

The Toronto World

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THE READING CAMP ASSOCIATION

The seventh annual report of the Reading Camp Association, of which Mr. Alfred Fitzpatrick is the founder and present secretary and superintendent, puts vividly before us the needs of a large group of frontier-laborers for whom very little has thus far been done by church or state. There are in Canada at least 250,000 men engaged in lumbering, fishing, mining and railway construction camps, removed from the refining, restraining and educating influences of civilized life. Many of these men are foreigners, unable to speak our language; many others, the Canadians by birth, have had little or no education, and all of them are forced for many months of the year to a 10 or 12 hour day of monotonous labor and a night spent in a crowded camp where it is almost impossible to read or write or even get away from the unedifying conversation of the crowd.

To meet such conditions the Reading Camp Association was organized by Mr. Fitzpatrick some eight years ago, and its activities have grown steadily year after year as the character and results of its labors appealed to the public. It aims to provide for each group of workers a reading camp, either a tent or a box car or a log shanty—with chairs, tables, papers, magazines, books, writing materials, etc., and a college student to take general charge of the camp and give instruction to all who can be induced to desire it and work for it. The duties of the student are genuinely heroic, for he works along with the men as navvy or miner or lumberman during the day and teaches at night, besides conducting some sort of musical service on Sunday. And yet 20 brave young fellows from our Canadian colleges did that sort of work last summer and their reports encouraging reading. All are agreed that the work is worth while, and in spite of the great hardships and difficulties of it many of them return to it year after year.

The work of the Reading Camp Association has already commended itself to the Governments of Ontario and Manitoba, which both give it a small annual grant. It has also appealed successfully to a considerable circle of friends, but it could easily utilize to good advantage a far larger revenue than it now has. Its work is inspired by the broadest humanitarianism; it aims to help all the men on the frontier irrespective of creed or tongue and consequently every broad-minded citizen ought to be anxious to see it succeed. The association itself, the head office of which is in the Traders' Bank Building over Toronto, hopes that this time may come when its work will be taken over by the provincial governments as part of their educational systems.

BRITISH LICENSING REFORM.

Judged from a Canadian standpoint, the terms of the licensing reform bill introduced in the British House of Commons last week, by the chancellor of the exchequer, appear to be deserving of the exceedingly strong adjectives "instantly forthcoming" from Mr. Balfour, and later from the interests specially concerned. That licensed houses are far too numerous in many localities has been frequently admitted by "the trade," a distinctive epithet assumed and, by custom, accorded to the makers and traffickers in intoxicants. By the operation of Mr. Balfour's own act considerable reductions have been made, and apparently it is not intended to disturb the basis and manner of compensation then established, tho the method of its computation and distribution may be varied to meet special cases. The new bill, indeed, accepts in full the principle of vested rights in existing licenses, tho as matter of fact these run from year to year only. But as Mr. Asquith recently observed, however much may theoretically be said against compensation under such circumstances, no real measure of reform can be achieved in Britain which does not concede its necessity.

The bill allows fourteen years as a period of grace within which compensation for the withdrawal of licenses will be granted on a continually diminishing scale. After its expiry nothing will be paid a dispossessed licensee-holder, and the property rights inherent in the monopoly created by the action of the law will revert to the state, which thus regains the free hand it should never have lost. The term is unexpectedly generous, careful expert calculation having fixed ten years as a fair limit within which licensee-holders could protect themselves from dispossession, and may be taken as evidence of the government's desire to deal justly with them. But if present indications are to be taken, the bill, as introduced, will be strenuously opposed by the trade, by the opposition, and even by ministerialists whose investments may be hit. The value of the bonds and stocks of companies in the wine, spirit and beer business are stated to have already dropped in value by £50,000,000, and a general feeling of uneasiness among in-

vestors is reported. This may be due in part to speculative action, but it shows the heavy character of the task the government has undertaken.

Another feature of the bill is the introduction for the first time of the principle of local option. Meantime it is only proposed that a simple majority of the voters may decide whether any new licenses are to be issued, the poll to be taken when demanded. This, of course, is far short of the right of a majority to say whether the existing licenses in any district are to be continued, but it is a step in the right direction. In many country villages the dominant land-owner under the present system prohibits the sale of liquor in any form, and there is no good reason why a community should not have an equal right to protect themselves, if they so desire. Police inspection is also proposed to be applied to clubs, and to this there will be no serious objection. Even the limited restrictions now in force have caused many so-called clubs into existence, which are simply public houses to all intents and purposes, and this evil is so great and growing that a memorial asking for police inspection received many influential signatures from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards. The end of the bill will be a compromise of some kind or other, and for this the government is no doubt, prepared. Unless, indeed, it is to be used in aid of that filling of the cup which is expected to have so potent an influence in the campaign against the house of lords.

A FEW INCHES WHICH MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

The World desires to direct the attention of the department of marines and fisheries to what may be an oversight, but nevertheless constitutes a grievance on the part of Canadian shipbuilding interests on the great lakes.

On Thursday last The Globe and The Star contained an advertisement calling for tenders for the construction of a steel ice-breaking mail and passenger steamer for use in Northumberland Straits, to be delivered at Charlottetown, P. E. I. The vessel is to be 250 feet in length, 46 feet breadth and 27 feet moulded depth. Tenders are to be in by March 8. The breadth of the steamer, 46 feet, is slightly too wide to permit of passage thru the Canadian canals, and therefore well equipped yards on the great lakes, perfectly competent to build this vessel, are cut off from submitting tenders. A slight modification of the plans would remove this injustice and give to Canadian shipyards work which otherwise will go to Great Britain.

The World is assured on unquestionable authority, that if the department will request the modification referred to, at least two, and possibly three, tenders from Canadian shipyards will be submitted.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS FOR CANADA.

For some time past we have been urging upon the government the necessity for a reorganization of the board of railway commissioners, in order to make that body an efficient force for good thruout the country. We are pleased to know that this view has met with favor and that a decision has been arrived at to increase the number of members and divide up the work so that it may be handled with some degree of expedition.

The Hon. George P. Graham has shown a commendable regard for the rights of the people since he became minister of railways and canals, and he deserves to be heartily supported in any measure having for its object the amelioration of existing abuses.

We believe that many members of both political parties are sincerely desirous of assisting in the passage of legislation introduced for the benefit of the people of this country, and no hesitation should be shown by anyone in giving credit to the government (no matter what political party may be in power), when measures are proposed which admittedly make for the welfare of the people.

As The World has taken a prominent part in the demand for reform, perhaps at this time it may not be amiss to point out for the consideration of the Hon. George P. Graham some of the reasons why the present board has failed to meet the expectations of the people, and to offer some suggestions with regard to the reorganization, bearing always in mind the idea that the board exists for the purpose of protecting the public against the abuses which undoubtedly exist in connection with the handling of freight and passenger traffic in Canada.

The original purpose for which the board of railway commissioners was created was the supervision of railway rates. From various causes this matter has been pushed into the background, and to-day the tariffs published by the railways are accepted and tacitly approved by the board, without inspection or analysis.

The changes which were rendered necessary in the personnel of the board may to some slight extent have been responsible for this state of affairs, but the real cause of the inaction of the board has been the fact that its members had not the necessary knowledge of railway business which would enable them to criticize the tariffs intelligently.

Then, again, new duties were constantly being imposed upon the board of railway commissioners, until, indeed, they got so hopelessly behind that it became a physical impossibility for them to cope with the volume of work placed before them.

It should be borne in mind, however, that if the members of the board had been experienced railway men, a great deal of time would have been saved, as they would then have been in a position to deal with the different questions with full knowledge and from a practical standpoint, instead of having to study them out on a theoretical basis.

Practical railway men, who are traffic experts, are required upon the board of railway commissioners, and the aim of the government should be to secure men competent to deal expeditiously with the questions submitted, rather than leave these to railway theorists who are obliged to learn by degrees how to handle intricate and novel points of railroad administration.

The government should profit by the lessons of the past, and make the reorganized board one that will be effective for good. This can only be accomplished by appointing men who thoroughly understand the transportation problems of the country.

The time has passed for experiments in this direction, and the government will do well if they take steps to convince the people that they are sincere in their desire to better existing conditions.

KNITTED COATS

For Gentlemen and Ladies.

For All Outdoor Sports

Fine Imported Coat, 3 pockets, silver grey, trimmed navy, for Special line grey, white and brown, \$3.50, for..... \$2.50

WREYFORD & CO.,

JAEGER DEPOT.
85 KING STREET WEST.

NEW JOINT MANAGER FOR CANADA LIFE

Frank Sanderson, Chief Actuary, Receives Promotion From the Board of Directors.

The board of directors of the Canada Life Assurance Company have announced that, at their last meeting they appointed Mr. Frank Sanderson, M.A., F.F.A., to be joint general manager of the company.

Mr. Sanderson, who has been connected with the Canada Life Assurance Company for 17 years, was assistant actuary in 1895, on the special recommendation of the former president. In 1900 he was promoted to be chief actuary, with full charge of the actuarial department, and of late years he has been closely identified with the executive of the company.

The long illness and recent death of the secretary, Mr. Hills, and the increasing responsibilities thrown upon the president and general manager in the conduct of its large business, not only in Canada but in the United States and Great Britain, has made advisable the identification of the actuary of the company in the responsibilities and counsels of the management.

Mr. Sanderson, who has been in his best years before him, has been known in the life insurance world of Canada and the United States for a number of years, and his services to his company will doubtless be increasingly valuable in the wider field he is called upon to occupy.

THOUGHTS OF THE COUNTRY.

Editor World: Hurrah for Billy Maclean, the one man who stands head and shoulders above all other men at this present time for the toiler—especially the farmer—working and striving for the interests of the man who tills mother earth! What a mighty good thing it would be if there were but a half dozen or so more such men holding power, representing the people of Ontario; the corporations and monopolies would not live in and hoist so much of the prompt of the land, the public would have a share of what was going. It is a sad thing to see a part of the Whiteites astride the fence, linking at corporations and perhaps forgetting that by keeping silent they are working against the public welfare. Please, pinch 'em and tie 'em up, as a peace, an Anxious Looker-On, Streetsville, Feb. 28.

THERE'S NO SPLIT ON THE POWER QUESTION

Mr. McNaught Declares Government, Commission and City Are Working Together.

So much misrepresentation and "hystrics," to use Premier Whitney's phrase has been appearing in the press recently regarding the hydro-electric power policy of the government and the city's interest therein, that the average citizen may well be confused.

Explicit denial has been given by Premier Whitney and other cabinet ministers to statements that the Electrical Development Co. directorate had made offers of their plant and assets to the government. The only basis for this story is the fact that common friends of the Electrical Development Co., the Electric Light Co. and the government, would have liked to arrange a basis of negotiation among them. It is even stated that some of these outsiders at the eleventh hour attempted to bring the parties together. But that the Electrical Development Co., in an official way or thru its officers or directors, made any proposals to the government is absolutely denied by all responsible persons connected with the matter.

Probably no one knows the whole situation better than W. K. McNaught, M.L.A., a member of the hydro-electric commission.

"With regard to the statement that an offer was made to the hydro-electric power commission by the Electrical Development Co., I can say that no such offer was made," he told The World on Saturday. "I have never heard of any such offer having been made to the government. If there had been such an offer of any kind, we would have put it in shape to submit to the government."

No Disagreements. "The Telegram," he continued, "is absolutely wrong. There is not and has not been any conflict between the government and the commission. Whatever might occur in the future, up to the present our relations have been harmonious."

Now, Mr. Editor, on behalf of the butchers, I beg to state that in the first place 90 per cent. of these so-called society people referred to in the said article are indebted eleven months out of every twelve to the butchers of the City of Toronto, whose company they this last year has this market been closed to the farmers for at least two or three weeks for the accommodation of our so-called society, inflicting a great hardship not only on the farmers but on the regular patrons of the market. Now, on the other hand, twice this last year has this market been closed to the farmers for at least two or three weeks for the accommodation of our so-called society, inflicting a great hardship not only on the farmers but on the regular patrons of the market. 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