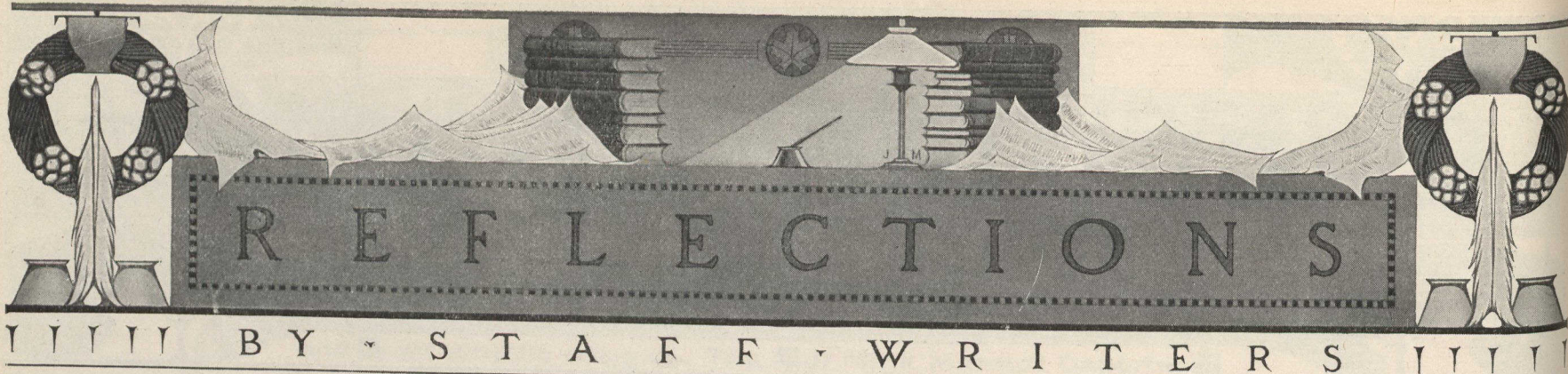




FLYING MACHINES

FLYING machines are coming and the surest indication of this is the increasing number of inventors who are working on the various problems involved. In his anniversary address to the Royal Society, presented on the last day of last month, Lord Rayleigh included the flights by the Brothers Wright as among the achievements of the year. He pointed out that flying as a feat was an accomplished fact, though there is a large gap to be bridged from a feat to a possibility of daily life. The greatest difficulty in the way seems to be that the troubles of the aeronauts increase with the size of the machine which they construct.

While machines heavier than air are thus being experimented with, controllable balloons are being perfected and put to various uses. These machines are being considered most seriously by those interested in military problems. A war-balloon may be useful even if it be not wholly reliable. The necessities of commerce are safety and certainty; the necessities of warfare are but possibility and occasional success. This difference accounts for the interest of military men in the balloon.

FOREIGN TREATIES

OUR success in negotiating foreign treaties does not seem to be so great as it appeared twelve months ago. The treaty with France has not yet been approved by the legislators of that great Republic, and Mr. Fielding is sending home some rather discouraging despatches. It is also announced from Paris that he cannot go to Berlin on this visit to arrange the basis for a German commercial treaty, which is also to be regretted.

Early this month, the Canadian Associated Press sent word from London that there was a possibility that Britain and Germany would revive the treaty which was cancelled in 1897. Under that treaty, Great Britain got the favoured nation treatment in Germany. Because the same privilege was not extended to the colonies which gave Great Britain special treatment not accorded to Germany, Britain cancelled the treaty. If therefore the treaty is revived, no doubt Canada will get the same treatment as Britain. No further news has been made public, so that apparently the announcement was somewhat premature. Unless some such arrangement as this is being considered, it is high time Canada opened direct communication with Berlin looking toward better commercial relations.

CHEAPER CABLES

ORDINARY citizens take little interest in the cost of cabling messages, but they should recognise that in the end the consumer pays. The wholesale merchant or the manufacturer may pay high prices for his cable messages, but he adds the cost to his goods. The newspaper proprietor also must add the cost of his cables to the price which he charges for his advertising space and his subscriptions. All this is in addition to the Imperial reasons which have been advanced in favour of British state-controlled cables with low rates.

Mr. Bottomley, secretary of the Marconi Company, calls the agitation a "super-patriotic dream" because he believes that the advance and progress of wireless telegraphy will make cables a poor investment. As soon as the station at Glace Bay, and this will shortly occur, is able to send and receive messages at the same time, it will have a capacity of 25,000 words a day and thus be able to handle all the business the public can give. "It seems to me a ridiculous scheme of faddists under such conditions to seriously propose an expenditure of millions of pounds sterling to be invested in cables at this time."

Very well, Mr. Bottomley, we shall accept your offer and save our money. If you can send our messages across the ocean at ten

cents a word instead of twenty-five as charged by the cable companies you will certainly get our custom. Indeed, we shall be willing to wait another year on you before deciding the question. Nevertheless, get it firmly fixed in your mind that Canada and Great Britain are determined to have the best and the cheapest service and will not be content to wait too long for the boon. A scattered Empire requires three services: fast and economic steamship service, cheap postage and cheap cabling. The first two have been accomplished; the Empire is now after the third.

THE BRITISH MOTOR TRADE

THE British motor and cycle trade has had a hard year. The Daimler Company, which makes high-class cars, lost money and instead of paying a dividend of 22½ per cent. as in the two previous years, it paid nothing. The Darracq Company which deals in low-priced cars, made a profit of \$750,000 and pays its usual 20 per cent. Almost all the other companies show decreased profits. As the *Economist* points out, two years ago ten companies made a profit of two and a half million; this year, eleven companies made just a little over half that profit.

The lesson of this is that Canadian motor and cycle companies should, like the banks, build up large reserve funds, in balmy days. When business depression occurs, the profits decline very rapidly, as was witnessed when the cycle merger company went bad in the middle nineties. Canadian motor companies are increasing in number, and investors in these should insist on careful management and strong reserve funds. The era of high profits in motors will pass as it has passed in other countries, and as it passed in the Canadian bicycle business.

LOCAL OPTION

A LARGE number of Manitoba municipalities have recently voted on local option; some have retained it, some have inaugurated it, some have refused it. Westmoreland County in New Brunswick has just voted on the Scott Act which has been in force there for many years and has retained it. Many Ontario municipalities will shortly take votes on it. Local option has certainly gained much ground in recent years. It is best adapted to rural and village conditions where enforcement is within the realm of possibility. In the larger towns and cities, it has not been a success, and consequently temperance reformers there work along the line of license reduction.

The greatest difficulty with local option in some places and with license reduction carried too far is that under restriction liquor drinking is debased unnecessarily. This leads to law-breaking and the consumption of harmful liquors—two features which must be regretted by all sane reformers.

Law-breaking when done generally and by men who are otherwise respectable citizens is a sin against good government. It paves the way for a general disrespect of the law which is inimical to the public interest. Our laws should be such as command the respect of a majority of the people and such as may be enforced. A law which cannot be enforced is worse than no law.

Under local option, in towns and cities, the sale of beer and wine is prevented and the consumption of bad whiskey increased. Beer and wine are bulky and cannot be easily transported; nor can they be readily adulterated by retailers; therefore their sale is restricted or eliminated. Whiskey is less bulky and can be easily adulterated; therefore it is continuously sold to the detriment of people's stomachs as well as morals.

Temperance reform appeals to us all. Drunkenness is abhorrent to all good citizens. Excessive drinking should be discouraged. Therefore when the voter goes to mark his ballot for or against local