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Topics of the Day

WHEN the University of Toronto, the other day, conferred special degrees on two old high school teachers, it paid a debt which was over-due. All universities in Canada owe much to the high school teachers of past generations. These men took boys by the score from the farms, fired them with ambition to become dentists, doctors, lawyers, or professors of some kind, and sent them along to the university.

One of the gentlemen whom the University honoured is Mr. H. I. Strang, of Goderich, of whom a little story may be told. Mr. Strang may be described as a "Scotch Grit," one of those who fancied that the Hon. G. W. Ross was the greatest minister of education the world ever saw. He and others refused to allow any suggestions for educational improvement, maintaining that a system which was perfect could not be improved. When a series of comments on the manner in which high schools were taking boys from the farm and the workshop and sending them into the professions appeared in "The Canadian Magazine," our friend Mr. Strang wrote letters of protest and cancelled his subscription. Perhaps Mr. Strang has become more broad-minded since and is now prepared to believe it possible that the high schools have deprived agriculture of many good men and sent them across the line to practice medicine and dentistry in a foreign land. Perhaps Mr. Strang is now anxious to see the high school teachers maintain and teach the dignity of manual labour and use more discretion in regard to the boys they forward by express to the universities.

Mr. James L. Hughes, the public school inspector of Toronto, is attending the educational conference in London, England. Mr. Hughes is a very clever man and bonuses the editor of the Toronto "Evening Telegram" to publish a weekly cartoon about him. He has other methods of keeping himself well before the public like his enterprising brother, "Colonel Sam." Because Mr. James L. Hughes is clever he told the people of England and the world in general that in the past, in Canada, the universities were supposed to train men only for the learned professions. He admitted that now it was becoming customary to allow bright minds, desiring to enter upon industrial or commercial careers, to acquire culture at a university. When he added that Canadian universities devoted much time to agriculture, he was not on such safe ground. That the universities have taken up the teaching of agriculture will be news to many people.

Among the other distinguished Canadians now in England, is the Hon. Adam Beck. Mr. Beck has not been attending the educational conference; he was more interested in the great Olympia Horse Show. The horses he took from Canada were shown side by side with the best produced in Europe with fairly satisfactory results. This is probably the first time in the history of the Empire that colonial horses went to England to compete for honours.

Mr. Beck's reputation does not rest alone on the possession of one of the best stables in Canada. He is

known in his own province as the "Minister of Power." He is the gentleman who has been keeping the light and power barons of Niagara Falls, Hamilton, Toronto and other centres from getting too much sleep at nights. He is an advocate of government-supplied light and power from Niagara and other power-producing centres. He is head of a commission which is trying to work out a scheme of this kind, assisted by those in the municipalities who believe in public ownership. The experiment is most interesting, but the success of it is not yet assured.

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The Ottawa "Journal" has an article on the increase in Anglo-Saxon immigration which strikes a hopeful note. It points out that the increase in English immigration during the year ending March 31st last, was 37 per cent. and in Scotch 84 per cent. This is reassuring. Every little while some one arises to tell us that this country will soon be overrun with foreigners who have no reverence or respect for the British flag. Judging from the article in the "Journal," which apparently is inspired by the government, the authorities confidently hope that the number of foreigners coming in will not be sufficiently large to cause serious anxiety.

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The Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux is being showered with honours and more are said to be coming. This week he has been made an honorary LL.D. and a member of the Senate of the University of Ottawa. The man who has succeeded in changing the reading matter of half a continent in face of opposition abroad and indifference at home is deserving of some recognition.

By the way, nothing could be more comical than the efforts of the United States publishers to show how angry their Canadian subscribers are because of the increased postage on United States publications. The "Outlook" of New York keeps up a most "serious" agitation. If the editor of that journal were well informed, he would know that ninety-five per cent. of the Canadian people are delighted to know that they can now buy British periodicals cheaply and hence are quite reconciled to paying a little more for such United States periodicals as they may require or desire.

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The Canadian writer in the New York "Independent" who represents this Dominion as ruled by the military set and as being an old man's country has created a mild interest in the land which he left, presumably several decades ago. Lord Dundonald discovered that, in Canada, the plough is mightier than the sword. The protest against respect shown to age is the natural result of living where authority and maturity are lightly esteemed.

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If Premier McBride of British Columbia did not get all he expected from his visit to Downing Street, he has at least got the British House of Commons to declare that the recent settlement between the Dominion Government and the provinces is not "final and unalterable." The House struck out that phrase, and if Mr. McBride is really responsible for the change then he has not travelled altogether in vain. Further, the trip from Victoria to London at this particular season must have been very pleasant. In June London is at its best.



Hon. Adam Beck.