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Topics of the Day

A STORY is going about which seems too good to keep, but which should never have got out. The Railway Commission has one member who is very much impressed with his own importance, but is not keen to do too much work. About Tuesday noon to Friday noon is his week and this is not sufficient to enable the Commission to get through its work. As a consequence some judgments have been given without his assent. Once, so the story goes, he made a protest and threatened to do something desperate. The Commission invited him to put his statement in writing so that it might be forwarded to the Government. This he was wise enough not to do.

Democracy and democratic methods have their limitations. A man who has attained to eminence through politics only is not as likely to serve the state as impartially and as keenly as those who have won their spurs by their abilities in other lines. Yet so long as the party methods of government obtain, the politician must be relied upon to perform many public functions. If he performs them badly, which he does not always do, it is part of the price we pay for government by the people at large.

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Reports from the West continue to infuse fresh hope as to the crop situation. Some districts report an increase of fifty per cent. in the acreage seeded. The growth during the past three weeks has almost made up for the lateness of the season. There is from fourteen to sixteen hours of daily sunshine.

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Sir Frederick Borden, who has returned home from the Imperial Conference, is enthusiastic over the great general staff for the Empire, which is to have a profound effect, it is hoped, on the Empire's military forces. It will study, collect and disseminate among the various governments military information and intelligence and endeavour to bring all parts of the Empire into military harmony. It will, however, be only an advisory body so that local responsibility will not be interfered with. The British authorities recognise that local autonomy and authority must be preserved, and yet it is possible to have co-operation and a synthetical policy.

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The secession movement in northwestern Ontario seems to be gathering force. The general opinion in that district seems to be that agitation is necessary, even if secession is not. The settlers are proceeding on the assumption that they must make a noise or they and their needs will be overlooked. The eastern part of New Ontario, with its government railway and its great mining development, seems to be well satisfied with the progress now being made. The agitation is confined chiefly to the Rainy River district.

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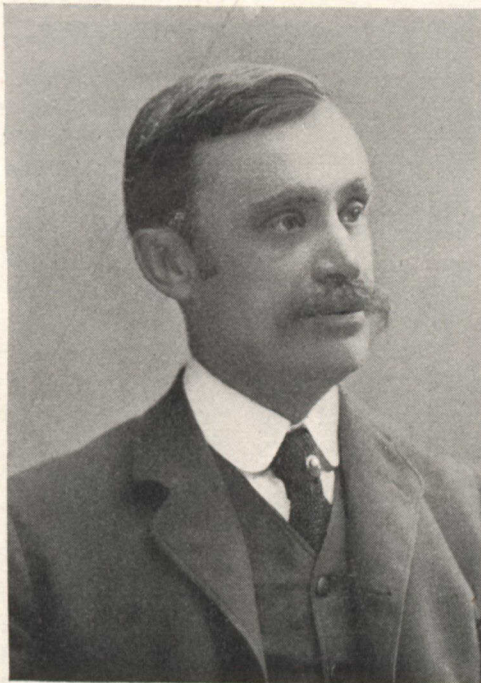
The trial transfer of mails at North Sydney was delayed until this month by the presence of ice on the Cape Breton coast. Beginning with Saturday last, the transfer is now being effected. This will enable outgoing mails to leave Montreal several hours later than if Rimouski were the point of transfer. In the case of in-

coming mails, a similar gain will be made and mail for the Maritime Provinces will be delivered twenty-four to thirty-six hours earlier.

This is the kind of improvement which will benefit Canada at very little expense. The all-red line would cost millions and most of its benefits could be secured cheaply by utilising and improving present opportunities. Canada needs to keep well to the front in the mail-carrying business, but there is no necessity of paying too much for the whistle.

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Mr. Rodolphe Forget is a leading figure in financial circles in Montreal, and is president of the Stock Exchange. Just now he is busy consulting in a light and airy way as to the value of the gas plant in that city, which the municipal authorities would like to buy. Mr. Forget says that perhaps twenty-five million dollars would buy out the company. Some people think that this is an exorbitant price; some think the plant and franchise are worth more.



Rodolphe Forget, Esq.,
President Montreal Stock Exchange.

Mr. Forget is a member of parliament, and is a director of the Canadian General Electric, the Crown Life, the Payne Consolidated Mining Co., and the Toronto Railway Co. He is president of the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Co., and the Union Brewery Co.; he is vice-president of the Montreal Heat, Light and Power Co. With all these connections he is one of the most powerful men in financial circles in Canada; he can make and unmake and has seldom been beaten in a financial battle.

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The Dominion Census Bureau announces that between 1901 and 1906 the total output of our manufacturing establishments has increased in value from 481 millions to 713 millions of dollars. This increase of nearly fifty per cent. in so short a period is consoling if somewhat surprising. In the previous ten years, the increase was only thirty per cent., so that the present development is the more marked.

Montreal ranks first, Toronto second, Hamilton third, Winnipeg fourth and London fifth. These are Canada's five great cities.

Among the provinces, Ontario is still first with twice the increase of Quebec. All the provinces show considerable progress, that of Nova Scotia and British Columbia being noteworthy.

There is no doubt that the present development in the country is remarkable. It has been sufficiently rapid to frighten the banks, which are said to be hoarding money in order to limit the present expansion. It seems a strange proceeding, but it may be justifiable.

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That man of mystery, the Hon. Charles Hyman, is again to the front. It is said that he has resigned definitely, this time both his portfolio and his seat in the House. The air of mystery still hovers over the situation, and will until Sir Wilfrid authorises an official announcement. The Conservative newspapers are speculating as to the new cabinet appointments, while the Liberal papers are maintaining a grim silence. The suspense is terrible and Sir Wilfrid's return is anxiously awaited.