



REFLECTIONS

BY - STAFF - WRITERS

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

A FRIEND who takes broad views of things suggests that there is no room in the provincial legislatures for party politics and that in choosing the candidates for these bodies the voters should not follow the federal party lines. In an editorial in its issue of May 20th, the *Montreal Gazette* compliments Premier Gouin on not putting into his Monument National speech much that was political and adds: "There is, indeed, not much room for politics in a provincial legislature. There, as in a municipal council, whatever is best administered is best."

The general public will not agree with these theoretical utterances. They will point to the experiences of New Brunswick and British Columbia as proofs that a provincial government which does not bear the name of one of the great parties, is not either Liberal or Conservative, is neither as efficient nor as jealous of its good name as one which is so labelled. The opposition side of the legislature cannot be well organised unless it has a name and a bond of cohesion. This is our experience and experience with the public counts for more than theory.

Perhaps the true position to take would be to say that there is less reason for strict party obedience in provincial elections and that voters should concern themselves more with the quality of the candidates than in federal elections. If one party promises and is likely to give as good administration as the other, then the qualifications of the candidates become of the utmost importance. In Toronto, for example, where eight members are to be elected in four constituencies there are four or five candidates in each constituency. If the Conservative party, which usually elects all the members in Toronto, votes for the nominees of the party organisations it is almost certain that the city will not get the best eight men available. The party nominees are not all first-class men and it would not be an unmixed evil if one or two of them were defeated. There may be similar situations, there no doubt are, in other constituencies in Ontario and Quebec. In such cases, the broader-minded voters might reasonably and profitably abandon party lines and vote for the best candidate in the field. In the provincial legislature more than in the federal House, there is a need for men of clear record and business qualifications. There is less room for the professional politician and the party weakling.

NO MILTONIC MINDS

MR. HAROLD BEGBIE, an English journalist who lately visited Canada with a view to "copy," has not ceased to bemoan our materialism in the brilliant epistles which he contributes to the *London Chronicle*. One of Mr. Begbie's latest lamentations arises from the circumstance that he found in Canada "No Milton-minded men." These are, indeed, hard lines. The Rocky Mountains, the hill at Hamilton, the grain elevators at Fort William, the steel works at Sydney and the harbour of St. John have failed to send him away joyful. It seems to us that the *Chronicle* gentleman is altogether unreasonable and exacting. A Milton is a nice enough possession but it must be remembered that even England, with ages of striving towards the light, has had few writers or philosophers of the Puritan poet's calibre. Cannot this superior scribe wait a while, until the Canadian has had time to build his railways, plough his farms and get an asphalt walk in front of the house? Then, perchance, he will wipe the perspiration from his brow and plan an epic or an ode. Mr. Begbie calls our politicians "corrupt and abominable." This is painful reading, and leads us to wonder what newspapers Mr. Begbie could have examined with care as he took his gentle flight across the Dominion. He really likes our lakes, rivers and mountains but is forced to express disapproval of our mercantile ways of expression and our purchasable politicians.

Mr. Begbie finds poetry in every natural feature of the country but none in Canadians. The mountains chant hymns of praise but

the people talk shop. The rivers sing of earth's lyric loveliness but the people are anxious for a bumper crop. Is it possible that someone has "jollied" the English journalist and made Canadians appear more prosaic than they actually are. There is much Scotch blood in this country and we are shy of speaking to the stranger about our aspirations. We may be almost bursting with the finest sort of ideals and yet discourse to the itinerant Englishman of our wheat and timber limits.

The English journalists, according to Mr. Begbie, expected to find in this young land "the statesmanship of a Moses, the prophecy of an Isaiah, and the rejoicing poetry of a Shakespeare." This is entirely too much to expect of a people who, only the day before yesterday, built for themselves huts in the wilderness. Canadians are too busy enforcing the Ten Commandments to have time to add to them, are too much absorbed in the day's work to write about what is going to happen a hundred years from now and are wise enough to rejoice in Shakespeare's dramas without cherishing an immediate desire to produce another *Hamlet*.

By way of respectful comment we might call Mr. Begbie's attention to the fact that in one breath he calls Sir Wilfrid Laurier a "central pillar" and a "chief pilot," as he regrets that our premier, though a good man, is not in possession of a Miltonic mind. But why should we have a prime minister with such a sweep of imagination? The average Canadian business man turns pale as he thinks of what might happen if Mr. Bliss Carman, Mr. Arthur Stringer or even Mr. Wilfred Campbell were looking after the national destiny. Milton, himself, was not allowed to be the Head of the Government in his stormy day. The late Oliver Cromwell took very good care to give the noble-minded poet nothing more lucrative than the office of Latin Secretary, a post for which no Canadian politician has ever applied.

If it were only the vagaries of an idle fancy which Mr. Begbie longed to discover, it is a thousand pities that he did not fall in with the Douks or the Dreamers. They are the one startling streak of imagination which brightens our commercial communities.

TO HIGHER FIELDS

THE western wilderness of forty years ago has now three universities in the making. Nor are these the only signs that in the march of Empire, higher education and the higher fields of scientific investigation are spreading fast. Next year Winnipeg is to have the honour of being the third city in Canada to entertain that greatest of all literary and scientific bodies, the British Association. Rev. Dr. Bryce, Professor Fuller and Professor Vincent are to attend this year's meeting at Dublin in September and will form a deputation from the Winnipeg Executive which has charge of next year's entertainment. Professor M. A. Parker is performing the secretarial duties of a strong committee of which Mr. D. W. McDermott is the presiding officer. The Dominion Government has promised \$25,000 and Winnipeg \$5,000 towards the expenses. Other cities in the West will entertain the visitors also.

That the noblest educational body in the Empire should go to Winnipeg for an annual meeting is a great compliment to the newer part of Canada. That the West should desire to have such an event occur shows that it is not wholly concerned with the commercial side of life. It is keeping its eye on the higher things of life and the necessity for increasing its knowledge, its culture and its share in the educational, economic and scientific world-development. The West does not propose to be behind the rest of the Anglo-Saxon world in its appreciation of the higher things of life.

MILITARY RIVALRY

MONTREAL and Toronto have various kinds of rivalries, always good-natured though sometimes sentimentally acute. The rivalry is due to these two cities being the largest in Canada and