



Main Street of Saskatoon, where the Saskatchewan Sangerfest was held.

try, even into the Yukon. As an item in the art-development of a new country it is entitled to some respect. Canada as a piano-manufacturing country stands high. There are no more than three or four foreign makes a bit better than the best made in Canada; which include half a dozen well-known standard makes.

An interesting feature of music development in Toronto is the recent movement of music houses to the main retail thoroughfare. A few years ago not a piano could be bought on Yonge Street. Then Gourlay, Winter & Leeming went in near the Eaton store. The R. S. Williams Co., whose factory is in Oshawa, moved in a few blocks lower down. The Bell firm, with factory in Guelph and head ware-rooms in Toronto, got in almost opposite. The Gerhard-Heintzman firm for some years occupied large premises below that again; till a few months ago they moved out to their palatial premises on Queen Street opposite the City Hall where they have one of the most modern and best equipped piano palaces in America. Still more recently the old Heintzman firm have begun to vacate their old quarters on King Street West. Having bought a seven-storey building from a large retail firm on Yonge Street above Queen, they are now engaged in refitting it throughout for a grand salon, combination offices and ware-rooms, concert hall and recital halls. To cap the climax along come the Mason & Risch Company, who for these many years have done business in the old stand on King Street. They have bought a lot on the west side of Yonge Street and have now complete plans drawn up for a most beautiful and complete six-storey building which for the sale of pianos and the display of pianos as an art product will have no superior and few equals anywhere. Besides, the old firm of Whaley-Royce, music dealers, who for so many years have done business at the corner of Yonge and Richmond, a few months ago moved up into a fine new-fitted and rebuilt premises on upper Yonge. This leaves only the Nordheimer firm in possession of King Street where they intend to stay. And this instance of piano trekking serves as a very good example of the way lower Yonge Street is becoming the big retail centre of Toronto.

In the making of organs Canada needs to learn but little from any other country. There are many creditable varieties of the cabinet reed organ made in this country; and some not very creditable. Most of these are made in smaller towns and a large majority of them in Ontario. As to pipe organs—there is one Canadian firm that have managed to get to the very top in the grand art: that is the Casavant Freres of St. Hyacinthe, P. Q., whose organs go across the border, competing with the very best in the United States; indeed, there is no firm in America with the reputation for beautiful pipe organs of the more costly quality than the Casavants have got. They are so busy building organs clear across Canada and down in the United States that a church music board anxious to get a new organ had better consult them a year in advance of the time they want the organ opened. One of their most notable organs in Canada is that of Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal. They have now two big organs about to begin in Toronto where they have already six or seven installed, including one of the finest in Canada. One of the two—that in St. Paul's Anglican Church—will cost thirty thousand dollars and take rank as in some respects the finest organ in America. There are other firms; one large firm, the Warren, that for many years have built some of the best organs in Canada, including the very costly and elaborate organ in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, costing now that it has been the second time rebuilt, not less than thirty-five thousand dollars. Some small firms

also make a specialty of smaller pipe organs of very exceptionally good quality.

On the practical art side we are doing very well. Complaint is sometimes made that Canada is rather laggard on the side of musical composition. At the recent music tourney it was decided that not a single amateur of all the scores who competed had sent in anything worthy of being considered. This was seriously disputed by some of the contestants and their friends who happened to know some of the very good work that had been done. Of professional composers we have no particular lack; except that so far most of our professional people have been too busy making money out of teaching and performing to bother with composition. We have had a large turn-out of various sorts of work for solo voice and chorus, for piano and for violin, for organ and for band, for string quartette and for orchestra. A good bit of this has been tommyrot. Much of it has been very good. We have sinned most grievously in the matter of national anthems; of which we have had scores, mostly "punk," and a few good ones; one unsurpassable—"O Canada," by the late lamented Calixta Lavallee of regrettable memory, for had he lived what might we not have got! Still there is hope. We may yet have a Canadian symphony and a Canadian grand opera.

THE SASKATCHEWAN SANGERFEST

By ISABEL C. ARMSTRONG

NOT content with growing "No. 1 Hard" and seeing towns and cities spring up as if by magic on the prairies, the people of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta are also intent upon cultivating an appreciation of the fine arts and developing latent talent. In the



Rev. E. B. Smith
President Saskatchewan Musical
Festival, 1909-1910.

cities, the towns, the villages and the prairie homes are to be found those who have brought with them old world culture, or still more frequently those who have enjoyed exceptional advantages in an educational way in Eastern Canada or the United States.

Music, the greatest of all great arts, has its numerous devotees and in order to promote musical interests, provincial musical festivals have been organised where orchestral and choral societies, church choirs, quartettes and soloists enter into competition for first place in their various classes once a year. The first Saskatchewan Musical Festival was held in Regina a year ago. On the twenty-fourth of May, 1910, musicians from all over the province gathered in Saskatoon.

Empire Day was a gala day in the mid-province city, picturesquely situated on the banks of the swift-flowing Saskatchewan River. Seventy-five business men from Winnipeg had reached the town that morning. The horse-races had attracted many visitors, and there was the army of musicians representing Moose Jaw, Regina, Battleford, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, Humboldt and many other parts. As a result, hotels and restaurants were filled to overflowing.

We have the themes. All we lack is the composers. They will come—in due course. We are yet too close to the clank of the box car and the cough of the steam shovel.

Take our brass bands. Here we are in a parlous condition. Years ago we had some particularly good bands in Canada. We have yet two or three worthy to stand up before a critical public. But if there is one in Toronto—we have not been listening of late. What is the matter with our bands? Deponent saith not. There has been a decadence. We need a band revival. We need as good bands in Canada as the best in the United States—and as near as possible to the great military bands from across the water.

As to orchestras. Most of our regular theatre orchestras are decisively bad. In Toronto there is only one good orchestra—out of eight; and that is in a vaudeville house. All the others are away below par; and yet they play to thousands upon thousands of people every year and no one seems to object. In Montreal there is improvement. There part of the symphony orchestra under Prof. Goulet put up a really fine programme of music every night at the Academie Francaise. Even in Ottawa there are a couple of decent theatre orchestras; and in Winnipeg and Vancouver—surely as good as most in Toronto.

In symphony orchestras we have done vastly better. We have four—some playing up to the top notch of amateurism, and some of them much beyond, well up indeed into the big touring orchestra class. The best and biggest of these is in Toronto, organised four years ago out of the conditions created by the indefatigable Dr. Torrington, the real father of both orchestral and choral music in Toronto. That is the Toronto Symphony under Mr. Frank Welsman, who as a pianist and a conductor has no equal in Canada; one of the real constructive musicians whose band has done a greater and a higher average of master works than any other two orchestras in Canada and in the near future will be on a par with some of the very best bands in America. Mr. Donald Heins in Ottawa has developed a band of amateur players who have run away with two or three Governor-General's awards. In Montreal Prof. Goulet has an orchestra that ranks second only to the Toronto Symphony. In Quebec City there is an excellent symphony orchestra. In Winnipeg and in Vancouver as yet none. Time will tell.

The members of the Regina Clef Club, ninety strong, had planned wisely and well for such an emergency. They had engaged a "special" to convey them to their destination and house them during their stay in Saskatoon.

The festival president, Rev. E. B. Smith, and the secretary-treasurer, Mr. J. D. Macdonald of Saskatoon, and other members of the executive did all in their power to make it pleasant for the guests and make the wheels run smoothly.

The rink, the largest available, was converted into an auditorium and, adorned with red, white and blue bunting and flags, presented a very attractive appearance. Best of all, the acoustic properties were good and the competitors were thus heard to advantage. Every seat in the great hall was filled when in the evening the Sangerfest proper opened with selections by the Saskatoon Symphony Society, an organisation of which any city might well be proud.

One of the outstanding features of the evening's programme was the rendering of "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" (Coleridge Taylor) by the Prince Albert Choral Society. Ambition and enthusiasm characterised the competitors of this northern town. Their entries included all classes from solos to choral work and among the contestants were artists as well as singers richly endowed by nature. One young girl, Miss Tyren, was considered one of the festival discoveries. Possessed of a soprano voice of rare beauty and strength, she created a furore and a bright future has been predicted for her.

At eleven-thirty on Wednesday the Festival annual meeting was held when it was unanimously decided to accept the cordial invitation of Prince Albert to hold the next Festival there.

Wednesday evening's programme was marked by two features—the presentation of Elgar's "Banner of St. George," by the Saskatoon Philharmonic Society, and the presentation of "Joan of Arc" (Gaul) by the Regina Clef Club. All the soloists acquitted themselves admirably. Of three complete works rendered by choral societies, it was undoubtedly the best performance of the Festival.