



REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS

A Westerner paid a unique tribute the other day to the West, the railways, the Government and Canada's great boom. He is a somewhat droll chap this. He is a lawyer by profession but produces about

A UNIQUE TRIBUTE

15,000 bushels of wheat annually as a pastime. As the strict dis-sectors of words would say, law is his vocation and farming his avocation. He knows all about the efforts of the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern to provide railway facilities in Western Canada. He is quite familiar with the splendid speed shown by the National Transcontinental Railway Commission in building a line from Winnipeg to Superior Junction to connect with the G.T.P. line to Port Arthur. He has heard all about enlarging the spout of the grain hopper. He has seen thousands of newspaper editorials on the subject of wheat transportation. He knows what the West is producing and how much of the last year's crop is still in the hands of the farmers. He has an idea as to the amount of grain to be produced this year. And he sums it all up by saying: "It wouldn't be such a bad thing if the crop were a failure this season, it would give the railways a year to catch up."

SAD sight, indeed, this outburst of praise for Mr. MacKenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour. He was the right man in the right place, but the unwise and blundering politicians would not leave him alone.

SPOILING AN OFFICIAL

Because he was making a reputation for himself, a few men, who would like to see the Laurier Government reconstructed so as to enable it to withstand the test of another general election, have talked of him as a cabinet minister. It would be a sorry state of affairs if all the good men in the civil service were to be turned into political managers and vote-catchers. There should be no connection between these two branches of our governmental system.

If Mr. MacKenzie King desires to leave the civil service and enter politics, he has a perfect right to do so. He is his own master. If he were to do this quietly and of his own volition, every person would wish him well. Many people, including the writer, would be glad to see such a virile, upright man plunge into a political game which at present presents none too pleasant a panorama. As a parliamentarian, and possible cabinet minister, one would expect great things of him. The civil service would lose, public life would gain.

The sadness, however, of the present proceeding is that a political boom is being made for a member of the civil service. It is bad taste. It is unfair to the service and Mr. King. There should be no boom of any civil servant. In Great Britain such a proceeding would not be tolerated for a moment. The newspaper man who started the boom lent himself to a most undesirable proceeding; his appreciation of Mr. King was greater than his judgment. How can Mr. King go on deciding upon matters in dispute between capital and labour between a few votes and many votes, while such a discussion is proceeding? Surely Mr. King must see where his over-enthusiastic friends are leading him. If he has made up his mind to retire and so announces himself, then the boom may properly be continued. Until he does so, he is allowing an improper use to be made of

one of the most valuable reputations ever won by a man of his years.

GOVERNMENT returns show that the shipments of British periodicals coming to Canada have already increased about fifty per cent. These British papers are displacing United States publications of a similar character. No doubt, under the new postal regulations, this displacement will continue until the sales of United States periodicals here will be small as compared with the sales of British periodicals. The change will be gradual, of course, and will extend over several years.

Those who view this change in our reading matter with equanimity and even pleasure, have little fault to find with United States periodicals. Many of them are as good as those issued in London. In both the United States and Great Britain, cheap and nasty literature is issued. The only reason why a preference is given to British periodicals by the Canadian Government is that this is a British country and it is more desirable that we should know what the British Empire is doing and thinking than that we should know United States events and thoughts.

Some Canadian subscribers to United States periodicals are objecting to the extra postage they are required to pay on their favourite publications. They have a perfect right to do so. This is exactly what the subscribers to British periodicals have been doing for years. The shoe is now on the other fellow's foot, and he is feeling the pinch. The subscriber to British papers and magazines is smiling because his annual subscription has been reduced very considerably. The smile and the frown have exchanged places.

HON. J. P. WHITNEY, Premier of Ontario, is to be congratulated upon the reduced price of school readers which now obtains in his province. For years when he was leader of an opposition, he maintained that the Government was allowing an alleged "ring" to charge prices out of proportion to the value of the readers supplied for the use of the school children of the province. He promised if he were made a premier, he would give the people cheaper books. He appointed a commission to investigate, and when the old contract expired inaugurated a new era with lower prices. He has fulfilled his promise.

Perhaps Mr. Whitney and his colleagues have not yet accomplished all they hoped for; they may yet have work to do along the same line. It is possible also that at one or two points they made blunders, especially in the method of making the new contract. Be these circumstances as they may, the Ontario Ministry has accomplished something after a strenuous fight. On this they are to be congratulated; for this they must be praised.

They still have much work ahead of them. A new set of readers must be prepared or selected within the next year and a half. This is a task of some magnitude and will require much careful direction on the part of the Cabinet and the Minister of Education. A new contract must be made and this will require careful attention to see that the best books are secured at a reasonable figure. Further, the prices of all other public and high