

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

An Election Forecast.

NOTHING is more certain at the present time than that both Liberals and Conservatives are going to sweep the country. The Liberal newspapers and politicians are confident that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will have an increased majority. Thousands of Conservatives are going to vote for reciprocity, both in the city and country. This wonderful pact has stirred the imagination of the people, and the Government will have an increased majority in the West, will wipe the Conservatives out in the East, will hold its own in Quebec, and will gain considerably in Ontario.

On the other hand, the Conservative newspapers and politicians are confident that reciprocity will be beaten, and that Mr. Borden will be Premier after September 21st. Reciprocity is becoming less popular in the West, will be dealt a smashing blow in Ontario, and has no attractions for the people of the Maritime Provinces. As for Quebec, the Nationalists and the Conservatives will have a majority of the sixty-five seats. It is manifestly absurd, they say, to think that Canadians will destroy their present magnificent prosperity, or that they will grasp at the shadow and lose the reality.

Both sides being so confident, it is just possible that after September 21st Canada will have two parties with a majority and two Premiers. Just what Lord Grey will do under those circumstances it is hard to say. No previous Governor-General ever had two sets of victorious advisers, and, therefore, there are no precedents.

My advice to the people of Canada would be to elect one party or the other and thus refrain from putting the Governor-General in an awkward situation. It would be a shame to have Lord Grey's brilliant and successful regime end in a mix-up of such a painful nature.

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Referendum vs. General Election.

THERE is a growing feeling in the country that the present method of deciding a great national question by a general election is not satisfactory. The personal element enters in so strongly both in individual constituencies and in regard to the leaders on both sides that the real issue is pushed into the background. Those who recognize this difficulty declare that a referendum would have been preferable.

For example, Jones is a Conservative, but in favour of reciprocity. He is also a friend of the Conservative candidate in his riding. To vote for reciprocity is to vote against his friend. Jones finds it hard to know what to do.

Again Smith is a Conservative and opposed to reciprocity. He is also a great admirer of Laurier and has given him general support. If he votes against reciprocity he must vote against Laurier, which he doesn't want to do. Smith is, therefore, in a quandary.

It is easy to see the complications which arise. A goodly number of Conservatives will vote for reciprocity and against the Conservative candidate because they know a general election is coming on a year hence, after redistribution, and they argue they can then get a chance to vote against the present administration. A number of Liberals will vote against reciprocity, hoping that it will bring the Conservatives into power for one year only. But, nevertheless, as has been said, many people are wavering between political allegiance and their views on the reciprocity pact.

A referendum on this great trade question would seem advantageous. Yet, under the British system, it has always been the custom to let Governments rise or fall according to the principles they advocate and practise. It has the advantage of preventing an opportunist Government from hiding behind referendums and remaining in power by trimming sails at opportune times. There will always be divergent views as to which is the better method, but it is generally admitted that the referendum is good if wisely and sparingly used.

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Provincial Reciprocity.

A RATHER strong argument is made by Hon. George E. Foster and other Conservative speakers when they declare for inter-provincial rather than international reciprocity. Unfor-

tunately for the argument there is an equally strong answer. The *Free Press* of Ottawa puts it as follows:

"Hon. G. E. Foster told his electors in North Toronto that what Canada requires is more reciprocity between the provinces. Has he ever lifted a finger or uttered a word to persuade his friend, Premier McBride, to relieve the eastern Canadian trader and manufacturer of the tax which is imposed upon them by the Conservative Government of British Columbia and which is as effective in checking business as any customs tariff?"

I am inclined to agree with the *Free Press*, or at least with the spirit of its remarks. For example, this journal has more than one thousand subscribers in British Columbia, and has been accustomed to send a canvasser out there each year as a national weekly must if it is to be national. Since the passage of this British Columbia law it costs THE COURIER \$50, I believe, for this yearly privilege. Other firms doing business in a larger way must pay as much as \$500. This is not encouraging inter-provincial trade.

Nor is the practice confined to the Conservative Province of British Columbia. Such towns as Brandon in Manitoba, Moncton in New Brunswick, and Pictou in Nova Scotia charge a fee of five dollars for the first day and two dollars for each subsequent day when a canvasser visits the town. Recently the chief of police in one of these towns escorted two COURIER canvassers to the railway

A Unique Scheme.

HON. DR. PYNE, Minister of Education for Ontario, has under way (so it is reported) a scheme to superannuate one superintendent of education, several high school inspectors and two score high school principals. These are the men who still believe in the old-fashioned system of secondary education. They must be superannuated in order to allow modern ideas to be introduced.

It is thought that Dr. Pyne will imitate Mr. Hanna's prison farm, buy a tract of land somewhere, and build a series of cottage homes in which these ancient and honourable educationists may be housed and maintained. This would be a great saving in expense. In connection with this composite institution there would be a central library, the chief feature of which will be that all the books or periodicals in it shall be those printed prior to 1890. The colony will thus not be disturbed at all by modern educational ideas.

Any person owning a piece of real estate suitable for this purpose will please write Dr. Pyne, Minister of Education, Toronto.

station, and on the way apologized for his town. He said that he was a reader of the paper and wished more people in the town would read it regularly, but he must enforce the law.

The practice of trying to hamper inter-provincial trade is not confined to Conservative provinces and towns. It is, unfortunately, quite general. Liberal Prince Edward Island is as narrow in this matter as Conservative British Columbia. Quebec, which is usually accused of being provincial and parochial, is more liberal in this respect than several other provinces ruled by broad-minded English-speaking Canadians.

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Development Through Government Effort.

SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE once said to the writer that among all the public men in Canada, the one most deserving of a monument was the late Hon. Arthur S. Hardy. When Premier of Ontario, he initiated legislation to prevent the export of sawlogs in their natural condition. Ever since that time, sawlogs cut on Crown lands had to be sawn into lumber or ground into wood pulp before they could be exported. At that time the sawmills of Michigan were depending on Ontario for their supplies, and Mr. Hardy forced these mills to move into Canada. This created traffic for the railways, and especially for that long stretch

of the Canadian Pacific between Fort William and North Bay.

What Mr. Hardy did for Ontario has since been done for Quebec by Premier Gouin and for New Brunswick by Premier Hazen. But the spirit of this reform has not permeated Canadian industrial life to any alarming extent. For example, there are millions of acres of good land in Ontario which could be made productive if the Government of that province would adopt a more aggressive policy. Similarly, there are millions of acres in the three Western provinces which might be brought under cultivation which are now bush wildernesses or desert wastes. The Canadian Pacific Railway has employed the genius of Mr. J. S. Dennis to begin the reclamation of hundreds of thousands of acres northwest of Calgary by an irrigation system.

Perhaps some account of what the United States Government is doing will illustrate what is meant. Uncle Sam has established a Reclamation Service, and appropriated ninety millions of dollars for the work. The Shoshone Dam in Northern Wyoming has backed up the waters of the Shoshone River and reclaimed 132,000 acres of waste lands. The Pathfinder Dam, about one hundred miles north of Cheyenne, supplies water to a canal ninety-five miles in length, and irrigates thousands of acres of most fruitful land. The Roosevelt Dam, in the Salt River Valley in Southern Arizona, will turn 240,000 acres into a Garden of Eden. These and other projects will, it is claimed, reclaim fifty million acres of land which would otherwise have been unfruitful and uninhabited.

Canada's problem is not quite the same as that of the United States. It is nearer akin to that of New Zealand when the Government found it necessary to supply capital to new farmers and to render assistance in the building of roads and schools. What needs to be emphasized is that every Government, Provincial or Dominion, must take a broad view of its responsibilities, and not be afraid of capital expenditures which will add to the area of settlement, increase the population, and develop the industries of the country. Bringing in immigrants and helping to build railways is good work, but this must be followed up with other development policies.

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Schools, Good and Bad.

IN the United States, the public schools are under control of the individual States, as is the case in Canada. Curiously enough, the country schools in nearly every State are a failure—just as they are in every province in Canada. However, there are signs that some of the States recognize this failure, just as Manitoba has recognized it. But there are some country schools in the United States which are not failures. These are the schools established by the national Government of the United States in the "reclaimed" districts of Dakota and Montana. The secret of these schools is that a high school education may be obtained without leaving the farm.

Speaking of these schools, Mr. Frank G. Carpenter, the well-known journalist, says:

"Among the interesting features of these schools are the gardens and little farms connected with them. The children learn practical agriculture by raising plants, fruits and grains, prizes being given for the best work. The teaching is all in the spirit of the farm, and its aim is to make the children love the farm and to have them stay on it. In the past the country schools have been managed by city teachers, who have taught the children to despise agriculture and tried to make them leave the farms for the city."

These schools are graded schools, usually situated in the villages. The children are brought in from the farms in carriages and taken home every evening. The farm children have thus all the advantages of town schools and yet are never out of touch with farm life. The school garden and the teaching in agriculture counteract the tendency to think that farming is the work of a peasant and not of a business man.

Just think, that here in progressive Canada, not one farmer's child from Halifax to Calgary is taught a single lesson in farming. Not one province has an authorized text-book on agriculture. Not one public school is trying to show that agriculture is as much a business as handling dry-goods, running a factory or managing an electric-light plant. Is it any wonder that the rural population of Eastern Canada is growing more slowly than the urban population, and that the Eastern farmer is discontented? Is it any wonder that the farmer who has made money anywhere in Canada moves into town "to give the boys a chance to get an education"?