

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

GENERAL Sir Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, inventor, patron and chief of the Boy Scouts of the British Empire, is to visit the Toronto Exhibition, and there is great excitement among the various Scout corps throughout Canada. Sir Robert is said to be the most popular officer in the British Army, as Lord Kitchener is the most respected. As the son of a professor of Oxford



General Sir R. S. S. Baden-Powell.

he inherits a literary ability which enables him to produce readable books. His first book was entitled "Pig Sticking or Hog Hunting," and his second was "Reconnaissance and Scouting." That was twenty years ago. In his later years his interest in "Pig Sticking" seems to have given way entirely before his interest in scouting. In 1890 he published "Aids to Scouting" and in 1898, "Scouting for Boys."

General Baden-Powell joined the 13th Hussars in 1876 and saw his first real fighting in Zululand in 1888 when he was "mentioned in dispatches." Since then he has served in Ashanti, Matabeleland and South Africa. At the time of the latter campaign he was Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 5th Dragoon Guards, and his famous hundred-day defence of Mafeking gained him a promotion to be Major-General. After the close of the war he organised the South African Constabulary and in 1898 founded the Boy Scouts.

The Directors of the Toronto Exhibition are doing Canada a real service in bringing to this country each year to visit their Exhibition some prominent Imperial figure. There was talk of an invitation being sent to Colonel Roosevelt, and it is possible he would have been a greater attraction. However, the Exhibition authorities were very wise in inviting General Baden-Powell. His visit will undoubtedly have a more profound effect upon our national life. The General is not a militarist, although a soldier. His greatest attribute is his belief in physical fitness and individual intelligence. He is keen on developing sturdiness, self-reliance, and personal independence in the British youth, and at the same time does not overlook the value of character and manners. He is a man in the fullest sense, and a hero whom Canada should delight to honour.

ONE may conclude that Western Canada is fairly well supplied with railways. There was a time when the West talked only wheat and railways and gave their attention quite impartially to the two subjects. Now the talk is confined almost wholly to wheat and its various phases. The growing of the grain having got beyond the experimental stage, the chief problem now is that of marketing; hence economic handling and suitable shipping facilities have become more important topics. The "loading platform" question seems to have been settled fairly satisfactorily and the question of "grading" has also receded somewhat into the background. The talk now is all about elevators. Manitoba is introducing a system of government-owned internal elevators. These will be scattered throughout the province where they will do most good. The Province of Saskatchewan has appointed a special commission which is going about the country gathering information as to whether that province shall follow Manitoba's lead and start a system of government-owned elevators. Alberta will do whatever Saskatchewan does.

Now comes the announcement that the Dominion Government, acting on expert advice, has decided to take over all the terminal elevators on Lake Superior and make them a government monopoly. These terminal elevators are now owned by the railways, milling companies and grain-shippers. The farmers of the West complain that they do not get equitable treatment from the shippers and the elevator men, and that there is a tendency to grade the wheat too low. As the farmer is paid according to the grading, he is anxious that his grain shall be graded at the highest possible point. He believes apparently that he can get justice only from government-owned elevators.

It seems curious that at a time when so many people are trying to prove that all politicians and public men are either incompetent or unrighteous, and that most public servants are lazy and incompetent, the policy of government control should be making such

progress. In spite of the newspapers and the political speech-makers one must conclude that the various public services in Canada were never better organised and never more trustworthy. There may be extravagances here and there, and there may be roguery and favouritism in certain quarters, but nevertheless the public business of the country is being fairly and economically administered both by the central and the provincial governments. This is not to say that there should not be a continuation of the agitation for civil service reform and more up-to-date methods in public administration. There is still room for improvement in public administration as there is in private business. The point is that the public recognise that most of the charges of graft and corruption made against the various public services in Canada are based upon minor incidents or faults, and that Canadians in public life are almost, if not quite, as honest as Canadians in private life.

FOR ten years the parole system has been in force in Canada and since that time 3,100 prisoners have been granted a parole. Of this number nearly two thousand have won their liberty and are now good and accredited citizens. At least, this is the report of Mr. W. P. Archibald, the Dominion parole official, in an interview given to the Kingston *Whig*, and there is no reason to doubt his statement. Of the 3,100 prisoners paroled in eleven years, 1,800 were from the penitentiaries and 1,300 from the gaols and reformatories. Only sixty-five of these have made a wrong use of their liberty.

These facts bear out the contention of the more advanced social reformers that close confinement in penitentiaries and gaols is neither necessary nor advisable except under limited circumstances. It also gives colour to their contention that not all men who have committed a crime are criminals and that the occasional criminal may be reformed if properly handled.

WHEN the average citizen thinks of the cost of living, he has visions of coal, meat, bread and general household supplies. The increase in the price of lumber does not, in his view, affect him seriously. Yet when one goes deeper into the situation, it will be seen that the increase in the price of lumber is almost as important as any other increase. It affects the original cost of the house and of the fence surrounding the house, the cost of screen doors and winter sash, and the price paid for general repairs. It also affects the cost of many articles of common household use.

This is a reason why every Canadian should lament when forest fires occur. During the past two months these fires have been extensive. Late in April, a fire in the Porcupine Hills, Alberta, devastated 140 square miles of timber with a loss of nearly half a million dollars. Late in May, a fire at Mistatim in central Saskatchewan caused a loss of nearly a million dollars, including a lumbering camp and sawmill. There have been other fires around Lesser Slave Lake and in the Riding Mountain Reserve. The district in western Ontario between Fort William and Winnipeg was the scene of the most extensive conflagrations, the losses being larger than those already mentioned.

The point to remember is that all these losses must eventually come out of the pockets of those who buy lumber or articles made of wood. Every stick of timber and every tree destroyed by fire makes every other tree more valuable. R. S. Kellogg, assistant forester in the United States Forest Service, is authority for the statement that "the prices of forest products have risen more rapidly than those of other commodities." Indeed, he goes so far as to say that they have risen twice as much as the average.

BECAUSE the price of lumber enters so largely into the cost of living, every citizen should interest himself in the questions connected with the preservation, conservation and reproduction of our forests. Michigan was once a great forest supplying 23 per cent. of the lumber used in the United States; now it supplies less than 5 per cent. The forests of Canada are disappearing just as the Michigan forests disappeared. Fifty years from now, wood will be a scarce article on this continent.

Yet there is really no need for this state of affairs. Europe has preserved and maintained its supply of timber by tree-planting and careful regulation. In Switzerland, they planted 23 million trees in 1908, and this was not extraordinary. In certain of their state forests where only ripe trees are cut and where forest fires are unknown, the annual net revenue is from \$7 to \$10 an acre. Each year, France buys up some waste lands and plants it with trees. Already over half a million acres of forest has been created in this way. Austria and Germany are doing splendid work in re-creating their forests. Denmark has a scientific policy of handling forests on waste lands and its net profit from the sale of timber is \$100,000 a year.

Canada's greatest national asset, after its land, is its timber. If that national asset is properly conserved it will remain forever growing always in value. Not only will it be valuable for its annual crop of ripe trees, but it will preserve our rivers and our lakes, prevent undue evaporation, maintain our water-powers and prevent floods and other spring disasters. Not only that, but by scientific tree-planting on waste lands, Canada could increase this asset sufficiently to create an annual revenue which would ultimately defray the yearly expenses of all the nine provincial administrations.