

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

PUBLIC sympathy will be with the Grand Trunk Railway in its fight with its employees. Not that people believe that Grand Trunk employees have been getting as much wages as they should, and not that they are opposed to a generous increase. The public has sympathy with the men at a time when the cost of living has seriously increased. Nevertheless, the advance in wages offered by



Mr. C. M. Hays,
President Grand Trunk Railway.

the railway and refused by the men was large enough to make the people believe that President Charles M. Hays was treating his employees fairly and even generously. When conductors are offered an increase equal to \$25 to \$50 a month and baggagemen and brakemen an increase of \$15 to \$25, there should be little ground for complaint on the part of these employees. There are few businesses in Canada which would not be seriously crippled by a similar increase in the rate of wages paid.

Trades unions have done much to raise the standard of wages, and at this late date few people deny the right of the trades unions to

strike for an improvement in conditions. While this is true, the general public recognise that the growing power of the trades unions may become as irksome as was the stupidity and cupidity of employers under the old regime. In this particular case the trades unions would have scored a great victory had they accepted Mr. Hays' offer. The arbitration tribunal had set forth the conditions and made certain recommendations. Mr. Hays complied with these recommendations and agreed that a further raise in wages should be given not later than January 1st, 1913. He further offered to submit the differences to an arbitration of railway men and to abide by their decision. Surely this was as far as any manager of a railway could be expected to go.

The unions may have some reasons for their actions not known to the public and, if so, these should be disclosed as soon as possible or the entire sympathy of the uninterested public will be with the Corporation and against the Unions.

IS our prosperity affecting our patriotism? When an institution is successful, the people connected with it are usually enthusiastic. It is natural that humans should be proud of their successes. In a general way, Canadians are proud of their country, of its immense breadth and depth, its varied scenery, its wonderful natural resources, its increasing population, and the certainty of its rising greatness. Canadians are as certain that their country will have a brilliant future as that the four seasons will regularly succeed each other in the years to come. The national pride and confidence were never greater.

Yet our recent prosperity is having some peculiar results. One of these is a tendency to slovenliness. When a manufacturer gets prosperous, there is always a temptation to be careless, to turn out goods which are just a little under the standard. The stimulus to improvement is not so strong as when he is building up a reputation for his wares. The same result is seen among retailers, builders, financiers and municipal and other public administrators. This slovenliness is akin to extravagance and at times is indistinguishable from it. The spur of necessity being removed, carelessness or slovenliness manifests itself in many curious ways.

THE other day a manufacturer was boasting of the good quality of his wares, and what a success he had made in the selling of them. When asked if he had a trade-mark, he replied in the negative. He stated that he formerly put his name on his goods, but that he was abandoning this practice so that the retailers could sell his goods as "imported" and get a higher price for them. In other words

he was conspiring with his customers to deceive the public. He had lost faith in the value of "Made in Canada" as the hall-mark of honest goods. He was willing to adopt a slovenly method of doing business, for the sake of a temporary easy profit. He was selling his reputation for a mess of pottage. He was abandoning a sure foundation for a doubtful, insecure custom.

Another case was reported last week, where a manufacturing firm were about to put on this market an article in common use but hitherto manufactured abroad. They had several conferences and thoroughly investigated the question as to whether the goods should be labelled "Made in Canada," but the weight of evidence was against it. They decided to keep their trade-marks indefinite so that the retailers might sell these articles as imported if they wished.

Here then are two cases, and the writer vouches for the accuracy of the facts, which indicate that some Canadian manufacturers are adopting slovenly methods. But the manufacturer is not wholly to blame. The public must be slovenly in its methods of buying if such ideas prevail among the younger manufacturers. Indeed, the public must be remarkably "easy" if the shop-keepers are able to sell them Canadian-made goods at higher prices on the plea that they are foreign made. Our national pride cannot be very great when habits of this kind can get a footing amongst us.

FEW German, British or United States manufacturers are ashamed of their goods. "Made in Germany" is a proud boast of the German manufacturer, "Made in Great Britain" is an even prouder hall-mark in the eyes of the Britisher, while a United States manufacturer who is ashamed of his wares is an undiscovered specimen. In Canada, we have many manufacturers who stand solidly behind their goods and are not afraid to label what they sell. Ogilvie, Purity and Lake of the Woods are three brands of flour which may be cited; McClary, Gurney, Smart and Clare are well-known makers of stoves; Metallic Roofing, Pedlar and Preston Steel are reputable makers of ceilings and roofings; the successful makers of men's wear have their brands in which they take a pardonable pride, such as W. G. & R., Penman's, Hewson, Turnbull, and Chipman-Holton; such cheese-makers as McLaren's and Ingersoll have helped to make this product famous; Cowan's and Ganong's have distinguished Canadian chocolates from all others; Taylors as makers of soaps and perfumes have by courage placed themselves in the front rank; and so on through the list. But, after all, how small it is! The manufacturers have been less courageous than the retailers; who ever heard of a retailer hiding his Canadian identity behind a foreign firm-name or brand or designation? About ten years ago, the manufacturers had a burst of courage, but in these later years there has been a sad falling off.

TAKE another instance in point, even at the danger of prolonging the argument unduly. Who can tell the name of a Canadian manufacturer of carpets? Nobody. Yet there is in this country one of the finest factories on the continent turning out magnificent carpets and rugs—unbranded and unadvertised. Those who do business with the firm know the reputation and success of the Toronto Carpet Company, but the general public never heard of them. The people buy their products, but probably believe they are manufactured in Austria or the United States. Why should not every rug and every yard of that carpet be labelled "Made in Canada"?

AT the Dominion Day dinner in London, Mr. Fielding told the story of Hon. Joseph Howe, who once said to a gathering of newsboys in Nova Scotia: "Boys, do not be afraid to brag of your country. It is a good fault." And Mr. Fielding proceeded to give an exhibition of his mastery of "Joe" Howe's lesson. Sometimes, perhaps, we brag too much, although no one can point to any serious damage done by our over-zealousness. Sometimes, however, we brag too little, and the writer is of the opinion that the Canadian manufacturers might do a little more bragging. It should be mild, sensible, argumentative bragging, of course. They should keep on telling the public about their wares, explaining why they are as good as the foreign makes and why they are cheaper. If they fail to do it thoroughly and well, the people may forget all about that famous "Made in Canada" campaign.

When Sir Wilfrid Laurier reached Port Arthur and Fort William he was taken out through the harbour to see the docks, the railway terminals and the shipping. Why should not our prominent public men and our distinguished foreign visitors be shown through our larger factories when occasion offers?