates who could be relied upon to represent their respective interests and put principle before party, a group might be sent to Victoria which would be a real influence in progressive legislation, no matter what party was in power.

Pending the introduction of the Proportional Representation method of voting—or even with it introduced, as it is likely to be sooner or later,—the time may be ripe for the formation of a third party, which, as "The People's" might well give satisfactory representation to Labour and other organizations which stress one form or another of community service.

A TOO DRASTIC REPORT.

"Counsels of perfection" are often much more easy to give than commonsense advice, and the temptation, when outlining or advocating improvements, to suggest the renewal of "lock, stock, and barrel," is one before which good and sincere practical men, no less than mere theorists, may succumb.

We do not wish to doubt the sincerity of the Library men from Seattle whose report of Vancouver Public Library has caused some stir, but we should, in the first place, like to know why it should have been thought necessary to go across the line at all for an independent opinion. Did the proximity of Seattle and the cheapness of the fare influence the course taken? Has Canada not Library men enough, who are also real literary men, who can be consulted in such a case?

How far a public library should pander to the popular taste or seek to educate it, may be a debatable question, concerning which much might be said on both sides. But surely none but a prig or snob in the book-shelving business—

Wise in mien, but meanly wise,

Whose learning's sought in others' eyes,

would suggest that the qualifications of first importance in the chief of a large library have to do with an intimate knowledge of a filing system, or involve a capacity to sit an examination on technical details affecting records that any one could learn in a few weeks or months.

We believe that in the opinion of many, a librarian should be first and foremost a literary man, with human interests and wide sympathies, who, if he has not had an opportunity of acquainting himself with the most up-to-date methods of tabulating records and keeping files, should speedily remove that disability by after-hours study, and, if need be, a short course at any college including library work in its curriculum.

But for any man or men to write a report as if certain defects in filing, or even occasional misjudgments in the numbers of particular books stocked for an uncertain and fickle public, formed a sufficient reason for not only questioning the fitness, but suggesting the dismissal of a public servant of years' standing and of unquestioned worth in local literary circles, must make independent inquirers question the bases of the judgment or report, and even wonder whether it was consciously or unconsciously inspired in any measure by previously prejudiced persons?

The B. C. M. holds no brief for Vancouver City Librarian, but as a publication with a living interest in all real literary workers, it has no hesitation in condemning the report from the Seattle gentlemen as altogether too drastic in its terms and unwarranted in some of its suggestions. In a "survey" it is well that the shortcomings of the institution, and incidentally of the staff should be pointed out to the supervising Board, at least, if not also to the public, but surely it was a little presumptuous in the "surveyors" (however experienced they may be in Library work) practically to advise the removal of the chief.