

# THE COURIER

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## BONNE ENTENTE MUTUELLE

THREE hundred men in Toronto last week sat at a feast of oratory and bonhomie that might have been inspiration enough for ten thousand. Eighty-five inhabitants of Quebec journeyed up from Montreal, Quebec, Sherbrooke and Three Rivers. They visited Toronto, Hamilton and Niagara Falls. The freedom of Ontario was given by Premier Hearst to the delegation from Quebec, as a few months ago the free run of Quebec was accorded by Premier Gouin to a similar delegation from Ontario.

This mutual camaraderie of two somewhat antipathetic provinces has been called the Bonne Entente. In reading this please do not pronounce the final "e" in either case. Likewise, as you are a non-French speaking reader, give to the space between the two words a slight nasal resonance. Then wherever you may be, whether on Vancouver Island or in Acadia, in the foothills or up the Saskatchewan or in the hinterland abutting on St. James' Bay you are qualified to become a member of this nationalizing community based upon tolerance, bonhomie and a desire for finding out what is best in the other fellow. You need know no other French than these two words, and no Quebecker will correct you even if you do not pronounce them unimpeachably. Bonne Entente is a thing of feeling and fact and fellowship, not merely of words. It knows no distinction of race, religion or politics. It is the wilful disregard of provincializing boundaries. It is the obliteration of the trademark. It is the kicking down of the line fence. It is a trench.

Altogether it is a pity that the first-hand impression of this memorable pair of junketing expeditions should be confined to a few hundred people and half a dozen or so of communities, leaving the rest of Canada to comprehend it from the newspapers. For a newspaper is usually a poor medium to express the peculiar genius of Bonne Entente. Picture galleries of portraits of prominent people who took part in the exchange of urbanities and national sentiments only delimit your ideas of it. Headlines put the accent where it does not belong. You simply cannot define or pictorialize Bonne Entente, because it is one of those all-pervasive things that come at you when you are least suspecting it. Bonne Entente is like a summer breeze, or the jocundry that comes from a sudden good story. It is the mutual discovery of good qualities in other people.

NOW that you are reading between the lines you may surmise that Bonne Entente, as applied to Quebec and Ontario, has somewhat to do with Rule 17 and recruiting. But even with Premier Hearst and Hon. Dr. Pyne both at the head table, Rule 17 was not even mentioned, and with Col. George Denison, Gen. Lessard and the Colonels back from the trenches all at the same table, much less was said about recruiting than about the things that go to make up a united Canada.

To a citizen of any of the Prairie Provinces this confluence of Ontario and Quebec into one river of sentiment may not seem to be very important. But it is. These two provinces have the faculty of differing more sharply than any other two. When they decide to forget the discords and come together on the harmonies, it is good popular business for the rest of us to sit up and take notice, even if we don't happen to have been included on the list of invitees.

This paragraph of the Bonne Entente circular gives an explanatory keynote:

During the summer of 1916 it was keenly realized by several gentlemen in Ontario that unless something were done to improve the drift of feeling between the two principal races in Canada, as affected especially by the relations of the two largest provinces, national unity in the Dominion might become endangered and the good feeling which the opening of the war brought into action

*Good spirits without wine; good fellowship without ostentation; Canadianism with the hyphens left out*



Cardinal Begin must have endorsed the Bonne Entente when he sent his circular to the Quebec clergy urging the people to sign the National Service cards, saying: "You should advise your parishioners to answer the questions asked exactly in order to comply with civil authority."

might disappear. It was felt also that unless Ontario endeavoured to appreciate the point of view of the thousands of enlisted French-Canadians, whose friends had the same attitude towards the war as the most earnest patriots in Ontario, we should miss the road to true statesmanship.

The return visit of Bonne Entente last week was an occasion of many speeches, banquets, luncheons, songs, flags, historical reminiscences, mingling of politicians and premiers and governors, business men, plain people and editors. Protestants and Catholics sat side by each. They applauded the same sentiments. Orator after orator dug into the mines of national idioms. They cracked jokes and told stories and worked up climaxes. The three hundred rose again and again with glasses of orangeade, and Apollinaris, toasting—Quebec, Ontario, and United Canada. They waved napkins and cheered and sang again and again "For he's a jolly good fellow." A Methodist minister sat at the back of the room next a Congregationalist preacher and pretended he was going to unwrap a fancy cigar. Orangemen sat at the same table with Catholics. Macs hobnobbed

with 'caus. They autographed one another's menus. The books of songs were half and half—French and English. God Save the King was sung in both languages. O Canada was done in French. Methodist orators vied with French speakers. Col. Denison sat next Gen. Lessard. They fraternized as soldiers. Nobody harped on Empire. It was taken for granted. The two last speeches were given by a Highlander Colonel from New Brunswick and a French Colonel, Guthrie and Girouard, both in khaki, both from the trenches.

AT one in the morning the concomity broke up. Not a drop of vin or liqueur in any form had been served. The enthusiasm was, therefore, as natural as the tide of the St. Lawrence, which in the form of the great lakes and Niagara does its best to get its arms round the neck of Ontario and cuts clean through the heart of Quebec.

To the pure imagination it was somewhat like as though a procession of St. Jean Baptiste had suddenly dreamed it was an Orange walk. Yet it was all as easy as eating the same food.

We have had it all in other forms before. Montreal, Quebec, St. John's, the Eastern Townships, the Canadian Parliament, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association—are all bonnes ententes. But this was the first time the idea was ever staged for a purpose—except at the Tercentenary in 1908.

Mr. J. M. Godfrey was chairman of the meeting. As chairman of the Recruiting League in Toronto, for more than a year his one enthusiasm has been to get more and more soldiers into the Canadian army. It was due to his happy suggestion that the Entente pilgrimaged from Ontario to Quebec last fall. Its journey back again from Quebec to Ontario last week was due in great measure to the co-operation of Sir George Garneau.

Never before had Mr. Godfrey—young lawyer—been beset by so many dissimilar important people. Congratulations, Mr. Godfrey! Long ago in this paper we began to work on the Entente idea without calling it anything. It has always seemed to us necessary to interest Quebec as well as Ontario and the other provinces without dragging in politics. The fact that we have been working on the idea so long may have dulled us to the dramatic importance of it.

The speech by Sir Lomer Gouin was a well-considered deliverance. Not a syllable of it was excited. Calmly, cautiously, reservedly, the Premier of Quebec paid his respects to the movement, to Ontario, to Quebec, to Canada. It may be taken for granted that he meant every word. Sir Lomer is too good a politician to commit himself to anything in speech which he may have to retract in action. He is perfectly understandable to an Ontario man. But for his accent he might be taken for a first cousin to the late Sir James Whitney, whom he very much resembles in face—the same grim jaw, square-set head, serious look. His talk, which was not an oration, made a fine impression, just because it was purely Canadian and not hyphenate. Had there been the suspicion of politics in the Entente he would have stayed out, because Sir Lomer does not play politics that way. Getting him to endorse the idea by a speech in Toronto was a shrewd piece of tactics. Anything in Quebec which Sir Lomer, with his overwhelming ascendancy in the Legislature does not endorse, need not expect to succeed.

PREMIER HEARST was much more of a Frenchman in his speech. He excited himself and everybody else. No man is more sincere than the Premier of Ontario. He believes in getting an audience by old-style oratory. With exalted praeferency he uplifted himself step by step up the staircase of his speech and down again landing by landing, till