

# MEN OF TO-DAY

## A Master of Irrigation

THERE is a man in Calgary who does more with few words than most men in that land of large deeds. Major J. S. Dennis is at the head of the dryest business in the world. He is probably the best-posted irrigation expert in America and one of the leading irrigationists in the world. He would be a good man for Egypt; but he is doing a work out on the dry belt east of Calgary that no man in Egypt has ever done.—not even Girouard. He is the irrigation king of three million acres of land into which his business is to turn the fructifying waters of the Bow River.

The Bow River runs through Calgary a few hundred yards from the big sandstone office of Major Dennis which is near the railway. Walk into that office and ask for Mr. Dennis and you will be confronted by one of the coolest, keen-eyed men that ever looked across a treeless landscape. Major Dennis is a silent man. He somewhat resembles Lord Kitchener. I remember calling on him once; just in a friendly way. He said very little; admitted that he was in a great business but had not a syllable to say for himself except that he had been in the West thirty-five years and ought to know something about the country. Incidentally he gave Calgary a boost and put Edmonton in second place. This is natural, although the Major has property in various parts of the West and is interested in the development of the entire country. Heaven knows he has seen enough of it; almost as much as that other veteran trail-finder in Calgary, Rev. John McDougall.

John Dennis went to the West in 1872. He was then a lad of sixteen. He went into surveying; first in Manitoba; two years with the Dominion Government. Six years later he was in charge of a section of special survey running base lines between meridians. A year later he went into the Hudson's Bay Company under Lord Strathcona; four years in that capacity, during which time he organised the company's land department; in 1884 he spent a year exploring in the Rockies; then came the Rebellion when he organised an intelligence corps of scouts of which most were surveyors that knew the country—and from that he got his military distinction and title.

After the war Major Dennis was made Inspector and Chief Engineer of Surveys—until 1894, when the Government turned him loose on the irrigation problem. He visited the irrigation tracts of the United States and learned most of what there was to know; so much so that he was able to give the Government useful pointers about the formulation of amendments to the Irrigation Act. In 1898 Major Dennis became Deputy-Minister of Public Works to the North-west Territories. When the Federal Government turned over the irrigation work to the new provinces, he became chief of the irrigation movement. Later developments have resulted in the Canadian Pacific Railway getting hold of the dry belt east of Calgary and incidentally of Major Dennis, who undertook to make fit for human habitation and agriculture a tract of three million acres which without the Bow River would be fit for little but occasional pasture. He was made superintendent of irrigation and land commissioner for British Columbia. Latterly he has been made assistant to the second vice-president of the C. P. R.

Mr. Dennis is an authority on intensive farming. He will tell you off-hand in his office what a farmer can do with an acre of land under irrigation; what the small farmer is able to do up against the big farmer that gobbles up sections of land. He is one of

the most useful pioneers in the West. He has made less noise than any other man of equal calibre; and there are very few men in that country who have such an organising grip on things as Major Dennis. He might have been a financier. He chose to become a developer. Incidentally he is pretty well off. But he has done more for Canada than to amass a big fortune. It was given to Moses to get water from a rock. Major Dennis is something of a modern Moses—in putting water on the dry land.

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## Head of a Fighting Clan

WHEN the Maritime Board of Trade meets there is usually no lack of kicks. At the convention held a week or so ago in Charlottetown, the members threshed out some live topics. They took a good healthy whack at the tunnel which is to the "million-acre farm" of potatoes and hay much what the Yonge Street bridge is to Toronto. They also tackled maritime union. One speaker went so far as to say that if union were a fact they might get the tunnel. A resolution was brought in by Senator Ross in favour of union, seconded by the famous "Hance" Logan of Cumberland. Mr. James Paton, prominent member of the Board, went dead against union but put in a shoulder boost for the tunnel. Mr. Paton has had his goods held up by the ice. Telephone rates were slated as excessive. Steamship subsidies were hauled over the coals.

In fact it was as lively a session of a Board of Trade as was ever held in Canada. The new president, Mr. W. B. Snowball, took a strong hand in the talk. Mr. Snowball is from Chatham, N.B., and he is a lumber merchant with large shipping interests. He is a live man who all his life has been studying the needs and the capabilities of the Atlantic provinces; one of the commercial school which has succeeded to the era of politicians and orators and poets in that land of much politics but latterly of fast-growing trade. He was born in Chatham and educated there; till he went to Upper Canada College where he put in three years. On the death of his father he became president of the J. B. Snowball Company. His qualifications for the presidency of the Maritime Board of Trade are partly indicated by the outlines of his public career: Alderman for Chatham during the years 1898 and 1899; mayor for 1901 and 1902; again in the council as alderman for four years; president for three terms of the Chatham Board of Trade; director of the Miramichi Steam Navigation Company, of the South-West Boom Company, and the North-West Boom Company; also chairman of the School Board, and in 1908 president of the Canadian Forestry Association.

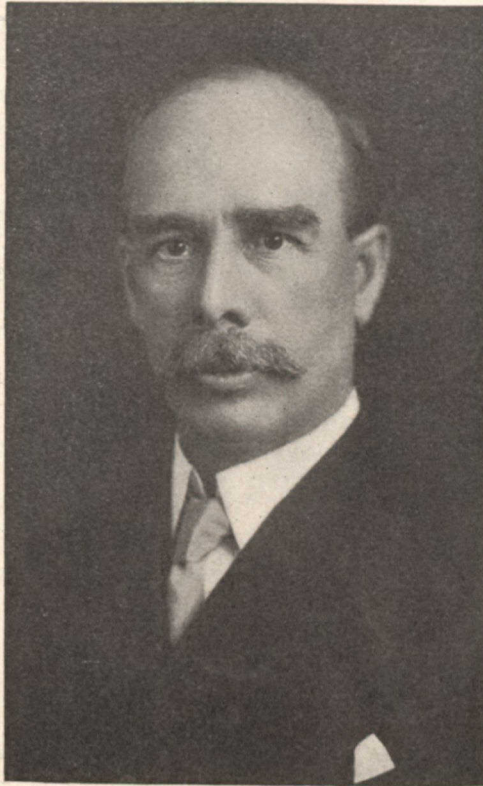
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## King of an Island

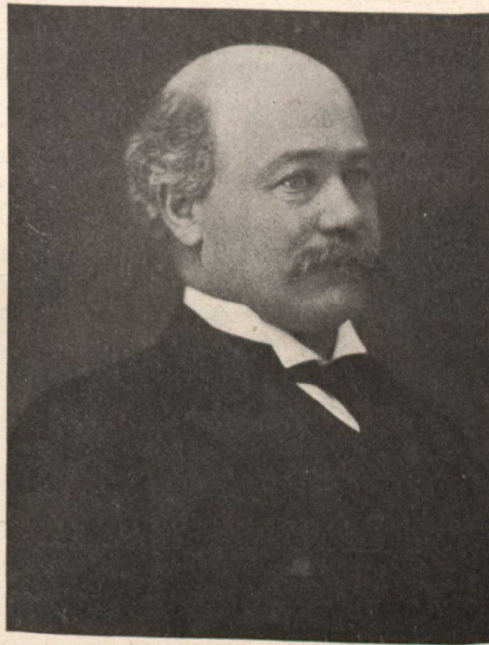
MR. JAMES PATON is second vice-president of the Maritime Board of Trade. He has braved the Atlantic to Europe ninety-one times. Mr. Paton belongs to Charlottetown, where his store is an emporium to the little Island. A raw youth from Paisley, Scotland, he got his first job on the Island with Robert

Young, a dry-goods king of Charlottetown in those days. Next he was with Messrs. Weeks & Finley, whose business eclipsed that of Mr. Young. Twenty years later he organised James Paton & Co. He has found time to be Mayor of Charlottetown, vice-president of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, and a Regent of Mount Allison College and University, Sackville, N.B.

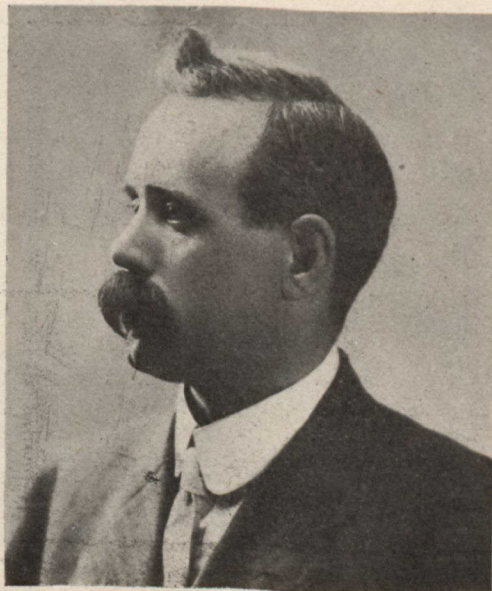
Mr. Paton is the merchant king of the Island. He represents the best Scotch traditions in dry goods. There is no doubt either that he is one of the Island's best consumers when it comes to the oat field. The "million-acre farm" has the finest oat fields in Canada. It has also a few of the best patrons of porridge.



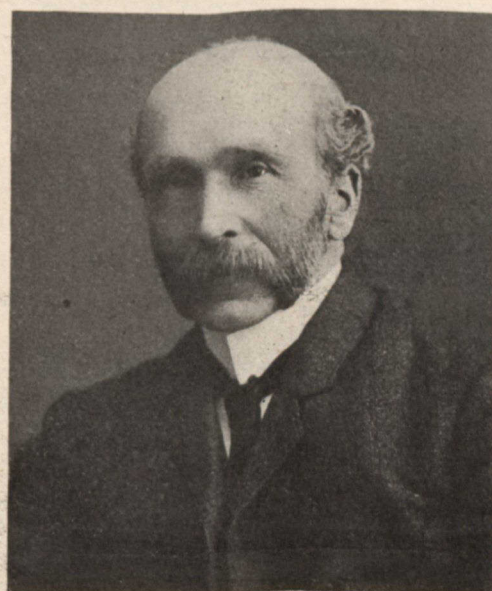
Major J. S. Dennis,  
Master of Irrigation.



Mr. W. B. Snowball,  
President of Maritime Board of Trade.



Mr. W. L. T. Weldon,  
Corresponding Secretary Maritime Board of Trade.



Mr. James Paton,  
Second Vice-President of the Board.