

# REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

## Mr. Borden's Return.

MR. BORDEN has returned, and his tremendous welcome in Britain has been almost excelled by his tumultuous welcome home. He has borne himself through all these stirring events with the dignity which becomes one who holds the high office of Premier of Canada. Dignity, moreover, is Mr. Borden's characteristic. In this respect he is more a typical British than Canadian statesman.

Now that the tumult and the shouting have ceased, thoughtful Canadians will await with anxiety and interest a definite announcement on the navy question. A fairly well-defined rumour was in circulation last week that he would propose a large cash contribution for emergency purposes. This seems hardly likely. Such action would not please a considerable section of his own party and would arouse the fullest opposition of the Liberals. It might be accepted by Parliament, but only after a strenuous fight. I doubt if Mr. Borden and his colleagues are prepared for so stern a battle at the outset of their career.

There is a strong feeling in England and also in Canada that as far as possible the two parties should agree upon the general lines of naval policy as they did in March, 1909. It is also advisable in many ways that Canada's policy should harmonize with the accepted policies of Australia and New Zealand. A cash contribution would run contrary to these two conditions, and hence it is unlikely that Mr. Borden's plan will run in that direction.

On the other hand, should Mr. Borden decide upon a fleet unit for the Atlantic and a fleet unit for the Pacific, the two necessary Dreadnoughts to be built at once and left for a time in British hands, he would probably have the support of the Opposition. That support might be tacit and somewhat silent, but it would be such as to prevent any spectacular political fight.

The framing a policy which will suit the Empire's needs, fully safeguard Canada's national pride and autonomy, and not prejudice the political future of the Conservative party, is a problem which will test the Borden Cabinet. If they can manage to do it successfully, their reward will be both pleasant and permanent.

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## Telephone vs. Telegraph.

WILL the telephone ultimately displace the telegraph? The process is certainly proceeding at a tremendous pace just now. Many small towns and villages are wholly dependent upon the telephone for outside communications. Every now and then we find an announcement in the papers that such and such telegraph offices have been closed. The telephone is winning in the small town.

The other day it was announced in Montreal that by the end of the year all Canadian Pacific trains from St. John to Vancouver would be despatched by telephone. This has involved building a double copper circuit more than three thousand miles in length. Superintendent Kent says the telephone is "quicker and more adaptable to emergencies."

Telegraph operators are hard to get. Young men are afraid to enter this profession because of the low wages paid and the uncertainty of the future. The young women find it easier to earn a salary at a telephone switch-board. The telegraph companies are trying to meet this with new equipment which involves automatic typewriting at the receiving end and a typewriter keyboard at the sending end. This will make up for the dearth of Morse operators, but will it save the situation?

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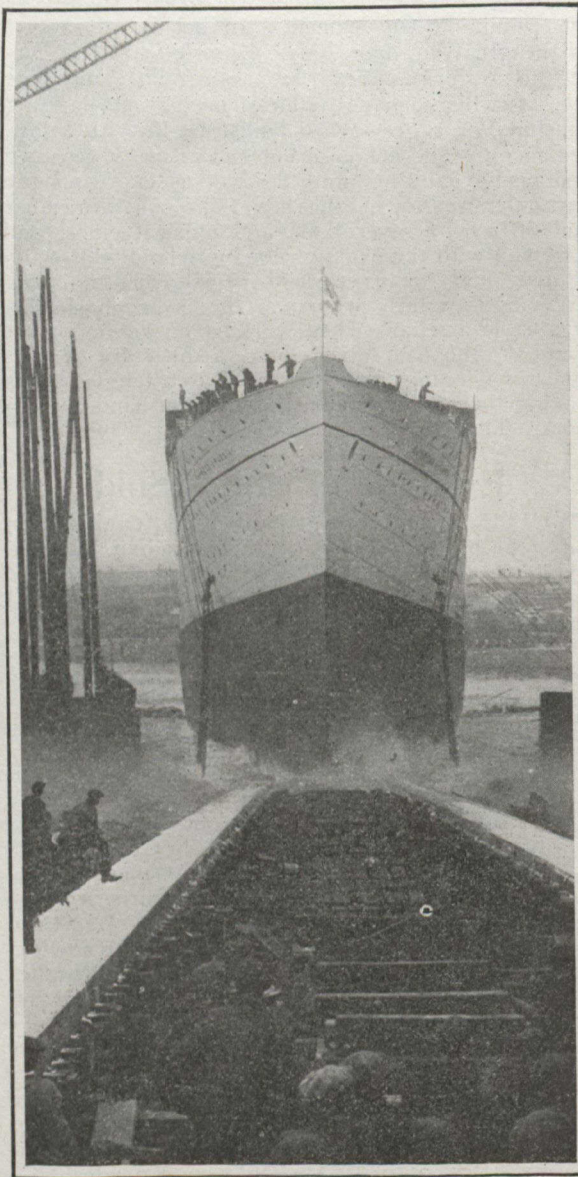
## The Faults of Municipal Government.

SOMETIMES we speak of the failure of municipal government. A milder and more truthful phrase is "the faults of municipal government." Whatever words we use it is certainly a matter of regret that we are not getting better municipal government in this country. For example, Toronto has had a trying experience with its new and expensive filtration plant, which is well worth considering. The plant was found to be inadequate for the purposes for which it was built and the construction seemed also to be faulty. Recently it was necessary to take the plant out of

commission for two months. Just what happened during that two months has not yet been fully disclosed. It is just possible that if the truth were known, it would be found that considerable repairing had to be done owing to faulty inspection during the construction of the work. It is also generally believed that the plant is inadequate to the needs of the city and will have to be doubled in capacity. In other words, Toronto will have to spend another million or million and a half before it has a decent filtration plant.

Ottawa is just passing through a similar experience. Last year it had a typhoid epidemic and it was found advisable to build a new aqueduct and intake so that purer water would be or might be supplied. The work was done at a cost of \$350,000, of which \$80,000 was spent on an intake pipe. When the second epidemic broke out this year an investigation was undertaken which has been placed in charge of Judge Gunn. The intake

## New C.P.R. Steamer for Pacific



At Govan, Scotland, August 28th, the Empress of Russia was launched at the Fairfield Yards. The Photograph Shows the Vessel Leaving the Ways.

pipe was emptied and inspected. It was found that this was very faulty and it will probably have to be scrapped. The aqueduct contained a sewage pipe as well as an intake pipe, and the sewage leaked into the city's drinking water. The citizens were thus drinking diluted sewage.

The general conclusion seems to be that as a city grows it is almost impossible for our present form of city government to grapple with the tremendous constructive problems. The class of men secured for the aldermanic boards is not such as to enable the city to carry on these large undertakings successfully. The Ottawa Free Press, dealing with this question, advocates a directly elected commission. It says: "The idea of leaving the solution of these problems to volunteers, the majority of whom are not competent to do more than participate in the pettiness of civil politics, is monstrous."

Speaking of this particular job the Free Press says: "It is apparent that the whole job was done in a most slovenly manner. Thousands of dollars have been wasted, many lives lost, and hundreds laid on beds of sickness through what looks like the criminal negligence of somebody."

Mr. Ker, the Ottawa city engineer, when asked about the specifications for the faulty intake pipe, remarked that "there were no specifications because the work was done by day labour." Imagine any private company spending three hundred and fifty thousand dollars on an aqueduct and intake pipe for a private water supply without specifications. Yet this is the unbusinesslike and inexplicable system pursued by the city engineer of one of the largest and most progressive Canadian cities.

No person is desirous at this late day to say that democracy is a failure or that our system of civic government is unworkable. These mistakes and lamentable occurrences do but indicate that our system needs revising from time to time. There is no reason why our methods of civic government should be less subject to improvement than other industrial matters. Every large corporation or great industrial concern finds it necessary from time to time to change its methods to meet new conditions. It must be the same with municipal government. The day of yearly elected aldermen is almost gone. This is the day of commissioners.

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## Chances for Women.

SUFFRAGISTS who are working for electoral rights for all women, might reasonably turn their attention to a more equitable distribution of the female population. In England and Wales alone there is a surplus supply of women of over a million. In the western provinces of Canada the supply is far below the demand. Look at these figures:

	Males.	Females.
Manitoba .....	250,056	205,558
Saskatchewan .....	291,730	200,702
Alberta .....	223,989	150,674
British Columbia .....	251,619	140,861
	1,017,394	697,795
Deficit of females ..		319,599
		1,017,394

Leaving Japs, Chinese, Hindus and other "aliens" out of consideration, there is easily a demand for 300,000 women in the West. Why not transfer that many girls from England to Western Canada?

The best interests of the Empire, of Canada, and of the British race demand that something shall be done to meet this situation. England is suffering from an over-supply; Canada is suffering from an under-supply. There are economic and moral advantages to be gained by the readjustment.

There is nothing in the fear that the English women who go to Western Canada would be called upon to face hardships. The day of severe isolation in the West has passed. To-day the town and village life is as attractive as in Eastern Canada. Even the farm life is now devoid of those defects which made residence there difficult and unpleasant.

This is an important piece of work for the women's societies in England and the Dominion, and they should tackle it seriously. The press will help, but it is the women's associations to which the two countries must look for real assistance and effective performance.

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## Lethbridge Post-office.

DESPITE the fact that Lethbridge is represented in Parliament by a Liberal instead of a Conservative, a contract for the erection of a new post-office and government offices has been let. Under our system of bestowing public works upon places which vote with the government, or are expected to do so, the defeat of Mr. C. A. Magrath by Mr. W. A. Buchanan would seem to have deprived Lethbridge temporarily of the hope of a new building. Not so, however, as the Borden administration has ordered otherwise.

This does not prove that the old rule has been abandoned forever. That rule is a part of our political patronage system which it will take years to eliminate. No doubt, the Borden government will continue to favour constituencies which have been supporters of that administration in the House. That the rule has been broken once or twice, however, is a good sign.

Public buildings should be erected in constituencies, when they are needed, irrespective of the colour of their political representative. The first minister of public works who follows that rule will write his name indelibly in the political history of his country and do much toward raising our politics and public administration to a higher level.