



REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS

SIR WILFRID LAURIER is favourably disposed towards art—painting and sculpture. In this proposed memorial to the Goddess of Peace, in honour of the three-hundredth anniversary of the City of Quebec, the Canadian sculptor will have a part. The "Courier"

A MAGNIFICENT OPPORTUNITY

would like to suggest to Earl Grey and Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the Canadian painter be also given a part. Let the best artist or the best two or three artists for the purpose be commissioned to paint one or more large historical canvases to celebrate this event, these pictures or cartoons to be hung either in the Legislature at Quebec or in the House of Parliament at Ottawa. The example has been set by the British Government, for there are such paintings at Westminster; by the French Government, in the famous battle scenes at Versailles; and by other equally good precedents.

Glancing over a recent number of "Cassell's Magazine," the writer was again reminded of the excellent pictures with an historical basis that are now being produced by contemporary British painters. This particular article dealt with the work of Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A. Among the subjects which he has immortalised are "Peter the Great at Deptford," when the great Russ came to England to learn ship-building, "William the Conqueror Granting a Charter to the Citizens of London," "The Burning of Luther's Papers," "Charles II. and Wren," "Reception by King Edward VII of the Moorish Ambassadors," "The Gordon Riots," which is one of his earliest works, and "A Whip for Van Tromp." This list is given merely to indicate what one British artist has done for history. Half a dozen other artists might be mentioned in this connection.

Canadian artists when asked why they do not paint historical pictures reply that there is no demand for them from governments or art galleries. The sculptor and the portrait painter get much encouragement from these authorities and from societies and business corporations, but the painter who might do notable work of great educative and historical value is forced to seek other opportunities. The committee who have this national memorial in charge would undoubtedly be willing to supervise some work of this character if Sir Wilfrid were to suggest that ten per cent. of the Dominion Government grant be allotted to this form of memorial.

CANADA might teach the world a new lesson if it were to pass a national law that no city should have more than a stated number of inhabitants—this number to vary according to the situation of the city and the population of the province in which it is situated. Such

LARGE CITIES UNMANAGEABLE

a law would be difficult to frame and even more difficult to enforce, but there can be no doubt that it would be a great help and a beneficial influence. Every one agrees that city life is not so healthy as country life. Most experts agree that the larger the city, the more difficult it is to govern. Assuming that these two premises are correct, should not large cities be discouraged? If it is not wise to have large cities, then why have them? If London and New York are too large, and if conditions in these cities tend to physical deterioration, profligacy, moral weakness, and loose civic government, why allow such conditions to be duplicated in this new country where conditions should be ideal? Do the conditions prevailing in Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, or any of the larger cities in the United States lead any one to advocate large cities in Canada?

The answer which readily rises to every tongue is that the growth of cities cannot be controlled. The rejoinder is that public opinion crystallised into law and backed up by honest administration can control any feature of human activity. For example, a beginning might be made by limiting the number of employees in factories according to acreage. This would drive factories into the small towns or the suburbs of large cities. Again, further reform might be accomplished by limiting the number of people who work in offices

in proportion to the floor space of the buildings, and enact that buildings should not rise higher than one and a half times the width of the street. If a government has power to say that human life shall be guarded from dangerous machinery or from level railway crossings, surely it has power to say that human life shall be protected from over-crowding and from smoke-laden atmosphere.

Again, large cities govern themselves poorly. The worst administration in Canada is probably found in the civic annals of Toronto and Montreal. Ward politics in these two cities are just as petty as any other kind of politics found in the country, and that is fairly thorough condemnation. In the smaller cities, the leading citizens give some attention to civic government and usually sound administration is secured. In the larger cities, the governing falls into the hands of small-minded professional office-seekers. It is so the world over—the larger the city, the less competent its government.

It is no answer to these arguments to say that such reforms are visionary. All reforms are entitled to this epithet in their earlier stages. If the reform is necessary and advisable, declaring it to be visionary or impracticable is but begging the question.

HON. J. P. WHITNEY has startled the Province of Ontario by his fashion of receiving and replying to deputations. Those who like politics with frills, who enjoy rolling periods with little substance will not be disposed to rejoice in a visit to Mr. Whitney's office, for

A PREMIER AND THE PEOPLE

the Premier of Ontario has an impatient scorn of all that is not to the point. But the most surprising feature of such occasions as the deputation calls is the amazing frankness with which the Premier states his views and intentions. Nor does the deputation receive the impression that such almost disconcerting honesty is a matter of policy—rather is it an individual characteristic of a man who may be brusque, who is occasionally bitter, but who is usually frank. In the session of 1902, when Mr. Whitney was Leader of the Ontario Opposition, he announced himself quite unnecessarily on a subject which was regarded as a sort of political petard. His uncalled-for declaration was considered rash folly and a certain Toronto editor, mournful though admiring, wrote: "It is magnificent but it is not politics." However, such unguarded candour may have appealed by its very rarity, for the class of voters supposed to be estranged took three years to think it over and then turned out on a cold January day to vote for the man who had boldly laid down his platform with a defiant thump to each plank. With Mr. Whitney there is no prolonged "taking-into-consideration" or smiling string of promises when faced by deputations. His methods are the man—downright and undelaying. His recent resentment of the word "classes," as applied to Canadians, is also characteristic, for Mr. Whitney is a thorough democrat, about as different from the old-style Tory as may well be imagined. As might be expected, Mr. Whitney has the defects of his qualities and is occasionally peppery and petulant. A recent critic expressed regret that the Premier of Ontario did not add unto many admirable traits something of Sir John Macdonald's geniality. "Ah," was the quick reply of one who had loved the big-hearted Chief in the strife of the "Eighties"—"they don't build a Sir John more than once in two hundred years."

A MONTREAL despatch of February 24th states that during the preceding seventy-two hours, two certain murders and a fatal shooting affair requiring careful investigation, formed the city's record of serious crime, Chief Detective Carpenter declaring that in

MURDERS IN MONTREAL

his twenty-eight years of active office in Montreal, this record had not been equalled. In each case the victim and the offender were of Italian blood. Last November the Parry Sound murderer, Frank Capelli, whose crime of a peculiarly revolting nature was followed by savage attacks on four other persons, was condemned to life imprisonment after two