

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

A Sublime Optimist.

JUST the other day in the famous rotunda of the Russell House, Ottawa, I met Mr. William Beech, the man who has pinned his faith to Port Churchill as the future grain port of Western Canada. Many a trip has Beech made from Winnipeg to Fort Churchill and back. Summer or winter makes little difference to him when he desires to visit his townsite. Nevertheless, he prefers the summer trip. He usually leaves Winnipeg about the middle of June and returns about the middle of August. With his tall, erect figure, and his long, but tidy, silvered beard, he has little of the appearance of a voyageur or a coureur du bois. Yet he is a trail maker of the nineteenth century quite equal in many respects to those romantic figures of two centuries ago whom Parkman, Ballantyne and Fennimore Cooper have made famous. His subdued tones and confident manner are what one would expect from a pioneer trailsman even though his facial appearance refuses to confirm this impression.

When I mentioned to Beech that it looked as if the Hudson Bay Railway, which has been built and rebuilt on paper by several governments, would likely go to the mouth of the Nelson instead of to Fort Churchill, he did not seem a bit dismayed. He quite admitted the possibility; and the admission was made in a quiet, off-hand, careless manner which indicated that it made no difference to his ideas and plans. The explanation came when he remarked that Western Canada would need not one, but three, ports on Hudson's Bay. It was then that I realized that I was talking with a sublime optimist.

Mr. Beech is working on an idea for more immediate execution which is certainly admirable. He wants to run an excursion by water from Montreal to Fort Churchill and return. He thinks of getting together a hundred representative men and chartering a steamer for the trip. If he can get support for the project they will leave Montreal the latter part of June and return about the middle of August. It would certainly be an unique excursion party and I confess to a desire to be a member. If the party could go through Northumberland Straits, in to Fort Churchill and back again without difficulty, then the question of the navigability of the Hudson Bay Route would be settled forever. Here's success to Beech and his Fort Churchill party. Such men supply the springs of national progress.

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McGill and Montreal.

MONTREAL is to be congratulated upon its appreciation of the work done by McGill University. Canada has too many universities, but of these institutions none has performed services equal to those of McGill. Unlike the University of Toronto, it is not a state institution. Unlike Queen's University, it has no connection with a church organization. It is therefore a purely voluntary institution. As such it should command the sympathy of the general public in the section of the country which it serves most. That the citizens committee which undertook to raise one and a half millions for it a few days ago were able to do so within so short a space of time, proves the civic spirit of the Montreal people and the general good feeling of the Canadian people towards their universities. It was a fine spectacle.

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Not Very Creditable.

OTTAWA newspapers are authority for the statement that a "round robin" was recently put in circulation in the House of Commons, requesting Mr. Borden to prorogue before Christmas so that members might draw two indemnities instead of one during their first year. This is not creditable to the members of the House. Indeed one wonders sometimes at the selfishness of the members of that honourable body.

To the credit of the best men in the House, it must be stated that the "round robin" referred to failed to meet with their support and consequently failed. The *Free Press* says: "The real representatives of the people, the men who are constant in their attendance at the sessions of the House, would have none of it."

By reducing the size of the standing committees, the new Government has made the first move to-

wards shortening the sessions and increasing efficiency. There is some talk of having a committee deal with non-contentious items in the estimates with a view of still further lessening the amount of time necessary for the despatch of parliamentary business. Another ancient, but ever new, suggestion, is the abolition of Hansard. This would decrease the temptation to make long speeches and have a decided effect upon the length of the sessions.

There is another suggestion which looks toward a fuller House and fewer members in the smoking rooms. It is difficult to see how compulsory attendance could be worked out, but possibly it might. The average member spends less than half his time in the House. The proceedings drag so horribly that he cannot endure continuous sittings.

Whatever the remedy or remedies, a six-months session, such as we have had in several recent years, is not a necessity, and is subversive of parliamentary discipline and efficiency. Long sessions mean inattentive members, and inefficient administration on the part of cabinet ministers.

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Influencing the Press.

WHEN a large corporation or business gets in trouble with the public, it is usually anxious to placate the press. If it hasn't been advertising in the papers, it proceeds to spend a "bunch" of money in that way, hoping that this will temper the attitude of these guardians of the public



MR. SAMUEL GOMPERS

Autocrat of the American Federation of Labour, as he appeared on arrival at the Union Station, Toronto, during his last visit to Canada in November, 1909. He is the smaller man in the picture. He is much in the public eye now because of the confession made by the McNamara brothers.

rights. Sometimes the move is successful. During the insurance investigation some years ago, one life insurance company came out in the leading daily papers with large advertisements telling of the merits of its business and apparently appealing to the public in the regular advertising way. That company doesn't believe in newspaper advertising. It was not spending its money in that way before the investigation, nor has it spent its money in that way since the investigation closed. The inference is natural and clear.

Recently there has appeared in a number of leading papers throughout Canada an illustrated article telling of the wonderful growth of the United Shoe Machinery Company, at Montreal. It purports to be a reprint of an article by Howland E. Watson, first published in a Canadian magazine, but it is an advertisement pure and simple. The better newspapers put the mystic sign: "(advt.)" at the

end. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the Canadian magazine and the daily papers were paid much good money to advertise this company, simply because an investigation is now being held in Montreal to find out whether or not this company combine or something of that sort? Is it reasonable to assume that there is a faint hope in the minds of some persons connected with the United Shoe Machinery Company that this general expenditure of money will make the press sympathetic in its reports of the investigation?

Of course, it is reasonable to assume that a newspaper is as friendly towards its advertisers as other business man is towards his customers. Nevertheless it is foolish for any man or any number of men to think that the press of Canada can be muzzled by an unusual or exceptional advertising appropriation. Perhaps the United Shoe Machinery Company had nothing of the kind in mind; if it had not, then it is merely a curious incidence.

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The Duke Goes A-visiting.

A NUMBER of journalists of the pugnacious semi-socialistic type are wondering about the Duke and his receptions at Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton and Kingston. When they first heard His Royal Highness was likely to come to Canada they tore their hair and declared that this country was not a fit place for royalty or that royalty was not fit for the continent. Yet the destiny which guides our supply of executive heads heeded neither not and the Duke came. And, lo the even tenor of Canadian life is undisturbed.

Even his visit to Toronto, that most democratic of cities, was apparently pleasing to the people. Every function in his honour was most successful. Every person who met him and his Royal Highness was pleased and satisfied. He was even welcomed by the Toronto Press Club where he seems to have made an excellent impression. And just here comes in the irony of it—he undertook to read a mild lecture to the press on behalf of pure and unadorned English. He doesn't seem to be a bit afraid of these semi-socialistic editors—probably because he has met the type in other places.

The truth is the Duke and Duchess are intensely human, understand fully their position to government and people, and know how to be social leaders without a show of superiority. Since arriving in Canada they have by their varying politeness and sympathy shown themselves to be people of sense and breeding. Nothing more is required.

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Manitoba's Great Harvest.

MANITOBA may be the postage-stamp province but it certainly grows grain. To the mind it is wonderful to think that such a small province should in one year produce six million bushels of wheat and seventy-three million bushels of oats, and twenty-three million bushels of barley. Yet such is the Manitoba government's estimate of the yield in 1911. Of course, this is an exceptional year. The wheat crop is twenty-two million bushels and the oat crop is twenty-two million bushels larger than last year.

The moral for all Canadians is, "Have Faith." This country is only on the threshold of its greatness. There are wonderful things to come.

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Women and the Ballot.

WOMEN who want the ballot must learn to use the ballot. The Kingston *Whig* tells us that the day of the women is coming, but adds that "In Kingston many of them have votes and will not use them. They refuse to visit the polls on their own account." The *Whig* concludes, and most people will agree, that "universal suffrage cannot be expected while limited suffrage remains a failure."

Women cannot secure the ballot by any means other than an evidence of willingness to use it with respect for its power. They must show "public spirit." They are coming closer to doing this, and a few steps more will bring them to their goal. Let them poll every woman's vote in municipal elections and it will be an evidence of their capacity for a further share in government.

Ontario General Election 1908		Ontario General Election 1911	
Conservatives	- 86	Conservatives	- 84
Liberals	- 19	Liberals	- 21
Labour	- 1	Labour	- 1
	106		106