



The Muddle of Democracy

BY REV. A. E. SMITH, NELSON, B.C.

THE season of the year has arrived once more, when the people of the land will seek entertainment in the celebrations of the National holidays, many of which have been created in response to that innate susceptibility of human nature to hero worship. Perhaps one of the surest signs that we are not a genuinely happy people is the fact that we have to be so much entertained, and the sort of entertainment which suffices to please or perhaps to delude us.

But what of this democracy which goes out so often to hear the band play, to listen to the platform patriot, and to be dazzled by the glitter of uniforms and the waving of flags? What is it thinking while the band is playing? The danger is that democracy is more anxious to be amused than to think, and the fact is that there are not a few who desire to keep the band playing to thoughtless people. When the people begin to think there will be less band playing and parade and show and more demand for the study of and care for the vital interests of the nation.

Democracy, to-day, is in a muddle; that is the prevailing aspect of the times. The richest person in America—that artificial but very real person—the People—is in a muddle over all his wealth and despite all his wealth.

This is the day of national debts, and, strange to say, national surpluses. Accumulating debts by federal, provincial and municipal governments is a feature of the political activity of the times. The people's money has been borrowed from the banks, and the people pay interest upon it, to build the public works—railroads, waterworks, power plants, etc., etc.

For the common citizen, the struggle to make a living has vastly intensified during the same period. The purchasing power of the dollar has steadily decreased, while the demand for dollars has steadily increased. Taxes grow with the national debt.

The railway system of the present day is a monument to the failure of democratic government and the ignorance of democracy—either ignorance or delusion, or perhaps both. Those who exercised the functions of government have failed to see the value of the railroad as a possession of the people, and the people have allowed themselves to be divided into foolish and warlike parties at the bidding of the demagogues of self-interest, and thus the people have become the prey of piratical companies. Governments have given away zones of the people's land, have lent the credit of the people to endow with borrowing power large corporations which have turned upon the people and now defy while they rob them. Railroad dividends, national debts, and the people's taxes increase every year.



But democracy think about it a bit while the band plays.

Long ago the river Rhine was a highway between Switzerland and the Netherlands. The barons of mediaeval times built their castles on the cliffs

along the banks, armed their retainers, and took toll by force, from the people who travelled upon the river. They became rich and powerful, and the more rich the more powerful, and the more powerful the more insolent and oppressive. They became a law unto themselves, ignored the government, since they could make or unmake any government. They did not make the river. They did not own the river. They simply had gotten,



SIR JAMES P. WHITNEY,
Premier of Ontario.

A Message from Ontario's Premier

This is a record time for the people of Canada. History shows no such instance of remarkable prosperity within so short a time. We live under British institutions—and that means so much. We are proud of our traditions and of the moral standard of our people. A kind Providence has lavished blessings there is a danger facing us as a people to-day, it is that we may perhaps take our happiness and prosperity as a matter of course and as calling for nothing in return on our part. Therefore, let us all join in Kipling's aspiration:

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

J. P. WHITNEY.

by a certain amount of foresight, a position of power and advantage on the river, which belonged to the people of the land, and by a continuous misunderstanding of the functions of government on the part of those elected to exercise those functions, they had been allowed, in brutal impudence, to impose upon and rob the people. The same thing is taking place in our day. The barons of finance have secured for themselves positions of advantage in the country, and are using the rightful possessions of the people as a means for the collecting of enormous tolls from the people. Through the misunderstanding of the functions of government, they are allowed to proceed with the creation of trusts, syndicates, corporations and combines, which make and unmake govern-

ments, and hold back the riches of the earth, the sea and the sky from their fellows, except as they can gather exorbitant profits in cash. The fact that any man or corporation can control the use and disposition, the cost of production, and the price to the consumer, of the necessities of life which belong to the people, is an evidence of the failure to understand the functions of democratic government.

The hope of democracy is in the development of power in the hands of the people and the education of the people to use the powers of government for themselves. The cure for the mistakes of democracy is more democracy. The training school for the people is in the municipal governments. Here the power is close to the people and the functions are more familiar. The future will see larger cities, more beautiful cities, and better governed cities, and long when it will be considered a greater honor to be the mayor of a progressive city than to be Premier or President. Democracy must stand for increased power in the hands of city governments, unprivileged industries in the cities, all public franchises owned by the people, and the control of the people to be exercised through the wise use of the initiative and referendum, and the recall. The hope of democracy is in democracy.

Manitoba's Place in the Canadian Federation

BY REV. W. A. COOKE, D.D., WINNIPEG, MAN.

IN Manitoba we are mainly a farming people, and take as our humble task to help supply the world with its bread and butter. And we intend to do our work well. That is why one of the most popular institutions in our Province is the Agricultural College, which our Government is fostering, generously developing. A splendid corps of professors is not only teaching the science and practice of farming, but also developing manhood, giving a wider outlook, stirring new interests, and thus ensuring that our future farm-citizens shall worthily take their place among our Empire's noblest sons.

Cosmopolitan Winnipeg has a big job on its hands in the matter of assimilating its polyglot immigration, and is already working hard at it. All People's Mission, under the Methodist Church, is the most serious and effective agency yet in the field. Winnipeg is growing, and the real estate market is very active. A great wholesale centre and developing power, and thus fostering manufactures, the city is forging ahead. Happily, there are many public-spirited citizens who are seeking the city's future good in projects of city planning, and encouraging the laying out of city parks, and other far-sighted provision for the days to come. Well-equipped elementary and collegiate and technical schools are making their contribution to the future efficiency of the city and province. About one thousand students will write on the Matriculation Examination this June.

The Church of Jesus Christ has a most important responsibility in this province. "Live by bread alone." "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The witness for Christ and His Kingdom is the spiritual life must be faithfully borne. And most important of all, the young people of our congregations, and the children of our Sunday Schools must be won to faith in Christ their Saviour, and obedience to His holy commandment.

