

# REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS.

**T**HE inevitable is about to happen. Premier Whitney decided to increase the government grant to the rural schools to enable them to pay better salaries and secure more adequate equipment. The town and city schools are now demanding that he give them increased assistance.

## SAD LOT OF STATESMEN

For example, the citizens of London claim that they are paying 5.85 mills in school rates whereas the rural districts of the county of Middlesex pay from 3 to 4 mills; that the rural population of Middlesex is only 46,000 as compared with London's 45,000 and that one half of the people should not be treated better than the other half.

The lot of the reforming administrator of any province is of a distressing character. One reform leads to another just as surely as one falsehood requires another. He gives a little attention to one class of the community and several others at once come forward with claims. If a statesman is willing to give, there are plenty of people to show him how it can be done. It is simply wonderful how easily they can devise schemes to show him how he can divert public revenues for the people's benefit.

It is just a question as to whether it is better for a government to get a reputation for being parsimonious as to acquire a name for generosity. The first leads to disaster, judging from the experience of Hon. John Sandfield Macdonald; the other leads to countless demands and possible extravagances. He is a wise man who can steer a middle course and satisfy nobody.

Much the same kind of experience is coming to the people of Manitoba in connection with the Roblin Government's railway policy. By uniting with the Canadian Northern the Manitoba authorities got lower rates on wheat from both railways. Now the Opposition is complaining loudly about the government guaranteeing further bonds on new lines.

Truly, it would seem better to be a hard-working journalist than to be saddled with the task of trying to please the people of any province in the matter of legislation and administration.

**T**HE people of St. John, New Brunswick, are determined to get on with their harbour improvements. Much has been said on the subject, something has been done, but much remains to be accomplished. A deputation of prominent citizens

## ST. JOHN HARBOUR

are to be in Ottawa shortly to urge the claims of nationalisation and to ask for prompt and generous assistance.

A committee of the Board of Trade has submitted a report showing the great improvements required. A new city berth, 550 feet long, is now under construction. New docks are required and these will entail much dredging. The dock under construction may be extended so as to provide four additional berths by the time the winter trade opens up in 1907-08. The western channel should be closed and the eastern dredged to a depth of thirty feet at low tide. At present large ships cannot safely enter except at fairly high tide and this must be obviated. Further, the demand is made that the port be free as recommended by the Transportation Commission.

The harbour of St. John is practically free of ice all

the year round and is ideal in many ways. It should certainly receive more attention from the government than it has yet had. True the people have not been as daring in expenditure as they might have been, but there are various reasons for that. If it is right to spend so many millions in Montreal and the channel between Montreal and Quebec, it is also right to put the best harbour on the Bay of Fundy in good condition. It is said that there is a better harbour to the east, but no railway has yet been built to that point and no official verification of the statement is available. Those who ought to know claim that several attempts have been made by the C.P.R. to acquire the land around this unknown harbour, but if this be true very little about the negotiations has reached the public. It is unlikely that St. John will have a contiguous rival for many years to come.

**C**OLDLY, unsympathetically and accurately the Census Bureau has announced the figures of male and female population in the Canadian West. In all three provinces there are 466,257 of the former and

## WOEFUL WESTERN BACHELORS

342,606 of the gentler sex. Here is a lamentable state of affairs. "Life without Yum Yum?" says Ko Ko; "the idea is preposterous!" And on the prairies, life without "Yum Yum" must be bald, dreary, dull and unendurable. Yum Yum, however, is a minus quantity to the number of no less than 123,651 of her. Are any means being taken to remedy this lamentable state of affairs? Is the Minister of the Interior, who is a married man himself and a father of daughters himself, doing anything more than the ordinary citizen to see to it that wives are supplied the sturdy plainsmen? If not, the Canadian government of 1907 is considerably behind the Canadian government of two centuries and a half ago. Quite rightly the administration of this branch of the administration under the Old Regime was attended to by a woman, a French gentlewoman, who saw to it that a thriving import trade—if so it may be called—was done in young women from France, who made excellent wives for the settlers. It is not to be thought that any such sweeping and wholesale method of supplying the Western matrimonial market would suit the opulent Westerner. He wants natural selection. Wives by the gross do not fit in with motor-cars, steam farming implements and wheat at eighty cents per bushel. Nevertheless, wives, eligible wives, must be furnished these prairie dwellers. Preferably they must be Canadian girls, as the important class of men under discussion are nearly all Canadian young men. The imported wife, whether from Britain or the United States, has been tried in many cases and, it is only fair to say, usually with complete satisfaction to both parties concerned.

It is not unfitting that these young men should learn by stern and sad experience how unfortunate is the wifeless Westerner. The wifeless Easterner is in evil case, it is true, but if he experiences a sudden accession of courage and sanity he has but to walk around the corner, so to speak, to meet a girl who will at least consider his case if his credentials are satisfactory. Different it is in the West—or in many sections thereof, where a fifty mile ride must be taken before the traveller