

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

The Greatest National Problem

CANADA'S greatest national problem for this year and next will be the care of the unemployed. All other national problems fade into insignificance compared with this. At present there are probably one hundred thousand people who are more or less in need of advice and care. By the end of the year, there will be 250,000 men in need of employment.

What steps will the Federal Government take to see that this little industrial army is placed so that it will be self-supporting and so that it will not be discouraged?

What steps will the provincial governments take to keep these men warm, well fed and so employed that they will not be lost to the provinces in which they reside?

This is the great national problem. It must be dealt with at once. It cannot be put off for even a month. Such arrangements as may be found advisable must be made immediately.

As Canada deals with this problem, so will Canada's reputation be during the next ten years. If the problem is well handled, the successful continuance of our immigration will be assured. If it is badly handled and if the present outward migration continues, Canada will be required to spend millions of dollars to get the current flowing again in this direction.

Two Possible Solutions

TWO solutions of the unemployed problem present themselves for consideration. First, getting a number of people on the land, and, second, putting a large number at temporary work in government lumber camps during the winter. Both these solutions must be worked out by the Provincial governments, assisted as far as possible by the Federal authorities.

If the Provincial governments make a determined effort they can place many of the unemployed on the land. The provinces must supply the land, designate the localities, and furnish the capital to carry the settlers for one year. It will be an expensive proposition, but in the end the money will come back. Any advances made must be secured by mortgages on the land cleared and tilled, on the houses and barns erected, and on the cattle and implements furnished.

The problem is not a new one. It has arisen in other countries and has been successfully met a score of times. Prussia met it and conquered it in the days of Frederick the Great. Denmark and Australia met it and won out in more recent times. There is plenty of experience to guide provincial ministers in their undertakings.

The second solution—government lumber camps for winter employment—is also feasible. Some of the provinces own large tracts of timbered lands. In these, they may establish lumber camps which will produce enough spruce logs, timber and lumber to repay all that would be expended and leave a handsome profit. No province has yet gone into this business, but this is an exceptional time and must be met with exceptional methods.

The problem is greatest, perhaps, in Ontario and Quebec. The cabinets of these two provinces should take action at once. They will find hundreds of good citizens with experience and knowledge willing to give freely in service. An industrial board of prominent men might be formed in each province to assist the Minister of Crown Lands in grappling with this pressing problem.

This is Canada's testing time. Let us not fail to look after the weak and the ignorant. Let us rise to this opportunity to prove that Canada is indeed a land of promise, where every man has a right to demand of the state that he shall be fed and clothed and sustained.

The Empress Verdict

LORD MERSEY'S finding in the "Empress" accident is couched in temperate language and must carry conviction to the great majority who are interested. The task imposed upon the Royal Commission was an exceedingly difficult one, because the evidence was both meager and contradictory. However it may differ from preconceived notions which most of us have formed, it is entitled to great respect. The exoneration of Captain Kendall is a very considerable tribute to the management and staff of the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company, while the exoneration of the St. Lawrence route should be equally satisfactory to all Canadians. As for Chief Officer Tuftenes, of the "Storstad," no one would wish to add anything to his condemnation. His was a mistake of judgment, not of intention.

The recommendations made by the commissioners, with a view to avoiding similar accidents in the

future, are of world-wide importance. Certain lessons with regard to the closing of water-tight doors and portholes have been learned at a terrific cost and will not be overlooked by steamship people. The suggestion, that rafts which could be easily released should be utilized on all modern steamers, bears out the lessons learned at the time of the Titanic disaster. This is especially international in its significance. The suggestion with regard to pilot stations on the north as well as on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, is a local one, and no doubt the Dominion Government will at once make regulations to overcome the dangers upon which it is based. It is such a simple reform that one wonders why it had not already occurred to those whose large interests are involved.

A National Press Association

LAST week the publishers of Canada held their first meeting as a national body. Heretofore, the Canadian Press Association, founded in 1859, and nominally national, in reality represented only the publishing interests of Ontario. By the amalgamation of this body with several other press associations in Quebec, the Maritime Provinces and the West, a national body has been formed, and hereafter the press of Canada will discuss publishing and journalistic matters on a national basis.

Provincialism dies hard in Canada. It is only recently that the medical men of the Dominion have succeeded in getting the fraternity in all the provinces to organize on the basis of dominion qualifications. It is only a few weeks since the legal profession organized a Dominion Bar Association. The broad extent of Canada's territory and the wide distribution of a small population have been factors working against nationality. Goldwin Smith looked upon this great problem in the seventies and eighties and despaired of a Canadian nationality, self-contained and vigorous. Nevertheless, there were other philosophers, less famous but more optimistic, who believed that in due time the feeling of nationality would grow to such strength that it would be as powerful in Canada as in any other country. These lesser philosophers are finding much consolation in the course of events, and the new national press organization is another indication that their optimism was justified.

Getting Rid of Huerta

HUERTA seems to be as tenacious of office as Sir Oliver Mowat and Sir John Macdonald. It is questionable, nevertheless, if these two gentlemen ever encountered such deep-seated opposition as President Huerta has. The United States nation of one hundred million people has said that "Huerta must go," and said it mightily emphatically. But to his credit, let it be said that he is still on the job.

Finding themselves with an expensive bit of eviction on their hands, the United States people called in the A. B. C. states and their mediators. But though Argentina, Brazil and Chile are also fairly big countries, Huerta still refused to go. He is the most sticky cactus that Mexico ever produced, with the single exception of one Porfirio Diaz.

Huerta is going. Of that there is no doubt. But the delays in connection with that event have been most trying. The New York papers have had the story of his flight in type so long that it is almost necessary to reset it. Scores of hard-working cartoonists have held certain pictures so long that they have almost forgotten they ever drew them.

Perhaps the school books of the future will hold Huerta up as an example of the tenacious man. In this respect he is quite the equal of Carnegie and Rockefeller, although inferior to them in ability to acquire things. He will not get away with one one-hundredth of what Carnegie smuggled over to Skibo Castle. Nevertheless, Huerta deserves much credit for his plucky fight. Most of us would have gone months ago.

Fire Prevention

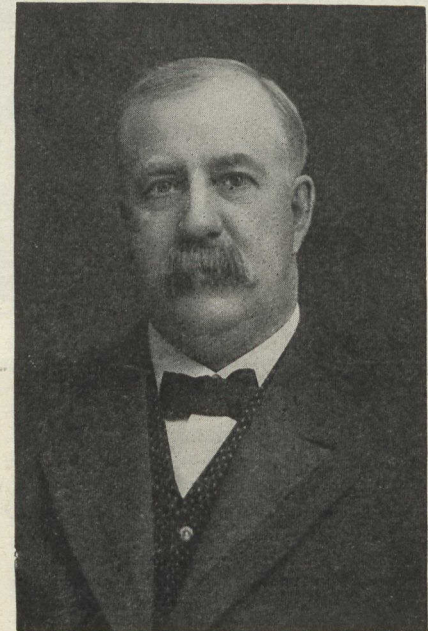
AS a result of the Municipal Survey of Toronto, made by New York experts last year at the expense of a citizens' committee, the idea has been crystallized that the city's fire-fighting force should be organized for fire prevention as well as for fire extinguishing. The Board of Control has decided to create a Fire Prevention Commission, consisting of five persons. These will include the Chief of the Brigade, the Medical Health Officer, the City Architect, a representative of the Fire Underwriters, and another representative from the Toronto Fire Prevention Association. This is a move which might be emulated by every Canadian city.

Other reforms in the Fire Department will include the establishment of a properly equipped drill school.

a better inspection department, and a broader fire record department. These reforms are also to be credited to the Municipal Survey, although this should not detract from the credit which is due to the city officials and city council for recognizing the value of the suggestions and for their willingness to give them effect. Every city council in Canada, in spite of the criticism which is generally loaded upon it, is anxious to do the best it can for the municipality which it governs. When it fails, it fails for lack of information or leadership not because of any unwillingness to do the right thing or adopt the correct method.

Manitoba Elections

TWO issues occupy the leading position in the general election campaign which has just closed in the Province of Manitoba. The first related to the abolition of the bar and gave the campaign something of the same aspect as that held in Ontario a fortnight previously. The temperance movement was more modified and less spectacular and apparently more successful. Some of the speakers in the campaign, notably Rev. Mr. Gordon (Ralph Connor) and Mrs. Nellie McClung, the author, were so extreme as to create animosity in the minds of more moderate reformers.



SIR RODMOND ROBLIN.

But the results were not such as to carry any considerable condemnation for these enthusiasts.

The second issue was bilingual schools, which were advocated and supported by the Ruthenians and the French Roman Catholics on the one side, and condemned by the Orangemen on the other side. This issue seems to have changed more votes.

The general result is that the Liberal Opposition have increased their forces from about thirteen in a House of forty-two to about twenty-three in a House of forty-nine. The exact figures will not be known until the three deferred elections are held and all the recounts have taken place. It seems tolerably certain, however, that the Roblin Government, though badly shaken up, will have a slight majority.

Sir Rodmond Roblin became Premier of the Province of Manitoba in 1900, after twelve years of service in the Legislature. He has thus directed the destinies of that Province for fourteen years, and in that time has fathered much legislation of a progressive and important character. Nevertheless, there has always been a feeling that in his election campaigns he has insisted too much upon machine methods and has gone too far in trying to stifle such public opinion as was not prepared to lend him support. Under these circumstances it was natural that a large number of people in Manitoba should decide that a change of government would be advisable. Fourteen years is long enough in office for any premier, and little fault can be found with the people for the way in which they voted.

M. R. T. C. NORRIS, the Liberal leader, is a native of Ontario (as is Premier Roblin). He is lacking in the showiness and daring which people expect in a political leader, and did not bring any overpowering personal elements to bear upon the situation. Nevertheless, he is credited with being a vigorous and trustworthy leader, and one who could be relied upon to govern the Province with care and skill. It is quite evident that, barring accidents, he will be Premier at a not very distant date. When he assumes these responsibilities he will no doubt bulk much larger in the public mind. This is the usual experience in Canadian politics. No Opposition leader is very highly regarded until he becomes a premier, and then he usually displays qualities with which he had not been generally credited.

This particular election had a national significance, because it was generally supposed that had Premier Roblin been overwhelmingly successful, as was Sir James Whitney, it was possible that the Conservative administration at Ottawa might deem it advisable to make an appeal to the country. The indecisiveness of the result in Manitoba makes the situation more speculative. The general belief among Conservative politicians is that there will be no Dominion general election until after another session at Ottawa. Sir Robert Borden will probably come nearer serving out his maximum term than the Conservative Premiers of Ontario and Manitoba.