

# THE WAYSIDE PHILOSOPHER

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## OUR FEDERAL ELECTIONS—A FORECAST

It is much too early to attempt anything like an exact forecast of the promised results in the present Federal contest. It is not, however, unimportant in its reference to the question of Group Government to ask ourselves "What is the Prospect?"

The situation is interesting in the matters of issues, men and party alignments.

The issues are not new. Evidently matters of Tariff are to play an important part. The principal Tariff Issue having been a bone of contention in previous elections, it requires no present comment. Those whose opinions are unformed on this issue are comparatively few. Conscription and Government Failures will presumably compass the other issues.

The outstanding men are, of course, the leaders of the respective parties, viz: Meighen, King, and Crerar.

So far Meighen has made himself known, mostly, as an able debater and fearless fighter. His Tariff convictions are Protectionist.

King does not stand so well. A good speaker, his convictions are uncertain. With the full weight of Laurier's still great influence behind him it may be questioned if his leadership is not a great mistake. Unquestionably, Fielding would prove much more dangerous to Government success than King.

Crerar, the Third-Party Leader, is a Free Trader. No one doubts the sincerity of his convictions. Neither can his stand on War Issues be questioned. As a speaker he may not, on any given occasion, equal either Meighen or King, but he is not to be disregarded as an effective platform orator.

Party alignments present some very interesting features. Some may not have decided, as yet, whether Meighen means a stabilized tariff or an increased protection. Such a decision will affect the allegiance of no small number.

Apart from that, we have a Government Party advocating Protection, a Liberal Opposition advocating with varying consistency Freer Trade Policy and a Farmers' Party who are Free Traders of the Mackenzie type.

The result is confusing. Quebec finds itself largely outside all three parties. Traditionally Laurier Liberal, it yet has strong moderate tariff convictions. It has no regard for the Farmer party. In tariff it favors Meighen; in all other matters King. Beyond a divided Quebec, largely Independent, no present prediction seems possible.

In the Maritime Provinces there is a different situation. Protection there has its friends. Crerar will, thus, injure King rather than Meighen.

Ontario largely suggests the question of whether the Farmers' Party can hold the place Provincial results would indicate. King has ceased to be a factor there and shows no signs of re-juvenation. A largely diminished Quebec contingent will be his main support in the next House.

On the prairies Mr. Crerar will come into his own. Here his main victories will be won. At best Meighen and King combined can hope to tie his forces here.

British Columbia will give small support to King and less to Crerar.

What then will happen? Ontario and Quebec will decide. King with an outside following of 60—and, probably, far less—will be Third Party Leader. Will the Farmer Party in

Ontario crumble, giving Meighen his present following there or a slightly increased one? If so, Meighen will be assured of sufficient support to carry on alone. If not, Crerar will come within striking distance of parity of following.

This, in turn, will make the attitude of the Quebec Independents a matter of much moment to Meighen and Canada.

Certain changes will occur with further nominations. Still others with the progress of the contest. Apart from the elimination of King as a serious contender for control much is quite uncertain. We await further developments with interest.

## SANFORD J. CROWE

Apropos of elections we have the retirement from the Federal House of Burrard's genial member, Mr. S. J. Crowe. To the country this is a decided loss. Mr. Crowe is not a speaker, but possesses sound business ability of a high executive order.

In political circles his outstanding value, however, was in his candour, integrity and broad sympathy. These qualities enabled him to inspire confidence and trust in himself on the part of political opponents as well as political friends. Often these factors procured him favours from opponents seldom, if ever, accorded his party confreres.

These characteristics are, generally speaking, lacking in the Federal House. Here few seem to have effectively crossed the lines of party antagonism and distrust. Much better would it be if, even, the debating talent in the House were sacrificed to provide room for a better understanding. At present it is largely a position of two or three armed camps skirmishing for advantage. Such a position is always bad in its effect on Legislation and National Character. It emphasizes politics—it limits patriotism.

Whatever Mr. Crowe's reasons for retirement were, let us hope they were such as would, in all good conscience, absolve him from an otherwise plain duty, viz:—to give to his country services such as few could, in the nature of things, have rendered.

## VERSE BY B.C. AUTHORS

Is it out of place for a mere prose writer to congratulate the B.C.M. on its Department of "Verse by B.C. Authors?" May those congratulations be extended to those contributing to the department in the last issue?

## WHAT'S WRONG ANYHOW?

Now that the hysteria of the war period is disappearing, and ravings over "NEW ERAS," "Unprecedented Situations," etc., are assuming their true position in the general situation of affairs, is it not somewhat apparent that most of us, unduly excited, have been looking for things in the wrong quarters? We are, perhaps, just now commencing to realize that God was not in the thunder or the whirlwind, but in the still small voice we were not listening for. Suppose we accept, for a while, Browning's theory, "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world," and let this thundering and thunderous procession of alarmist writers, speakers, preachers and teachers rave in their delirium till sobriety of thought comes again. No doubt the B.C.M. readers can find numerous examples of these "birds of evil" without any being here mentioned. Local Literary, Debating and Educational Societies please take note.