

Notes and Comments

(By Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M. A.)

Ralph Smith

The death of the Hon. Ralph Smith has removed a well known and able man from the public life of the country. He was in a unique sense of the words, a self-made man, and his career should be an encouragement to every young man who, in the presence of handicaps, has a worthy desire to serve his generation. Mr. Smith began in a coal mine in England, when a mere boy, and rendered remarkable assistance to the labor movement both in the Old Land and Canada. It is true that the very men he tried to benefit most did not always appreciate him, and I recall his declining to continue a speech in the old City Hall here some fifteen years ago, owing to interruptions from a little coterie of extreme Socialists. Nothing has been a larger detriment to the cause of workingmen than their own disposition to become suspicious or jealous of one of their own number who rises in public life. Just when he gets into a position where he can do most for them, they begin to find fault with him. Even John Burns, champion of the dock men, was assailed by his former supporters because he was receiving the salary of a minister of the Crown. Ralph Smith retained to the end his great interest in the condition of the manual workers, and that his consistent fearlessness won the approval of the general mass of them was evident from the tremendous vote he received at his last election in Vancouver. A sturdy, manly type of a man was this coal miner who became a strong figure in our House of Commons at Ottawa, and who, though passing away just as he was entering on his duties as a member of the Provincial Government, had made a distinct place for himself in the public life of the Dominion.

Woodrow Wilson

President Wilson has disappointed those who were saying that he was deficient in strength, for he has given the adroit and tricky Bernstorff his walking-papers, and stands fully prepared to take any further steps that may be necessary to preserve the freedom of the seas. Those who knew President Wilson's upbringing were quite sure that he was not lacking in vertebral column. We think that even though the United States was not a signatory to the famous treaty which guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium, Wilson should have protested in the name of humanity against the brutality of the Hun. In that and the Lusitania case his judgment was wrong in our opinion, but the leader of a hundred millions of people has many things to consider. Like other human beings, he has his faults, but events will show that he has courage to act when his judgment approves.

Social Service

Exhibits and lectures by experts in social service work have been much in evidence lately. And great praise is due to all who study social conditions with a view to improving the surroundings of people. But we venture to think that the persistent effort made to eliminate the individual by merging him in the community has its dangers as well as its fallaciousness. Anything which tends to dim in men the sense of personal responsibility will in the long run be detrimental to human society. It is when men in corporations and organizations retain their full sense of individual accountability that the best results will be reached. Notwith-