



Wanted--More "Sam" Blakes

"SAM" Blake is dead, I see. Canada will be the poorer for his loss. "Sam" Blake was a man who was not afraid to say right out in meeting just exactly what he thought on any public question—and sometimes on private peculiarities as well. The great thing about him was that he gave you his opinion—not the opinion which he thought you might like to hear, or which would make him popular, or which would not cause him any trouble. He did not dodge and smirk and skulk and slide his way through life. He did not follow the line of least resistance. He tramped straight ahead, his head up, his eye on yours, a real man, unafraid. He did not fear that he might lose his job or see his revenue cut off or miss his ambition—though he did sturdily object, early in life, to having another man passed over his head. But that was probably less disappointed ambition than a manly indignation at what he regarded as a failure in fair play.

WE have mighty few "Sam" Blakes to-day. The great majority of our big-brained men, whose opinions are worth much, are as cowardly as cats. They have so many interests at stake that they are always fearful lest one of them will suffer at the hands of some puppet in office whom an outspoken opinion may offend. So they swallow their opinions, and give the public carefully considered and cautiously sterilized samples of popular platitude or meaningless mumblings which will not get them into trouble with any one nearer home than Thibet. From cowardice of this sort, it is only a short step to deception; and the first thing these timorous time-servers know, they are deliberately misleading the public as to what they think—not merely hiding it. If it pays them to keep out of trouble and avoid loss by hiding an opinion, a steady practice of this poltroon policy so vitiates their moral sense that they will soon be ready to pay themselves better by lying about their opinions.

THERE are lots of men in Canada who are strong enough, in every sense of the word, to give their fellows the great benefit of their real opinions on public questions and public men. They have a comfortable competence or a safe "job." They are beyond the reach of the vengeance of any petty politician who might resent their criticisms. They do not aspire to office; and so can snap their fingers at both political wire-pullers and popular prejudice. They could stand up above the common ruck of place-hunters and constitutional cowards in the most honourable distinction open to a citizen in a free country, and could become known as plucky and untrifled truth-tellers on every occasion. To such men, if they played the man, a very rich reward would come in time—possibly sooner than they think. At all events, they could be certain of the secret envy of their compatriots; for all men love above all things bravery and courage.

BUT the truth-tellers amongst us are so few that, when we lose one, the gap is quite visible. Who will replace "Sam" Blake? Can you think of a single candidate for his position? The woods are full of apologists and speakers of soft things and "trimmers" and compromisers and all the contemptible category of cowards. There is a lot of bold rhetoric heard; but it is always on safe and assured lines. Men take up "noble stands" well within the entrenchments and out of range of any effective artillery. This is what makes our alleged men of "light and leading" so little luminous and such limping leaders. This is what leaves us so wholly to the interested self-seeker and the flexible politician. The consequence is that the only outspokenness we hear is from men who have neither the experience nor the capacity to speak with wisdom; and the people, finding them unreliable guides, fall into indifference—and leave politics to the politicians.

FOR there is no doubt that a busy people like ours will not take time to master their own politics. If they are not well-led, they will march to slaughter like any other mob. Most of us feel that we can better afford to pay down our share of the fine inflicted upon us by bad government than take time from our business to organize and agitate and fight for good government. We have about as much "patriotism" as a pack of dogs—indeed, I slander the dogs; for they have an instinct of pack loyalty which serves them for reasoned patriotism, and serves them far better than our reasoned product does most of us. We regard it largely as a matter of dollars and cents—of profitable employment. If we can make more

money by paying blackmail to bad rulers than we can by pausing to fling them off our shoulders, we will pay the blackmail—nine times out of ten, unless they are stupid enough to wound some of our sentimental prejudices.

AND all we ask of our big-brained men is to tell us plainly what they think. They need not get out and organize unless they feel like it. There are lots of ordinary citizens who can attend to that sort of thing, once they get the inspiration and the guidance. But we need more "Sam" Blakes to stand

right up and show where government is bad and where it is good. Will we ever get them? Yes; when this country has got over its money-madness and its love of boastful display, and comes to realize that Canada is not a "mining camp" but a permanent home for ourselves and our children forever. Then we will build permanently—and among the permanencies that we will build will be decent and honest government. There are plenty of "Sam" Blakes in the United Kingdom; for the people of the British Isles look upon them as their homes, and propose to see to it that they are run in the best possible fashion.

THE marvel to me is that more men do not aspire to this distinction. Almost anybody can be a member of Parliament—few of us can be individual forces, whom Members of Parliament fear and respect. A man whose speeches from a private platform weigh more heavily than the speeches delivered in the House of Commons, has a power in the country which I would expect all big-souled citizens to covet. Such a man was "Sam" Blake. May we frequently see his like again!

THE MONOCLE MAN.

A Man With An Idea

WHEN a public servant gets an idea which he believes will benefit the public if put into practice, his troubles have merely begun. Mr. N. G. Neill, the Publicity Commissioner who has put North Battleford on the map in large type, recently decided that the great need of Western Canada was an independent publicity bureau which would tell the truth about every district in the West. Straightway he proceeded to try to popularize.

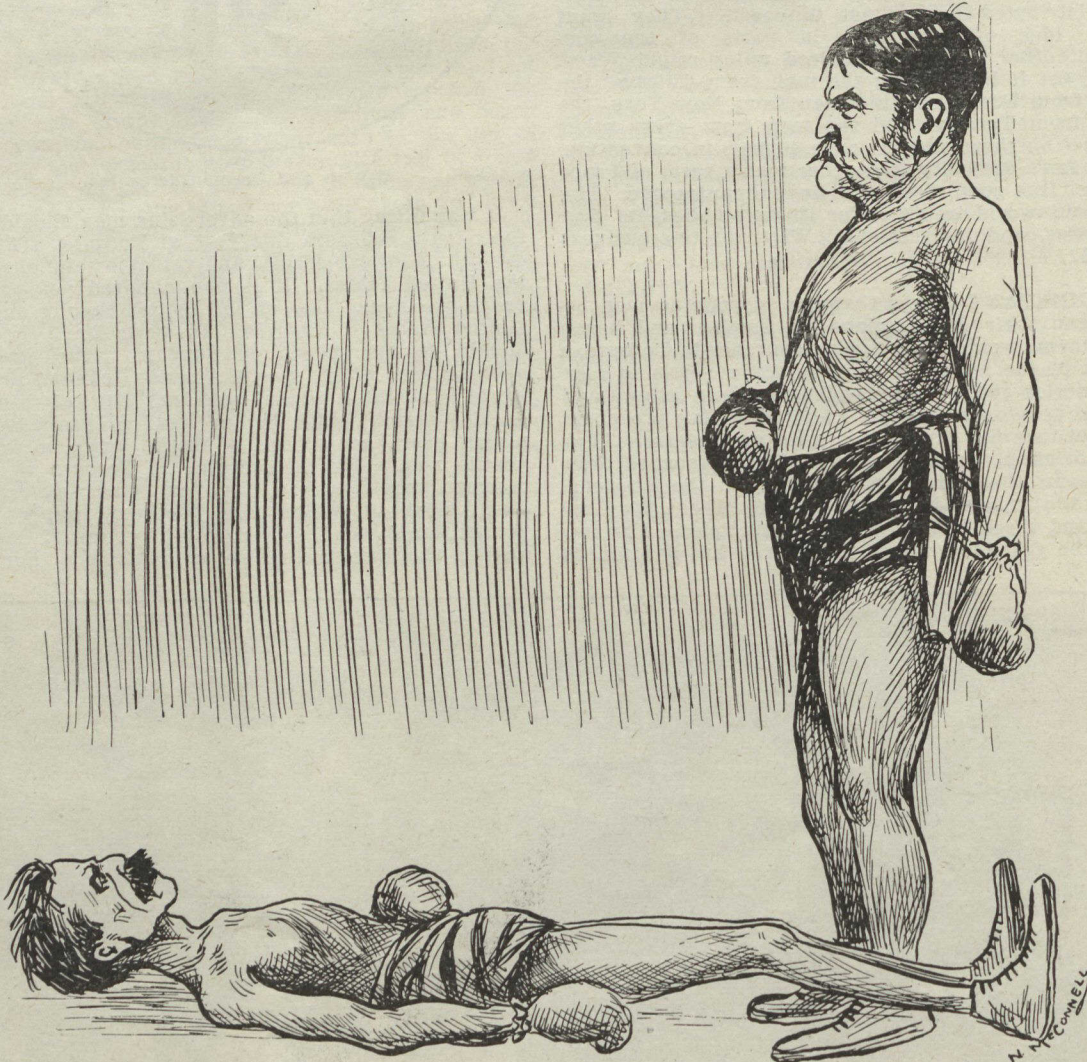
As a betting proposition the chances are about twenty to one against Mr. Neill. Unless the West changes very much, it is not likely to be satisfied with the plain, unvarnished facts. Up to the present time the West has deified only those publicity men who could paint pictures and dream dreams. The message that the Western cities have sent out to the world does not tell what they are to-day, but what they are likely to be fifty or a hundred years hence.

Undismayed, Mr. Neill called a "Colonization and Development Convention" at North Battleford last

month and invited all the prominent people in the West to attend. Of course they did not attend. The idea of having one advertising bureau for every district in Western Canada was too new to be accepted readily. Nevertheless, a few people met and discussed the subject and passed a series of resolutions. A permanent organization was founded for "the establishment of an impartial bureau for the giving of unprejudiced and reliable information as to the conditions existing in each locality. Another resolution emphasized the point that the urban communities of the West had grown faster than the rural communities, and that it would be necessary to develop agriculture and other industries in order to support the present urban population. Finally, a resolution was passed in favour of mixed farming and the establishment of live stock companies for the purpose of rendering financial assistance to farmers engaged in raising live stock.

Mr. Neill's idea is excellent. If he will persist, he must win.

At The Ontario Provincial Finals



THE OLD KNIGHT CAN STILL HAND OUT A SLEEP-PRODUCER

(Mr. McConnell, our cartoonist, was instructed to prepare a cartoon for this week's paper which would be "good" whether the Conservatives or the Liberals won. The elections were on Monday, and this page had to go to press on that day. This is the result. If you will turn the page to the left a distance of ninety degrees you will see the cartoon as it would have appeared had the cartoonist expected Mr. Rowell to win.)