

claim that it does. The real situation is that no one knows. The system of bookkeeping does not enable any person to discover the truth. Even the statistics which come from Great Britain are highly contradictory.

If the people are to know whether municipal franchises would be best in the hands of the local authorities or of private corporations, the statistics of all such enterprises should be available. At present, the most reliable information comes from the private companies who are obliged by law to make a full statement of their affairs to their shareholders. There seems to be no good reason why the same rule should not be applied to each municipality operating a public service of any kind.

In fact, if the provincial authorities would establish a bureau to collect and distribute such statistics, after such auditing and revising as might be deemed necessary, much would be accomplished. The public could then intelligently decide which plan is advisable under certain circumstances. Further, a healthy rivalry between private companies and municipal managements would be engendered, which would undoubtedly result in great benefits to the general taxpayer.

IT is eminently proper that delegates to conventions meeting at Toronto should almost invariably be taken to Guelph for a day's visit at the Ontario Agricultural College and Macdonald Institute. The development of the former into a group of educational institutions

#### GOLDEN DAYS AT GUELPH

where the most practical training is received from agricultural and scientific specialists is a matter of national pride. For years during its early struggle this college had to contend with public indifference and misunderstanding; but it came victoriously through the years of stress and is now one of the most useful features in our modern educational equipment. President Creelman is a chief who could transform a forlorn hope into a victorious army and, when he was placed at the head of a thriving institution, his sunshine and strength made the O. A. C. the most optimistic spot in the Premier Province of Canada. A pessimist would find it hard to hold on to his job if he were to visit the most picturesque environs of the Royal City and watch Young Canada as it learns the whole process from seed-time to harvest. However, interesting as the visitors may find the college where agricultural instruction is the daily lot of hundreds of students, the domestic course at Macdonald Institute and the subsequent luncheon at Macdonald Hall send all sojourning journalists into paroxysms of admiration, from which they recover just in time to write glowing paragraphs about the "Macdonald girls." Humanity has the same old instincts, after all, however electricity and aeroplanes may change its method of locomotion. A man will regard with curiosity the hat which his wife has trimmed with her own fair fingers; he will treat with respect the hand-painted china which his daughter brings home from college; but his enthusiasm will break forth in unprecedented adjectives when he finds that lovely woman is learning to cook and that Macdonald Institute means toothsome delicacies for the masculine palate. The Macdonald girls are pretty, graceful and becomingly-clad; but, above all, they can cook; and the fountain pen of the youngest editor gushes gladly in their praise. It is the study of our daily bread, whether in flour production or oven finish, which absorbs the attention of boys and girls at Guelph college and institute and which fills the observing visitor with a great belief in the Empire's granary.

THE proposed visit of the Sheffield Choir to Canada is properly regarded as something more than a series of musical events. Dr. Coward, the conductor of this celebrated organisation, is one of England's greatest musical figures and will be welcomed to Canada by citizens of all professions. It is stated that more

CHORAL VISITORS than one hundred distinguished English visitors will accompany the Sheffield singers, the Bishop of Sheffield and Dr. Mann, Professor of Music in the University of Cambridge, being among the number. It is comforting to be informed that these accompanying friends "include millionaires." Money has been accused of talking, but modern civilisation has found a more melodious use for dollars in bulk. The Sheffield Choir will spend thirteen days in this country, giving concerts in the leading cities of Eastern Canada, three of which will be enjoyed by Toronto. In connection with their welcome to Ontario's capital, the committee of the Mendelssohn Choir will have a place of prominence and Dr. A. S. Vogt, as the first choral conductor of the Dominion, will take an especial interest in the head of the great Yorkshire choir. It is to be hoped that the visit of so celebrated a musical body as the Sheffield

Choir to Canada will further a project, already widely-discussed, a visit of the Mendelssohn Choir to the Old Land. There could not be a better year than 1909 for such an expedition and there could not be afforded a greater proof of Canada's progress in the arts of civilisation than the sending of this unique chorus to the heart of the Empire. It is difficult to arouse municipal and even parliamentary authorities to an interest in either choral or artistic achievement but, in this instance, perhaps the triumph of the Mendelssohn Choir abroad will enlighten aldermen and legislative representatives as to the place which the Mendelssohn Choir has given Canada. To what other Canadian events do outside critics from Rochester, Detroit, Buffalo, and Boston turn for finished performance as they do to the February cycle of Mendelssohn Choir concerts? The campaign in behalf of a British tour for the Mendelssohn Choir is already being vigorously pushed by several Canadians whose lexicon does not recognise the word "fail." It will need much public enthusiasm and a generous public grant, however, before Canada's champion conductor raises his baton in the concert halls of Old London.

THE freedom of the Fourth Estate appears to be concerned in the present attitude of the Theatrical Trust towards certain New York critics who have dared to be dramatic Daniels. Mr. James Metcalfe of New York "Life," whose paragraphs on plays are always

#### A TRUST AND A CRITIC

worth reading was refused admission to the Trust theatres about two years ago, simply because he had told the truth concerning their alleged "attractions," and when Mr. Metcalfe took his case to court, the Trust magnates appeared to have obtained a strangle-hold on the law. Now it is Mr. Eaton of the New York "Sun" who has aroused the ire of those urbane elevators of the stage, Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger, by failing to appreciate one of their soulful productions. Straightway the advertising of all theatres under the control of the aforesaid elevators was withdrawn from the "Sun," the syndicate gentlemen hoping in this way to enforce their disapproval of an honest critic. As New York practically controls whatever dramatic entertainment is afforded Canadians, it is a matter of interest to know that there is now before the New York Legislature a bill, which, if it becomes law, will make it impossible for managers to exercise the petty persecution of excluding from their theatre critics who are so presuming as to tell the truth. Mr. Alan Dale gives as the reason for so many wretched and short-lived productions the ignorance and comparative illiteracy of the men who own and syndicate the American stage. They are coarse and indiscriminating; hence the public is inflicted with a series of Cohan productions which have led Montreal to protest. Miss Anne Warner has lately revealed with delightful humour the abysmal stupidity of theatrical "authorities" who distort and mar the original production until the author is fain to disown his creation. There is one shining exception in the ranks of New York managers and he actually credits the public with the possession of intelligence and imagination. So far, his success as a "producer" seems to warrant his assumption. There are several indications that the dramatic centre of the continent is alive to the vulgar tyranny which has been exercised by the Theatrical Trust and that eventually the critic will be more than an annex to the advertising columns.

SLOWLY but surely the blessed sunshine is getting plentiful and potent, and as this process goes on from day to day the spirits of people keep pace. Canada has had a rather hard winter, speaking financially and meteorologically. Business has not been up to the high level of the previous corresponding season, while the weather has been only fairly decent.

#### THE BLESSED SUNSHINE

It is remarkable how much we depend upon the blessed sunshine. Canada's latitude on the map would make her a land of almost ceaseless snow and frost were it not that the sun shines very hard during the summer months and shines longer in each twenty-four hours than in any other part of the world. It is the sunshine which makes this country the greatest agricultural country in the world. It is the sunshine which makes Canadians buoyant, hopeful and optimistic.

Already, the sun is warming up the soil in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and seeding will commence in a few days. Ontario and the East are somewhat slower and the land is still clothed in a light mantle of snow. Already, however, the ice on the Great Lakes and Great Rivers is fast breaking up and early in April navigation will be possible even where the streams run broad and slow. On the sunnier hillsides, all over the Dominion, the seeds are budding in the warm surface soil and the sap is stirring in the maple trees.