



Should Canada Go Slow?

THEY say that we are going to have "hard times" this winter. The charities report that two or three times the usual number of applications for help have been coming in; and men in many trades declare that there is precious "little doing" in their lines of business. I met an optimistic book-store man the other day who said that "hard times" would probably help him during the Christmas season. I inquired why. He replied that a ten-dollar bill would go much farther in his store than in a jeweller's—and he would thus get more than his usual share of Christmas shopping. So even his optimism was a pessimistic comment. I know another man who wants to buy an automobile, but he is waiting. He expects to get a second-hand one, cheap, before spring.

"TIGHT money" was bound to bring "hard times" to a country organized on the basis of constant activity. We have manned this country with a view to rapid growth. Our building trade, for instance, is organized on a scale—not merely to replace worn-out structures and meet a moderate demand for better buildings—but to take care of an unflagging "boom." It has shown its ability during the last few years to put up all over the Dominion an immense number of costly and extensive new buildings, and to put them up simultaneously. Our growth in this regard is startling and incredible to visitors from the staid and steady old world. But all this implies that our highly-developed building trade must be kept busy at this astonishing rate, or else both men and equipment will lie idle. When money became tight, further big building operations were postponed. They cost too much under present financial conditions. The inevitable result followed. Labour and capital found themselves out of a job and eating their heads off.

THIS all brings up the question whether we are altogether wise as a people in trying to suck up our whole big, luscious and juicy orange in so furious a fashion as we have followed lately. Admittedly we have got a country here rich in natural resources beyond the dreams of romance, hardly scratched by the plough of development, uncounted square miles of fertile land awaiting the settler, the richest forests in the world, the load-stone of Europe, the modern El Dorado. Naturally, we want to make the most of it while we ourselves are yet alive to profit and partake. This slow building for future generations may be all very well for an old country with the pride and love of race exceedingly strong, or for an historic institution like the Roman Catholic Church. But for hasty, hungry, passionate, living-for-the-moment individuals, the Present is always spelled with a capital P; and we want what we want when we want it.

BUT do we want unnecessary hard times? Won't we find them unpleasant—not to say painful? Yet it is as sure as Fate that, if we keep ourselves manned up to the "rush" standard, equipped to build a town-a-day, roaring ahead on the eat-em-alive system, we are bound to suffer hard times whenever circumstances compel us to put on the brakes. We are over-stuffed for ordinary life; and it is feeding that idle staff in ordinary times which makes us think the times are "hard." In such a country as ours, with so wide-open an opportunity to everybody to employ himself on the land, we should never even guess what "hard times" are. But you can't stop an express train suddenly without entire comfort to the passengers. And what do we get by hogging it all in a decade? Some of us get more money to spend than we can use—a lot more of us get extravagant notions of life—the country gets much more "foreign matter" in the way of immigration than it can digest—and our posterity gets the leavings, robbed of much of their rightful heritage. Moreover, we waste an immense amount of raw material in thus digging through it hastily for the "plums."

HOWEVER, I know perfectly that it is absolutely no use to waste good printer's ink talking this way. We are all going to get just as much

as we can in the shortest possible time—and the devil take the hindmost! Philosophy may tell us that too much money is bad for us, and does not bring happiness, and the rest of that sort of ethereal wisdom which every whirling "limousine" seems to deny and utterly disprove. But we all feel that we would like to try it for ourselves—just once. So, when profit beckons, the mad race will go on just as soon as the financiers of Europe ease off the brakes a bit. As we thus take note of the gentlemen whose hands are on the brakes, we might also take note of the reason why they have turned stingy all at once. It pays them to lend us money—so why don't they lend it? The reason is only too plain—they haven't got it. It was taken away from them by the late Balkan War. The Balkans burned up some—the Powers used up a lot more getting ready for eventualities—considerable more was hoarded by nervous individuals—and a big lot more is being lifted from their pockets to-day by all and sundry to get ready for the next war. I just mention this, by the way, for the benefit

of those who thought we had no personal concern with the Balkan War. They thought it simply "a butchery of barbarians" which our newspapers would have done well to leave out—as they do (or don't do) the prize fights. Well, when the "hard times" arrive, they will notice that they enclosed in a neat box on which is painted—"With the compliments of the Balkans."

OBSERVE that there is a tendency on the part of some of the Ministers to treat the approaching "hard times" as none of their funeral. They should not be too sure. If Sir Richard Cartwright were still alive, he could tell them what happened a Government which told the Canadian people, afflicted with "hard times," that their Ministers were "only thirteen flies on a wheel." The "wheel" turned over. It does not do for the men responsible for the government of the country and the presumably great powers of Parliament, to assume too philosophical and "top-lofty" an attitude toward the real troubles of the plain people. Sufferers do not like their sufferings to be borne with too great equanimity by other people who do not particularly feel them—and especially if these detached "other people" are drawing salaries for making us prosperous. If I were going to give a bit of advice to the Ottawa Government, it would be to be twice as anxious about the coming "hard times" as are the Opposition leaders.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

The Traders From Cormorant Lake

Where the High Cost of Living is a Dream

By L. F. KIPP



Peter Durie, 170 miles from a White Neighbour.

IN cariboo coats and hoods, beaded moccasins and great gauntlets of moose skin and bear trimmings, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Durie, two hardy Scotch fur-traders of the great north land, are nearing Scotland to-day. Out of the north country they came a week ago, to sail from Quebec on the Empress of Ireland for a Christmas vacation with their parents and friends in Edinburgh and Scotland. Then, when the holiday season is over and the Indians are ready to dispose of their fur catch again, they will return to the barren shores of Cormorant

Lake, to the tiny little shack on the bare, flat rock that they call home. Fifty miles from the nearest white woman, there Mrs. Durie will reign "Queen of the North" again.

Mrs. Durie was the observed of all when she walked up the gang plank of the big ocean liner at Quebec. A three-quarter length cariboo coat, with a great hood of the same skin, was the most striking part of her costume. The cuffs were ornamented with designs in red silk; it had no buttons or patent fasteners, but strong strips of moose-skin tied it close around the body when that was needed. The hood, of the Esquimaux style, was thrown back off the head, revealing a mass of lustrous brown hair, the choice possession of the attractive Scotch woman of thirty years of age.

Around the waist was a big, red scarf, knotted at the right side. Moose-skin moccasins, ornamented in Indian style, and like the coat made by the Esquimaux at Fort Churchill, were the covering of the feet, while a pair of heavy gauntlets, ornamented with black-bear trimmings and fancy designs on the cuffs, completed the dress. Mrs. Durie carried herself like an Indian princess as she came on board—strong, lithe and proud.

Fifteen months ago the young Scots were living in Sheffield. The husband was a commercial traveller, selling tea. He longed for the wild, free life; his young wife shared his longings. One day the chance came to them; an old fur-trader of the far north wanted a young couple to come and live

with him and learn the business. Mr. Durie went, and in a few weeks he and his wife were installed on the rocky shores of Cormorant Lake, fifty miles from Le Pas, on the Hudson Bay Railway. It was a new life of rock, canoe, muskeg and Cree Indians.

"It is a grand life that we live," she said. "I would not go back to the city for the world. I am Queen of it all—I get everything I want," she laughed.

"Lonely? Not a particle. Why, we have dances there. Last winter I took the dogs and went to one forty miles away. We had a fine time, too.

The woods are full of fur animals and there is always the keen interest in the trapping. The Indians are clean and honest. We never have to lock our doors against strangers like you have to do in the city," she continued. "The Crees are straight—except when fish for their dogs is needed. Then they will steal any that they need.

"We have to hunt our meat there; there is no butcher just around the corner. One time we ran out of 'grub' and Peter had to walk forty-three miles for some more supplies. He made the journey in thirteen hours. When we go out on a hunt we always take with us provisions for three days for every one we expect to be away. Once we got caught in a terrible storm and made only eight miles in three days.

"The Crees seldom get lost in the woods, but occasionally one loses his bearings. Last spring one was in trouble. He walked and walked, but found no way out of the timber. Finally he stopped and muttered, 'Indian no lost; no, Indian no lost, but tepee gone.'"

As happy as two children and in the very pink of physical condition the hardy fur-traders will arrive in Scotland about the 20th of the month for three months with their friends; then they will return to the little shack on Cormorant Lake, for the call of the wild is stronger than the lure of the great city; but this time the nearest white neighbour will be 170 miles distant. And they will be able to laugh at the high cost of living.



Mrs. Peter Durie home from Cormorant Lake for Christmas.