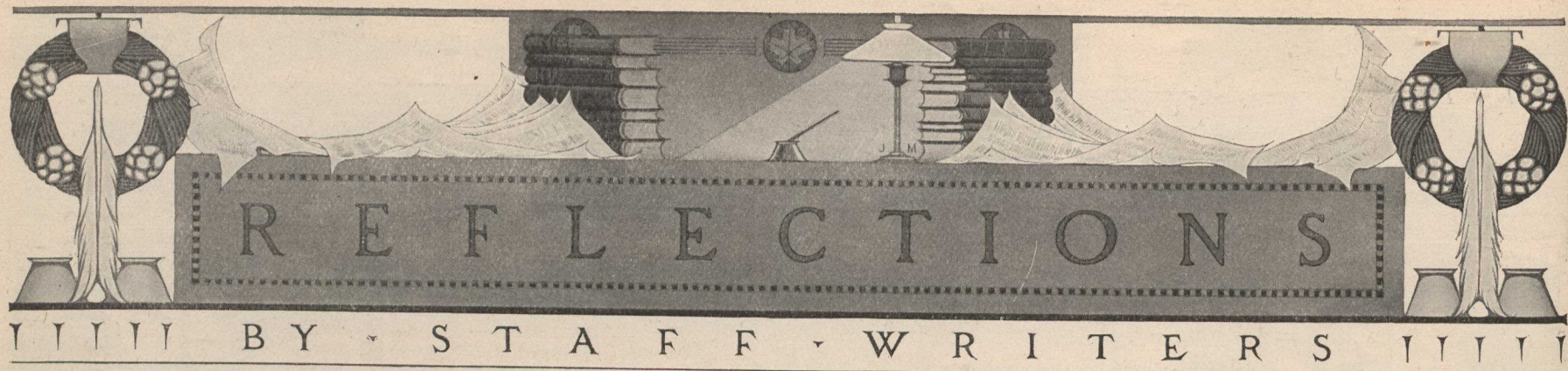




THE DULL, DARK DAYS

NOW that the general election is a matter of history, it is easier to tell the truth. Mr. Fielding is face to face with a great deficit. Canada's national business is in bad condition. For the eight months ending November 30th, our ordinary expenditure went up nearly four million dollars and our revenue went down eleven and a half. In other words, we are fifteen and a half millions worse off than in the same period of 1907. This calculation does not include the capital expenditure, which also increased quite decently. Mr. Fielding should have the national sympathy.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS

D. R. S. MORLEY WICKETT, who has done such good work on behalf of technical education, has also set on foot a movement looking toward uniform municipal accounting. In other words, he would have a model set of book-keeping devised and have every municipality adopt it. The chief benefit would be the possibility of comparison under such a system. Every city would be able to understand the statistics of all other cities, and every town of all other towns. At present, municipal statistics, for comparative purposes, are almost useless, because the provincial governments have never set forth the basis for a uniform system of accounting. The subject will now be pressed upon the various provincial legislatures by a committee of "The Union of Canadian Municipalities."

The municipalities which operate their own public utilities should know whether or not these are successful. At present the book-keeping methods are so crude, that it is impossible to be certain on this point. For example, how many municipalities charge up the loss of taxes against their undertakings of this character? Probably, not one; and yet this must be done to enable a fair comparison to be made between public and private operation.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

WISDOM and foolishness play tag through our daily judgments.

Hasty decisions, though wrong, may sometimes be excused, but the decision of the Christian laity to devote the major portion of their time and savings to foreign missions has not been done hastily, therefore if wrong there is little excuse for it. Theoretically, they are right, but practically what is the situation? A reader of the *Toronto News* draws attention to the fact that the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church, in its last report, states that sixty-three of its ministers received less than the minimum salary of \$750. What can the public think of men who starve their own clergymen to send increased contributions to China and Japan?

The Canadian West requires a thousand new churches and a thousand new clergymen. The Roman Catholic Church believes strongly in foreign missions but at the moment it is putting forth a special effort to supply the home needs of the newer districts. The Protestants are putting forth a special effort on behalf of the foreigner in Asia and Africa. Which church is pursuing the best policy? Which church will secure the greatest reward? Protestantism for the moment seems to have lost its head.

A FABLE FOR CRITICS

M. R. KIPLING has given up engines and automobiles, for the time being, and has returned to the animal world for a bee story with a sting in it. The sting is for the socialists, who are very much in political evidence in modern England and who are represented in

the latest Kiplingesque fiction, "The Mother Hive," as Wax-Moths, which bring about the final destruction and burning of the home which the workers aforetime had made. The application is obvious, from the first paragraph where we are told: "If the stock had not been old and over-crowded, the Wax-Moth would never have entered; but where bees are too thick on the comb there must be sickness or parasites."

Mr. Kipling is not in the habit of beating timidly about the bush nor of searching for euphemisms in order to avoid offence. His present production is plainly an attack and all the more effective for the bee-tragedy form which it takes. The readers of the *Windsor Magazine*, in which "The Mother Hive" appears, will probably be gladdened ere long by a counter fable from Mr. H. G. Wells or Mr. Bernard Shaw in which the "hive" will swarm with socialistic activity. The catch-words and sentimentalisms of such as would live on the toil of others are most amusingly echoed by the Wax-Moth and the feeble Oddities. Several comments on the story have represented this as Mr. Kipling's first serious attack on modern British developments of compensation and pension. In a much earlier work, a poem which gives the tale of the council, "the German Kaiser decreed," the poet of the "Recessionary" scoffed at the fancies of the Fabians. The writer is evidently not in love with the modern phase of the labour question and those who read his letters of last year on his sojourn in British Columbia are in no doubt as to his sentiments on conditions in Pacific towns. Judging from the report of the recent London meeting for a state-owned cable, "socialism" is either a bogey or a talisman.

A PLAY WHICH IS NOT THE THING

THE announcement that the much-discussed play, "The Devil," will be the "attraction" at a Toronto theatre during Christmas week was not taken seriously, at first, as the production appeared to be of an extraordinary character for such a season. However, the advertisement of "The Devil's" allurements assures Torontonians that the Molnar drama is at their doors. In the *Toronto News* of December 12th, it was stated that the Anglican Guild of Ottawa in session assembled had commended Earl Grey for refusing to attend the performance of this play.

The talk about "The Devil" has reached the curious public, and Inspector Archibald, who looks after the principles of plays at the Toronto theatres, informed the *News* that he would have his men visit the play on the Monday of its arrival and report to him on its character. Thus an interesting situation has developed, in connection with the Molnar play, and the representatives of the law will doubtless realise the responsibilities of their task when the asbestos curtain rises, to disclose the swans and roses, which, in their turn, will ascend to give place to the subtleties of Satanic genius. The play has not been regarded with favour by those of fine discernment. The critic of the *San Francisco Argonaut*, a journal which certainly cannot be accused of narrow-minded prudery, considered it an unedifying production, especially for the youth of the community. Without wishing to pronounce on the merits of an unseen play, one may be permitted to doubt the desirability of a drama which leaves humanity a prey to debasing suggestion.

Inspector Archibald will have some difficulty in selecting his men, for it is one matter to arrest a "drunk and disorderly," and quite another to test the moral quality of a production, in which an adroit Personal Devil plays the leading part. The matter of theatrical censor has been discussed more than once this season, in Toronto, which in the past proudly wore the halo of "the Good"; but there are aesthetic and intellectual difficulties to be overcome. The size of the audience to behold "The Devil," on the first night of its Toronto