

PEOPLE AND PLACES

MOST interesting post office in Canada at present is that at Winnipeg. The Federal Government has made a gift of a new office to the city of box cars and wheat. And the evolution of the post office in one of those western cities is a fascinating thing. Old style post office back in the days of Fort Garry—well, it was as crude as a Red River cart; a log shack or a wooden thing placarded with patent medicine ads. and mounted police notices; visited by everybody and decorated by the old mail coach or the buck-board hitting the trail, or the big democrat labelled "Royal Mail"—or maybe a dog-team with a sled. Some of these old-timers are still doing business—for instance, at Macleod. But nowadays the post office and the fire hall are two of the buildings first voted money for in a western town. The office at Winnipeg has been a long while building. It was badly needed. Winnipeg distributes letters and newspapers as lavishly as she does wheat and wholesale groceries. Number of towns to which the wheat city sends mail—2,512; number of letter-carriers, seventy-two; amount of postal supplies kept on hand, one hundred thousand dollars; number of parcels of mail going through in one day, three hundred thousand. This is what has made the new palace building on Portage Avenue the great necessity. Portage Avenue is a fine place for a post office. This was the old trail out from Fort Garry westward to Portage La Prairie and beyond to Edmonton and the wilds. Now Portage is a great retail thoroughfare—and a post office is the greatest retail establishment in the world. Of course the business that made Portage the great retail midway of Winnipeg is Eaton's. When Eaton opened a big store on that wide, yawning and grass-grown street the feet of thrifty Winnipeggers began to turn away from Main Street. Now the post office has followed as a natural result—the finest post office building in the West; one of the finest in Canada; modern Grecian style; into which letters come at the rate of a thousand a minute; where the wickets are labelled to seven various parts of the earth; where if you would see anything in that land more cosmopolitan and restless and travelsome, you must visit the C. P. R. station, which is the most diversified resort in the whole of Canada.

THEY are raising lions up in Middlesex County; at least, so it appears from the *Aylmer Express*, in which lately appeared a pathetic announcement regarding the fall fair to be held in that town. A lot of casualties happened; not that the patchwork quilt failed to arrive or that the mammoth "punkin" fell out and got squashed on the road. No—none of these. The farmers and their wares arrived as usual in any good, healthy, traditional fair; but the baby lions that had been born at Aylmer and engaged to give a side-show to the fat calf couldn't come. Then the Imperial Japanese Troupe—born, of course, on the seventh concession along Kettle Creek—got typhoid and were not present. At the same time it was consoling to the husbandmen and their wives and families to know that the "equilibrists" arrived all right, caged up in a lumber waggon; and the faultless gymnasts done up in a case; and the man with the trick dog; not to mention the man with the intelligent stallion. Yes—the truly rural fair is a great institution; calls up such pleasant and gentle memories of the days when we were all saving up coppers to get in.

BIG fairs are not all confined to Toronto and London, Winnipeg and Calgary. Halifax and St. John have come to the fore this year with two bumping big exhibitions. Halifax had eight days of it; with nearly six thousand people present at the opening; seventy-six thousand all told; best of weather most of the time; distinguished men at the opening; marine visitors, excellent programmes and a splendid collection of pictures. St. John opened with a large number of notables to set the ball a-rolling—with that peculiar, intense neighbourliness which distinguishes the dwellers by the sea. Minister of Agriculture was there—a good sign that farming is large in the life of the Maritime Provinces. Some fairs we know would not be bothered with an agriculturist as a formal opener—preferring nobility and

military heads. But the agricultural features of the Maritime fairs will always be the characteristic note; must have been an inspiration to poetry to behold the marvellous fruits gathered from the great orchards and vineyards of that land of Evangeline. Speeches were very felicitous. Said one of the local newspapers of the opening at Halifax:

"Premier Murray in opening the speaking said he recognised the time and energy devoted by Mr. Justice Longley to the Exhibition. He personally appreciated the fact that the judge had so well stood by the Exhibition. The president had 'said it all' when he remarked that Nova Scotia would not take a second place with the other provinces in the matter of exhibitions. This exhibition is worth to this province the \$4,000 or \$5,000 that it annually costs. He believed the people of Nova Scotia were of this mind."

This also concerning St. John:

"With grounds and buildings brilliantly illuminated, with several thousand people gathered, with sparkling addresses delivered in the large amusement hall, the St. John Exhibition of 1908 was formally opened on Saturday evening. 'Give us good weather to-day,' said those who have striven for months to make the fair the best yet held, 'and this year's exhibition will surpass any St. John has known.'"

RURAL government mail boxes will soon be a feature of Ontario roadscapes. This is progress; but also a reminiscence of the style things used to be in the days of the old stage that paddled



Winnipeg's New Post Office.

its weary way along the front of the settlement miles from a railway and delivered the farmer's mail both ways for a dollar a year apiece; when the farmer's boy whacked up a pigeon-hole box out of shingles and nailed it on top of a post out by the gate and probably the milk-stand; when the farmer's wife watched out of the window or churning at the door for the dust-cloud that she knew was travelling too slow for anybody but the stage man, and went bustling out—not to keep the Royal Mail waiting—with a letter for which she had not a stamp, but only a couple of coppers. But the stage-driver's perquisite will soon be a gone—when Mr. Lemieux begins to build boxes along the roads.

HOW the world do move! and civilisation crawls northward. A few weeks ago a Cabinet Minister of Alberta—Hon. Mr. Cushing, Minister of Public Works—made the first trip north to the Peace River ever taken by a Minister. The natives had been lying low for him a good while; no guns and no objections to the good Grit policy of the Rutherford administration—but just waiting for a chance to behold a great man. At Lesser Slave Lake flags flew—even the flag is up there—and an address was presented to the Minister in the Cree tongue saying: "For a long time we natives of this country have heard of a government at Edmonton, of men working for the welfare of the country, and we have been waiting for one of you to come."

MINA BENSON was a quiet school-teacher in the county of Northumberland, Ontario; and

like many other teachers she might have gone peacefully along and married some good tradesman or farmer, and been happy and uneventful ever after; but she didn't. Miss Benson went away to the States and learned to nurse; she met a man—often the way; and she married that man—whose name was Leonidas Hubbard, the man who died in Labrador while exploring that frozen country. His wife went in over the trail—she also wrote a book about the land. Just the other day she married the son of an English statesman—Harold Thornton, son of John Edward Ellis, formerly Under Secretary of State for India. Mina Benson that was is now Mrs. Ellis—but will always be remembered by Canadians as Mrs. Hubbard.

THE other day away up in the interior wilds of British Columbia, up in a forest round about Sooke Lake, a man from Victoria saw something that perhaps no other Nimrod in Canada ever saw. He was hunting; looking for trouble; but not for natural history. What he found would have been a painting worth any artist's while; and it is best appreciated by reading the words of a man who told the story:

"Stretched before him were the waters of the Sooke River. Bobbing up and down like a piece of driftwood he witnessed two animals in a death grip. They were, he discerned, a large buck deer and a ferocious wolf. He had arrived just too late to witness the silent battle which must have been waged. The wolf, when he espied him, had just been successful in tearing the throat from his prey, and, the quivering carcass gushing forth blood, the victor was pulling ashore by the nose. From his ambush Mr. Armor watched without a motion. As the wolf drew nearer, dragging the 'buck' slowly along, the sportsman quietly raised the gun to his shoulder. One shot was enough."

SOME people talk of "combines" too much. When the price of cordwood or cheese or butter or wheat goes up, no one speaks of a combine. When freight rates or other commercial prices go up, some one shouts combine. When there was little freight offering on the lakes this spring, rates were low and yet steamers were idle. Now when shippers are competing for boats, and freight is plentiful, rates go up. Yet some kicker sends out a despatch from Montreal which states that because wheat rates have advanced from 3 1-2 to 7 cents a bushel, there is a combine. Apparently this man never heard of "demand and supply."

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

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Sir Wilfrid recalls Disraeli and Sir John Macdonald, Mr. Borden brings to mind Sir John Thompson and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. As one who can conceive policies for a young nation, Mr. Borden is probably Sir Wilfrid's equal. As an administrator, holding other political administrators in check, Mr. Borden might possibly excel Sir Wilfrid. He is equally strong-minded and equally determined. He has fighting qualities, though they are rather of the council-room than of the House, or the platform.

The men behind Sir Wilfrid are not more able than the men behind Mr. Borden. Nor is there any reason to believe that if Mr. Borden came into power, he would not shortly have as strong a cabinet as Sir Wilfrid has had since Sir Oliver Mowat, Hon. David Mills, Sir Louis Davies, and Sir William Mulock ceased to be his colleagues. It is a mistake to believe that all the strong men are those holding cabinet positions.

This then is the situation. My description does not adequately portray it, but it touches some of the chief features. The independent voter must look back ten years and forward ten years and decide what is best in the interests of the whole of Canada. Sir Wilfrid made his strongest appeal when he asked for another term to finish his work. Canada may grant it to him, but it is an appeal which has been made many times by men who had no right to make it. It is an appeal which must be carefully examined at all times, to make sure that there is a justification for its being made. In this case, the independent voter must make the decision.