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Topics of the Day

ALLAN is a name familiar to Canadian ears almost since young Hugh Allan landed at Montreal in May, 1826, from a boat of which his father was commander and his eldest brother second officer. Since 1831, there has always been an Allan connected with the shipping trade of Montreal. The Allan line proper dates from 1856. This Hugh Allan afterwards became Sir Hugh. With him from 1846 was associated his brother Andrew, and when Sir Hugh died in 1882, Andrew succeeded him as manager of the steamship line, as president of the Merchants' Bank and the Montreal National Telegraph Company.

The second son of Sir Hugh is Sir H. Montagu Allan who was born in Montreal in 1860. When his uncle died a few years ago, he succeeded to the management of the steamship line and the presidency of the Merchants' Bank. He is prominent socially and was for some time master of the Fox Hounds. In a quiet way he has played his part in public affairs. During the recent visit of Prince Fushimi, he was his Montreal host.

Sir Montagu has drawn public attention to himself by his protest against the building mania which seems to have taken possession of those who control the Canadian chartered banks. The Bank of Montreal led the way with a head office which is one of the most gorgeously furnished business places on the continent. The Bank of Commerce is now erecting a building in Montreal which, while only a branch, is apparently intended to be equally impressive. The Traders has erected a fifteen story structure in Toronto which is more extensive than either of these, if less gorgeous in its appointments. All the banks are going in for expensive head offices and stylish branches, and much capital is thus being locked up.

Some of the bankers are criticising the Dominion Government for spending so much money on public works which do not bring in any return worth while, declaring that this policy is using up the people's savings faster than such capital can be accumulated. If these gentlemen would examine their own accounts they would probably find that the banks are following the same policy in locking up capital in expensive buildings which cannot possibly return a fair interest in return. Sir Montagu's protest was opportune.

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Mr. Cockshutt, president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, in a speech at Winnipeg drew attention to the vast sums of money Canadians are sending out of their country. The foreign purchases are vastly in excess of the foreign sales. He especially deprecated paying forty-two million dollars in three years for fire insurance with British and foreign companies, and intimated that the manufacturers hope to keep a great deal of this money in the country through their new mutual companies.

There is no doubt that Canada's prosperity has induced an era of extravagance on the part of all classes of the community. Every new country buying steel, railway equipment and other construction material, is likely to make great purchases abroad during its "build-

ing" period. These two features have combined to turn the balance of trade against us. When our extensive borrowings are added, it is evident that our indebtedness abroad is increasing at tremendous speed.

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That the manufacturers are not intending to drive Sir Wilfrid Laurier out of office because of his free trade speeches made years ago is indicated by the acceptance of the Brantford Liberal nomination of Mr. Lloyd Harris. He is one of the most prominent and influential members of the C.M.A., an ardent protectionist and a strong "made in Canada" advocate. If he can ride under the Laurier banner it is evidence that the tariff is pretty well out of politics.

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The Census Bureau continues to give new statistics to show how prosperous the country has been during the past five years. This prosperity is well known to all of us, but some of these figures must open the eyes of even well-informed and optimistic citizens. That the grain area of the West should have doubled in six years is one of the startling facts. That the total wheat yield in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta was one hundred and ten millions last year and that the crop of oats produced an equal number of bushels are also striking facts. Eight million acres under crop in a district where forty years ago there were not ten thousand white people is a record which is hardly equalled in the history of the human race.

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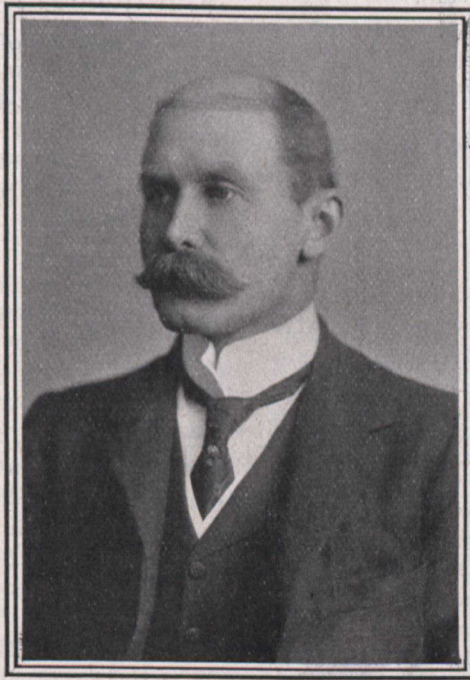
One of the most remarkable features of the public discussions of the past few months is the utter absence of any news concerning the Canadian Society of Authors. Has it been disbanded? If not, why has it not come to the support of the Hon. Mr. Lemieux in his efforts to provide a home field for native writers? Does it not believe in Canadian writers and Canadian literature? Has it no faith in our literary future? Is the greatest literary change in the last twenty-five years to go unnoticed by the persons who should be most interested? Is it the deepness of its affection for Mr. Munsey and Mr. Bok and other United States publishers that causes this stern silence?

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been in Paris laying the basis for a new commercial arrangement with Paris. Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur are still there working out the details. Thus Canada is taking unto herself the power and privilege of making her own treaties. The more Canadian statesmen become known in London, the greater the readiness on the part of the Imperial authorities to allow the premier colony the privilege of conducting its own foreign negotiations. Downing Street is a very reasonable centre just now. There is scarcely anything it will not do to please the colonies—except to put a tax on foreign foodstuffs.

Canadians generally will appreciate this extension of our self-governing freedom, and the Empire generally will benefit. When a colony conducts its own negotiations it cannot find fault with the Home authorities if the results do not come up to expectations.

Now that Canada has this privilege, other colonies will demand it. Under supervision, it should be granted.



Sir H. Montagu Allan.