

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

MOST Canadians who have read about Portugal's troubles during the past fortnight have probably decided once more that they are glad they live in a country where the government is stable, where the constitution does not require changing and where there is national harmony. Yet, without being pessimistic, one might easily argue that Portugal's case is not much worse than Canada's, though ours is not acute at the present moment. Our advantage lies in the hope that being Anglo-Saxons, we shall probably solve all our problems without revolution or civil war.

In the first place, we have not yet decided whether Canada's future is to be bound up entirely with that of Great Britain or whether in the distant future she shall become an independent nation. For the present, we all agree that we desire to remain a part of the Empire, but when anyone talks of sharing the Imperial burdens and of sending representatives to an Imperial parliament, most of us shake our heads in a decidedly negative fashion.

When we talk about Canada's flag, we find differences of opinion. There is a small section of our people who have not yet adopted the official flag of the country and are not prepared to do so.

There is an equal divergence of opinion with regard to a national anthem. "The Maple Leaf" is not accepted everywhere because of its imperial sentiment; "O Canada!" is condemned because it is "associated with diversity of creed rather than unity of citizenship," as the Toronto Telegram puts it.

Again, there is a great divergence of opinion as to the official language of the country. In some of our schools, French is the official tongue, in others English. This is further complicated by the divergence of opinion between the Roman Catholic and Protestant bodies as to whether educational should be religious or secular.

Again, sectionalism remains strong in spite of a more than nominal confederation. The governing of the country is only possible by playing off one section against another, and a constant juggling of legislation and administration. A unified citizenship has not yet been evolved.

UNDoubtedly these points of difference, this lack of harmony in national ideas and ideals, are not as important as those which have disturbed Portugal, and are likely to disturb Spain. No one of them is so acute as to disturb the outward harmony of our national life. Nevertheless, these problems are not growing smaller. Only national prosperity and the tremendous exertions necessary to national development have kept these points of difference in the background. Unquestionably they exist and the must furnish much food for thought and speculation in the minds of those who are accustomed to look ahead. It does not require a fertile imagination to foresee what may happen should any determined and able agitator force any or all of these questions into the arena of political discussion.

Not that there is anything in the situation to dismay us. Every nation has its problems, as has every individual and every family. No two men think alike, and no nation can have absolutely unified ideals. Divergence of opinion spells progress so long as that divergence does not overshadow the points on which all are agreed. So long as we have faith in our country's present constitution and are convinced that its geographical boundaries must be preserved before all else, the minor differences may be discussed patiently and calmly. In the meantime, let us not be either superior or supercilious.

A WRITER in the Canadian Farm estimates that the three prairie provinces produced last year enough wheat to keep 33,000,000 people in bread for twelve months. In other words, they produced enough bread to feed eight million Canadians and had enough left over to feed more than half of the people of the United Kingdom. Nor does this take into account the wheat grown in Eastern Canada. From these figures one may easily reach the conclusion that Canada will shortly be put to it to discover a market for her grain and flour.

Will Great Britain take all the wheat and flour we can spare ten years hence? Manifestly not. Canada cannot monopolise a wheat market to which India, Australia, Argentina and Russia have equal access. Will the United States take what Great Britain does not need? It may take some, if its population continues to grow faster than its food production and if it finds that a lower tariff on wheat is advisable. If, however, Canadian wheat is shut out of the United States market, where will it go? Here is a problem worth serious consideration.

There is only one man who is willing to answer this question off-

land, and that is the protectionist. He will tell you with a smiling confidence that the solution is simple. "Build up a great industrial population and consume the bread at home." Theoretically, he has much in favour of his argument. In the home market, the wheat producer has no competition; in the foreign market he meets the competition of the world. Yet the building up of an industrial population may be a long, difficult and expensive process.

CANADA'S annual mineral crop, like wheat, grows apace. Every mineralised district is being developed gradually but surely.

This is not nearly so wonderful, however, as the steady annual crop of fools who expect to make a sudden fortune out of a new gold or silver mine. Walk into the King Edward Hotel, Toronto, or the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, and you will have no difficulty in finding a dozen men who have mines to sell, each worth anywhere from a hundred thousand dollars to a cool million. The mines are never sold; they are always just about to be sold. The prospective purchasers are usually a syndicate of New York or London capitalists. Perhaps the most curious part of the drama, is the optimism of the prospective sellers. They are always confident, always optimistic, always waiting patiently for the opportune moment.

Somewhat similar is the stampede which occurs whenever a new mineral region is discovered. Last June, some unscrupulous person announced that free milling gold ore had been found on Bitter Creek in the Portland Canal district. There were also several mountains of silver in the same district. The usual stampede occurred and Bitter Creek is staked from end to end. But apparently no one has found the gold. Mr. McConnell of the Geological Survey has just returned and states that the reports were mainly falsehood. There is mineral throughout the district, but, like nearly all other mineral, it is obtainable only after the building of roads, careful surveying and planning, the importation of machinery and miners, and the investment of much capital. It is the same old story.

THE SUMMIT

Every Canadian artist aims to have an example of his work hung in the National Gallery at Ottawa. When he succeeds, he feels that his career is rounded out. The selection is in the hands of a committee appointed by the Government. Last week, three of the drawings made for the "Canadian Courier" by Arthur Heming, were selected for this purpose, through Sir Edmund Walker, chairman of the committee. Mr. Heming is to be congratulated upon this unusual distinction.

THERE is probably more money to be made in the automobile industry than in the mining industry, yet how differently people look at industrial stocks and mining stocks! When a man invests in a mining stock, he expects to sell it shortly afterwards at four to ten times its value. When he buys industrial stocks he is wonderfully content if they do not depreciate and continue to pay at least eight per cent. per annum. Some day the small investor may learn that the average industrial is five times as good as the average mining stock, and the value of either depends upon conditions which cannot be fully estimated.

There is a royal road to wealth, but not more than one in a hundred thousand finds it. The other 99,999 must invest carefully and judiciously and be content with modest returns. Indeed, for most small investors the only "sure thing" is a life insurance policy or a government annuity. If all the Canadians who have lost money chasing mining rainbows had

invested in government annuities, there would be many thousands of happier homes. The safety and certainty are unequalled even by British consols, and the ultimate return is nearly double.

MOST people will sympathise with the criticism of our banking system as made by Professor Johnson of New York University, is so far as the rate of interest is concerned. Three per cent. on notice deposits is low, and the methods adopted by the chartered banks to keep the rate at that point is not wholly in the public interest. It looks much like an application of brute force on behalf of bank profits.

Canada is proud of her banking system and proud of the able corps of men who direct her banking institutions. On the whole, it is one of the best systems in the world. Nevertheless, on this one point, it does not seem to be above criticism. Professor Johnson points out that in the United States, depositors get four per cent. even in the larger cities, and that real estate mortgages and bonds give a higher return than in that country. Therefore, he deduces, the Canadian banker pays less for his money and receives more than the United States banker.

If Canadians have not complained much on this score, it is because we have recognised that there were other benefits to more than offset this unsatisfactory condition. Nevertheless, it would be more satisfactory if our banks would worry less about the growth of their "rest" accounts and more about the returns they are making to their savings account depositors.

On no other point has Mr. Johnson anything of importance to urge against the banking machinery of Canada. He is not sure that our branch system plays fair with the smaller communities, but on this point there has always been a difference of opinion among experts. Like all other critics and students who have investigated the system he finds it, speaking generally, worthy of emulation.