

war it came to a toss-up between Captain Foster and his brother-in-law who should represent the firm and the family in France and Flanders. Captain Vassie won, so the one left at home shouldered the extra burden, and has now accepted as a patriotic duty the direction of the affairs of the people of the whole province.

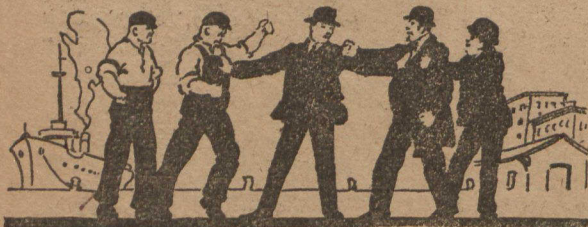
Mr. Foster's patriotism is a thing good to see. The vision of service came to him early in life and he has had it ever before him. He speaks of his new responsibility gravely, yet with shining eyes. Cares of office mean less time given to keeping the pot boiling at the Vassie office, but Mr. Foster frankly says he has weighed the question and decided it is worth more to give himself to the service of his native province at the unmistakable call of the people. He truly regards the gift of the electorate and the confidence of his own party, heartily expressed at a representative conference following the election, as a rare opportunity which he cannot afford to miss.



Foster is a real democrat at heart. Long before he entered political life as a prospective premier, his appearance on the public platform was the signal for a storm of applause. The general public liked his frank manner, his engaging smile and, before he got through, his earnest and business-like way of presenting his case.

Successful arbitrator and chairman of the conciliation board appointed, he twice settled differences arising between the Longshoremen of St. John and the Shipping Federation, so that he has proven his ability to get the viewpoint of labour.

His predilection for the place of his birth crops out in his interest as president and manager of the St. Martin's railway. This experience, however circumscribed, should prove of value in his handling the affairs of this railway-ridden province. Other ambitious projects, all designed to improve his home town, appealing to his support were the New Brunswick Hydro-Electric Power Co., the Dominion Dry Dock Co.



Little wonder that in the midst of all these activities Mr. Foster is willing to confess that he is not much of a hand for sport. After the partial eclipse in the cataclysm of 1912, when the whole opposition solar system blinked out, the political star of Walter Foster arose at the Good Government Convention at Fredericton, Dec. 3, 1914, when he was at the head of the table and propounded the new slogan, "Abolish the Bag," which somehow caught on with the people of New Brunswick. Mindful of the Who's Who man, after this, particularly when he had accepted the chairmanship of the leadership committee on the retirement of Hon. C. W. Robinson, Mr. Foster forced himself, to use his own words, to pay some attention to golf. For what public man is there in whose biography, mixed in, quite fittingly, with his clubs and his religion, there does not appear those magic words, "Recreation, Golf." As a member of the Union Club, president of the Cliff Club, and a good Anglican, Mr. Foster is otherwise well equipped, but even yet he does not profess to be in the premier-



ship class when it comes to putt and brassie. In politics he found his only sport and, although a tyro in legislative halls, he organized and led the Young Liberals of St. John in many a brow fight and, as all games should be played, he has made this game clean and honest and fair, though bucking the line hard. He brings to the service of the people absolute independence, a wide business experience and a grasp of public affairs such as is given few men. The bitterest enemies of his party say they will give him a show, staunch Liberals hail him as a new leader of great promise, the men of moral fibre who switched in thousands to his support in almost

every constituency see in his accession to the premiership the dawning of a new day for New Brunswick, when the real voice of the people shall control and the real interests of the people be served.

The new premier can no longer put forward politics as his one diversion. For him the word has taken on its true meaning. He has dedicated himself to the people. From the time he left school, at fifteen, he has not stopped to pick roses along life's pathway, and he has, further, postponed any possibility of hours of ease. It promises to be many years yet before his biographer can conclude with aught but "Recreation—Service."

## THAT TIRED-TOWN FEELING

By BRITTON B. COOKE

IS the Board of Trade in your town dead? Or only half-dead? Or is it by some miraculous chance alive and working? I ask this question because, in my small experience, one of the best things a Board of Trade does is to die. It is a delicate flower and has a hard time wintering. In the summer of prosperity it puts forth many blossoms. I have enjoyed some of them myself, such as automobile rides for visiting politicians and their newspaper entourage, or dinners, or luncheons in a local tavern, or pamphlets on hand-worked paper with deckle edges and hand-made envelopes, describing your town and its modest acquiescence in the title "Hub of Alberta" or "Focus Point of Saskatchewan," or—you probably recall such names for yourself. The objects of such booklets used to be to attract industries to your town. About all they really did was to keep your local printer from going bankrupt.

But wartimes and the intervals between booms have always been considered hard on the constitutions of even the huskiest Boards of Trade. They bud as usual—with new officers and a new slogan. Then they just naturally seem to curl up and wither. The collapse of the boom usually means that the town's publicity agent has to be fired, or the highly paid secretary who used to do that work, has to go on half pay and lose heart trying to hold down all his real estate. The best thing the President does is to keep the members from hitting the Treasurer over the head for his infernal persistence in asking for annual fees. Even the best marathon talker in the organization is reduced to talking about the deeds of your local quota of men in the firing line, if for no other reason than because you and he hate to stop and think about your own town and its actual state at the time of writing.

These—I say—are the average conditions in our Canadian towns to-day. Boom gone. War here. Corner lots hanging heavy on the hands of the poorest man in town. But there ARE exceptions. Some Boards of Trade have NOT died but have been wonderfully stimulated by the prospect of seeing their town go to bits. And it is of these I write.

### II.

Podmore, in the province of —, had accumulated about as nice a collection of dead industries as any town could wish for. By wild advertising before 1907, and by wild subsidizing, it had obtained an implement foundry, a knitting mill and a tannery, a condensed-milk factory, a patent oatmeal plant and a cannery. That makes six. All six received encouragement in one form or another and then passed away. Then prominent citizens who had once worn flowers on their chests because it was due to their enterprise that these industries had come to town—passed into retirement with shame on their heads for having encouraged the town to make a fool of itself. The empty factories stood by the side of the river—there was a good river on which the local M. P. promised that ocean liners should one day come sailing—and provoked the old men of the town to sermons on the folly of municipal ambition and the dangers of not listening to advice. A year or two ago small boys had taken pride in knocking out the panes of glass in the deserted buildings, but had long since smashed the last pane. Weeds grew over the tan-bark roadway leading into the tannery and rabbits reared their families in the cellar of the canning factory. The

citizens of the town, in taxes and in sighs, paid the perennial fee of misguided ambition.

This town was one of the first to realize the importance of the munition business in relation to itself. The local manager of one of the big banks—there was only one branch-bank in the town: it had absorbed what used to be Doherty's private bank—happened to be in Toronto head-office and to overhear a conversation between one of the bank inspectors and the general manager upon whose pleasure the small-town manager was waiting. The inspector made it clear to the G. M. that certain customers could be placed in a better position to meet their obligations to the bank if they could be assisted to get more munition orders. What they lacked was factory accommodation.

A hint being as good as a harangue to this branch manager he waited only till the inspector and the G. M. had finished their conversation before mentioning casually the empty factories in his town. He did it skillfully—without any hint in his voice that he really thought these factories might have any bearing on the problem of the big customer to whom the inspector referred. He knew that to suggest the uses of these factories BLUNTLY would at once arouse the hostility of the General Manager, who would thus be robbed of any credit there might be in discovering the uses of these empty factories. But as it was—the G. M. DID see the merits of the suggestion, took it up, asked details of the said idle factories and after recalling that the bank had also some interest in the success of this particular town and its branch there—ordered a full report, and, when it came, passed it over to the firm who needed more factory accommodation in order to coax greater munition orders from the Imperial Munitions Board.

Thus the town found three out of its six factories transformed into busy workshops. Though the other three remained idle there was now a distinct movement on foot to find tenants for them, and two others—at the time of writing—have been let to concerns who promise to employ one hundred workers between them.

The town has shaken off its lethargy and is now making plans for the future. It has revived its moribund Board of Trade and instead of placing at its head the richest man in the town, or the most popular man in town, it has elected Old Tom Brown, the town crank who gets all the Blue Books from Ottawa, all the agricultural bulletins from the various departments of agriculture, Federal and Provincial, and who for years has been a student of the THEORY of town growth. This man has presented to the town a report on the raw material resources of the community, another report is being made on the railway service (and the practical possibilities of improvement in that regard), and a third is being prepared by the principal of the High School on the cost of living in that town and its bearing on the wages of factory workers.

In other words, this town, when the war is over, is going to put up a great fight for prosperity. It is not going to relinquish its busy factories without making a supreme effort to prove to the businessmen of Canada that this is a good town, and that there are real cold cash reasons for carrying on manufacturing at this centre. The munition plants have made it possible for the town to obtain long distance power connections which it might not have been able to obtain otherwise. It will take advantage