CURRENT COMMENT

The Rain in the West

There are times in Ontario when a long drought makes rain a crying necessity, and the whole community awakens to the agricultural need. In the west, however, the rainfall in vast districts is the essence of the situation, and year by year the question arises whether the clouds will quench the thirst of the land. It is not with doubt or question that the situation is faced. As one old settler remarked, the farmers out there are good gamblers and good sports, and while it may seem to be an incongruous way of putting it, there is no better description of their simple, natural faith in the bounty of providence. They do their work, they plant their seed, and they wait the turn of the wheel of fortune. Last year at this time pasture was parched and brown. This year pasturage has been excellent. But the grain crops at the end of May still thirsted for moisture. Then came the report of rain, and as it spread eastwards from the mountains the news went ahead by telephone and telegraph that it was on the way, that it had reached such a point, and such another. Then it came with a rush and swish, and the farmer's heart warmed in him to think that once more seedtime and harvest might not fail him. They were singing Mendelssohn's "Elijah" in Edmonton about the time the rain-clouds broke, and there is no more adequate expression of the farmer's joy in the west when the June rains come and assure him a crop than the great chorus that celebrates the end of the drought. They may sing it with thanksgiving this year in the west for the assurance of a harvest, as far as "the useful trouble of the rain" can give it, has been received.

Develop Your Own Property

If a man had a fine farm and a splendid garden, and if his sons and daughters when they grew up and learned to do certain things, so that one was a clever carpenter, and another could shoe horses and was skilful with machinery, and a third knew all about the building crafts, while his daughters could spin and weave and make all kinds of clothes, what would be thought of him and his family if they went to the family on the next farm and hired the people there to do all the work they might have done themselves, and also left their farm resources undeveloped and much of it untilled? They could not expect to prosper as others do, nor to get the best out of their farm. Yes, it's a little parable about farmer Canada and his fine farm, and his big family who can do everything that anybody can do if given the chance, and incidentally develop the resources of the most richly endowed among the nations. We are constantly going to other farms and other farmers' sons, and paying for things and for work that we could get at home. We are just as much one family in Canada as any farmer's sons and daughters in their own household, and we should consider the family interest, the unity and community of that interest if we are to prosper nationally or individually. Let's work our own land and use our own products.

Population and Provender

A highly suggestive series of lessons are being dug out of the returns of the newly-made United States census, which are now beginning to come in. The census is a year ahead of the Canadian one, which is taken after the decennial period has closed. The general impression is of urban increase and rural decrease in population. There is no reason to doubt that a similar condition will be found in Canada next year when our own census is taken. There are considerably more than 100 cities of over 100,000 in the United States, and returns from a large number of these show varying from about five to 200 per cent. Spokane, which inflated the census returns ten years ago, suffers the penalty and now shows a decrease. St. Louis, which was once larger than Chicago, has crept up to 793,000, or about the size of Chicago thirty years ago. Natural increase is not regarded as accounting for the marked increase in city population, nor is immigration the factor it formerly was. The war unquestionably made a difference, though the 28,000 killed in the United States army would not appreciably affect the U.S. census returns as double the number in the Canadian army will the Canadian census. Enlistment has undoubtedly made for gains to the city population. With all the facts of profiteering before us and not the slightest intention of minimizing them, it must be evident that the decrease of farm labor is one direct cause of the high cost of living. There are more people to feed and fewer to feed them. Will it come to compulsory service on the farm as in the field of battle? Must we fight hunger as we fought the Hun? Systematic and business methods must be applied to the agricultural problem as they were to the military one.

Refusing a Mandate

In the refusal of the United States Senate to accept a mandate for Armenia for which President Wilson pleaded, we have an example of the ambiguous conditions of United States politics. It may be contended that the Washington Government is only being consistent in refusing to entangle itself in European politics. But after the assumptions of the war, not to speak of Cuba or the Philippines, most observers will examine the presidential election politics of the season for the cause of the refusal. If the people of the United States prefer to consider material and selfish interests before ethical and disinterested aims, the senate may have displayed worldly wisdom. It is difficult to believe, however, that a nation which made such sacrifices to suppress slavery and forced an unwilling administration into action against Germany will be satisfied with the decision to abandon Armenia to her fate. That fate, it is quite possible, may in consequence be placed in charge of Britain, in which case we shall undoubtedly have the spectacle of the senate denouncing the machinations of Britain to extend her empire in the East. It is probable that in view of the Presidential election the campaign requires a program of economy and retrenchment, to which an Armenian mandate would not contribute. The election of a Republican president might be followed by as notable a reversal of policy as in the case of Wilson and the war. There is likely to be a change. By the time these words are in print both Republican and Democratic candidates will have been chosen, and a good deal depends on the personal factor. Even the nomination of Debs may have much to do with the issue. The independent vote that elected Wilson is not necessarily bound to vote Republican, and the "protest" vote may do as strange things as it did in Ontario.

Winning the War

A writer in the New York Times delivers himself in this fashion: "General Foch said he won the war by smoking his pipe. England said she won it by her love of cricket. As a matter of fact, the country that won it was the country that produced 'Pop' Anson, Christy Mathewson, Ty Cobb, 'Slim' Sallee, and 'Babe' Ruth." A United States lecturer in Winnipeg recently, in addressing an audience, said: "When the war began in 1917"—and then, observing a sensation among those before him, explained, "When the United States entered the war." But on his own side of the line his first remark would have caused no sensation. We must be prepared to see the legend grow and the tradition handed down that the United States delivered the world from German militarism. "Do not let the English pull the wool over your eyes" is an injunction carefuly observed, and everybody knows that it was "American" troops that broke the Hindenburg line in the last hundred days and were the first to enter Cambrai. If these things were mentioned to stir up rancor it would be a despicable business. Canadians must be prepared to hear more and more of such talk and of the views that are behind it, and learn to receive it with courteous reticence and without retort or provocation. The truth is streng enough to make its way and survive, and there are plenty of people in the United States who know it and will support it. Meanwhile, let us encourage our own sports—lacrosse, rugby, soccer, hockey, rowing and so forth—and keep our good temper.

Religion, Politics and the Devil.

If no one has said it before it is time to say it now. Politics is a compromise between religion and the devil by which be obtains control of the social organism. There is only one devil of any real menace, and that is selfishness. If we could eliminate selfishness from the human race the world would be a paradise. It is a most unfortunate fact that most of our social and political compromises belong to the order of back-scratching performances by which the selfishness of one set of men is gratified by another set who have a lively sense of impending reciprocity to a similar end. One is quite safe in these observations, because the whole principle is always violently repudiated by any party or both which may have its motives impugned. Macaulay sung of a time when none were for the party, but all were for the state, when the rich man loved the poor man, and the poor loved the great. If we did that now we would all be a great deal better off and a great deal happier. Tennyson also dreams of a time when no man sought his own but each his fellow's good, and that was not in his time nor is it in ours. But some one must make a beginning or the regeneration of the world will go over to Doomsday. It was the Archbishop of York, Dr. Magee, who declared away back in the '70's, that if the British Empire attempted to observe the Sermon on the Mount it would go to pieces in six months. What if it did—if it was in the attempt to keep the Golden Rule? It raises a big question, whether it is better to break an Empire than to break the Golden Rule. This is where the "Devil" and Religion make their compromise, and the ordinary man is unable to see how the compromise is to be avoided. Perhaps if this were fully understood there would be less conceit over our position.

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS MEET

Successful Convention of C. W. N. A. Held at Toronto, When Problems of Rural Publishers Were Discussed---Entertainment and Boat Trip For Delegates.

Nearly three hundred members of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers' Association met in convention at the King Edward Hotel, Toronto, on June 3rd and 4th, and after a most interesting series of meetings, spent Saturday, June 5th, by taking a trip across the lake and on to East Aurora, New York, where the printing plant and entire premises of the Roycroft Inn, Elbert Hubbard's former home, were inspected.

The chief problems discussed at the convention naturally centred on the cost of producing weekly newspapers, and the inevitable increase in subscription, advertising and job printing prices, which were necessary in order to allow the weekly publishers to make a living. In this connection probably the most important paper at the convention was given by Mr. E. K. Whiting of the Journal-Chronicle, Owatonna, Minesota. Mr. Whiting gave an address at the Canadian Press Association's convention about five years ago, and as a result many publishers have installed a cost system by which they are enabled to know whether they are losing or making money.

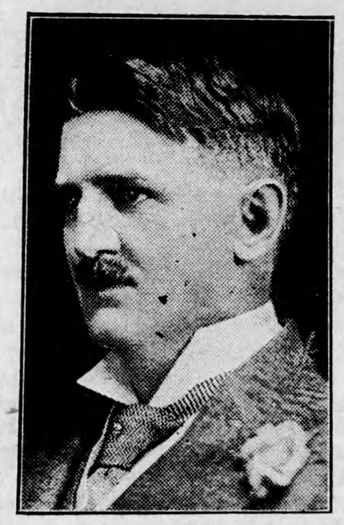
Mr. Whiting dealt with the increased cost of porduction and made it plain to the Canadian proprietors that unless they take into consideration the added cost of turning out their papers, and make the necessary allowance for that in their advertising and circulation rates, some of them are certain to go out of business shortly. Mr. Whiting presumed that Canadian conditions are much the same as they are across the line, where newsprint and labor have both gone up at a surprising rate. In order to meet the situation in the United States, Mr. Whiting pointed out that it had been necessary for the National Association to take the matter in hand and strike a new schedule of advertising rates. The new rates had been considered high by the advertisers, and while he appreciated that some of the Canadian advertisers might object to paying correspondingly increased rates in the country, he declared it was the only thing possible.

Mr. Whiting also felt that the circulation departments of the papers should be put upon a changed basis, in order that they can do a little more towards relieving the advertising end of the papers. It is generally recognized, he recalled, that the circulation receipts for any paper do not pay for the newsprint alone, let alone paying for the cost of printing and setting up of the copy. The time is coming, he felt, when the papers will conduct their businesses upon a more business-like scale, and will make each department carry its own expense. This would necessarily mean increasing the prices of subscriptions, as well as the advertising schedules, for the papers occupy such an important place in the community that they should not be allowed to fail. In the United States, Mr. Whiting pointed out, there is still a big battle under way with the Red element, and the speaker was ready to give to the small country papers much of the credit for fighting down the Bolshevik element.

Stand Pat On Prices.

So far as advertising rates were concerned, Mr. Whiting's advice to the weekly proprietors was that they should fix their rates at scales which they believed fair, allowing them a reasonable percentage of profit, and that they should stand pat. Advertisers might complain, but he did not think the reasonable advertiser would hold out long once he appreciated that the cost of producing newspapers has gone up at a tremendous rate in the past few years. The best way in which the proprietors could arrive at fair rates would be for them to install cost systems, making allowances for all departments, and charging all bills to the right departments. As an illustration of what a cost system will do for a newspaper business, Mr. Whiting told of an example which came to his attention during the convention of the United States National Association. The assocation had decided upon sweeping increases for all lines of advertising. One owner of an ideal paper had complained, declaring he had not the conscience to charge higher rates, as during the past year he had made profits of $12,000 on his old rates.

Mr. Whiting had then undertaken a personal investigation of that editor's paper. Upon inquiry he found out that in declaring profits of $12,000 for the year the man in question had not made any allowance for his own salary, for



W. R. Davies, publisher of the Renfrew Mercury, who was elected president of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association at its Convention in Toronto.

interest on plant, for depreciation, or for the use of the building he was occupying. When these things were taken into consideration, the speaker pointed out, it was found that instead of having a profit of $12,000, the plant had really operated at a loss. It was the same principle which Mr. Whiting suggested should be applied to the Canadian papers if they are to operate at a profit. The great trouble with the newspaper profession, he declared, is that in the past the workers have been giving their lives for but little or nothing at all. He wanted to emphasize his belief that there is nothing to be feared in increasing advertising rates, and added that the man who makes good as a proprietor is the man who will not be bound down by the conventions of the past generation, but who will run his plant on a true business system.

President's Address.

Mr. A. E. Calnan, of the Picton Gazete, president, opened the convention. He referred to the first meeting of the C.P.A., when only a few weekly publishers were present, and contrasted it with this year's, when there were 342 members in an organization only seven months old. Before the convention concluded Mr. Roy Rales reported that ten more publishers had joined the association. Mr. Calnan paid a great tribute to Mr. Sayles for his work as manager of the association, especially in connection with organization and the news print situation.

This year, said Mr. Calnan, was going to be a difficult one for weekly publishers. The increased revenue from advertising and job printing was not meeting the increased costs of production, and in order to meet the higher wages, cost of news print, etc., higher rates for subscriptions, advertising and job printing were necessary. Some weeklies had advanced their rates to $2, some to $1.50, and a few were still being sold at a dollar a year. The lower cost papers, he said, must raise their rates or go out of business. As a matter of fact, some weeklies had gone out of busness, and some had amalgamated on account of the great increase in cost of production. It was necessary for every weekly publisher to remember that the C.W.N.A. was working for his good, and was co-operating in every way in order to assst ating in every way in order to assist them all to build up their local news and editorial pages.

Should Get Two Dollars.

Reports of various committees were presented, among the most important being that given by Mr. P. George Pearce on circulation and- subscriptions. He advised all members to get a two-dollar rate, and to have their subscriptions paid in advance as much as possble.

D. Maxwel Merry, an advertisng specialist, referred to the fact that many agencies seemed to be prejudiced against weekly newspapers. He found this largely due to the fact that they could not use mats. He referred to the fact that some weeklies paid commissons and some did not, while the amount of commisson paid did not seem to be established and adhered to. This, in his opinion, was a great mistake. He referred to the awful cuts some weeklies use, and the fact that copy gets balled up, resulting in suffering by the advertiser. Instead of using cuts, he advised clear type ads, unless first-class cuts were obtainable. Copy also should be changed oftener. He referred to one paper in which he had seen a St. Patrick's Day advertisement running in June, because the advertiser had forgotten to change the copy and the publisher had not got after the advertiser for a change.

Ads Should be Clean.

Publishers, he said, should remember that their first duty was to their readers, and part of that duty was to see that the ads were clean, up-to-date and useful. He referred to the habit of some advertisers writing their copy in a hurry just before press time, and said the publishers should help to overcome this fault. Special sales to clean out stocks were good advertising features, he said.

The Editorial Page.

Mr. J. T. Clark gave an address on "The Editorial Page of the Country Weekly." He referred first to the tremendous waste in news print by the larger city papers, and expressed the opinion that something should be done to stop it. Papers, he said, which were going to succeed, let alone survive, had to be edited as well as published. Every editor should make comments each week on local as well as general questions. He should have opinions of his own, and should let his readers know what those opinions were. The editor's opinion lent character and personality to the paper.

Answering a question by one of the delegates as to whether weekly editorials should be local or international in scope, Mr. Clark thought that the average weekly publisher was as well able to express an opinion on the Eastern or any other question as any editor of a daily newspaper who sat cooped up in an office and never got outside.

Paper Situation.

Mr. C. H. Hale's comment on the paper situation was that it was causing serious concern to the publishers. There should be an increase in subscription rates. He could make no predictions as to the future. He thanked the Eddy Co. and the Canada Paper Co. for their co-operation and assistance in supplying news print to some of the weekly publishers.

At this point in the proceedings a telegram was received from Hon. P. E. Blondin, postmaster-general, stating that the request from the C.W.N.A. that weeklies in towns up to 10,000 population still be allowed a 40-mile free zone radius had been complied with. The privilege, however, was denied to semi-weeklies.

Advertising Rates.

Mr. W. R. Davies, of the Renfrew Mercury, gave an important address on advertising. He advised all weekly publishers to make a rate sufficiently high, and to stick to that rate. Weekly publishers, he said, should realize the power they possessed. They should have a good, bright editorial page. Weekly papers, in his opinion were a force which had to be contended with very seriously. They formed an organization which for power and influence were second to none in Canada.

Mr. H. J. Pettypiece, in referring to the editorial pages, expressed the opinion that the chief topic for discussion on editorial pages should be the depopulation and stagnation of rural towns in Ontario, and every weekly publisher should do everything possble to help stem the tide of men and women drifting off the farms and into the cities and larger towns.

Mr. J. J Hunter gave one of his characteristically bright addresses. Public men and public opinion, he said, were more afraid of the newspapers than anything else. He was glad that the weekly publishers were co-operating more now than ever before. The day of the mud-slinging editorial was past, and such editorials were beneath contempt anyway. Publishers were getting together on prices for advertising, subscriptions and job printing, and if they would stick together it would be better for all concerned. He referred particularly to the benefits obtained for the members of the C.W.N.A., especially along the line of news print supply and free postal rates.

Mr. J. J. Hurley of Brantford, next to Mr. Whiting, was the most interest ing speaker. He has built up a successful printing business and told how he did it. In the first place he installed a cost system, so that he would know what his work cost, then he set his prices, and stuck to them. If he knew his competitor was taking work at a loss he let him have it, because he didn't want any of that kind of printing For the weekly publishers he advised the installation of a weekly cost system, so that they would know what ther work was costing. He gave some detailed information, among which was the fact that in charging hour costs, one-third of the labor time purchased by the employer must be counted as non-productive and added to the overhead. The publishers should allow themselves a salary, and should include in the cost system every item of expense, even to the washing of office towels.

He praised the weekly papers for the work they had done during the war and were doing during this critical time of reconstruction and industrial unrest. To them, he said, was due most of the credit for combatting the spread of Bolshevism in Canada and other countries.

Mr. Whiting gave a second address on higher subscription rates, advising his hearers to make a rate sufficiently high to enable them to sell their manufactured article at a profit, and to stick to the rate. They might lose some subscribers, but would get them back.

Vancouver Next Year.

Vancouver was chosen as the next place of meeting, on invitation of F. J. Burd of the Vancouver Province.

The report of the manager, Mr. E. Roy Sayles, was satisfactory, and proved that Mr. Sayles had secured excellent results during the seven months in which the C.W.N.A. has been in existence.

At the conclusion of the convention the delegates and their wives were guests of the Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Clark at Government House. A most enjoyable day was spent on Saturday on the trip across Lake Ontaro and to East Aurora.

Mr. J. J. Hunter was official reporter for the convention, and the official record of the proceedings will be printed without delay and distributed to every member.

Following is a complete list of officers and directors elected:—

President—W. R. Davies, Renfrew (Ont.) Mercury.

Past President—A. E. Calnan, Picton (Ont.) Gazette.

1st Vice-President—V. C. French, Wetaskiwin (Alta.) Times.

2nd Vice-President—A. R. Brennan, Summerside (P.E.I.) Journal.

Secretary—A. R. Alloway, Oshawa (Ont.) Reformer.

Directors—J. A. MacLaren, The Examiner Barrie (Ont.); Lorne Eedy, The Telescope, Walkerton (Ont.); F. A. J. Davies, Central Canadian, Carleton Place (Ont.); B. McGuire, The Banner, Orangeville (Ont.); L. J. Cowie, News-Express, Carberry (Man.); Roy G. Ashwin, The Mail, Milestone (Sask.); C. Kerr Stewart, St. Maurice Valley Chronicle, Three Rivers (Que.); Ed. Fortin, L'Eclaireur, Beauceville (Que.); F. Burton, Globe, Cardstone (Alta.); L. J. Ball, The News, Vernon (B.C.); Fred Stevens, Observer, Hartland (N.B.)

Directors on C.P.A. Board—W. R. Davies, The Mercury, Renfrew (Ont.); D. Williams, The Bulletin, Collingwood (Ont.); A. R. Brennan, The Journal, Summerside (P.E.I.); Mrs. Fielding, Tribune (N.S.); J. C. Hebert, Le Peuple, Montmagny (Que.); S. N. Wynn, Enterprise, Yorkton (Sask.); J. A. Carswell, News, Red Deer (Alta.); J. M. George, Times, Deloraine (Man.); J. W. Ellis, Herald, Merritt (B.C.); H. B. Anslow, Graphic, Campbellton (N.B.).

Advisory Board—W. R. Davies, The Mercury, Renfrew (Ont.); A. E. Calnan, The Gazette, Picton (Ont.); A. R. Alloway, The Reformer, Oshawa (Ont.); J. A. MacLaren, The Examiner, Barrie (Ont.); Lorne Eedy, The Telescope, Walkerton (Ont.); P. Geo. Pearce, The Star, Waterford (Ont.); F. A. J. Davis, Central Canadian, Carleton Place (Ont.).

Advertising Committee—Lorne Eedy, The Telescope, Walkerton (Ont.); J. A. MacLaren, The Examiner, Barrie (Ont.); D. Williams, The Bulletin, Collingwood (Ont.); T. H. Harvey, The Express, Newmarket (Ont.); A. R. Alloway, The Reformer, Oshawa (Ont.).

Paper Committee—F. A. J. Davis, Central Canadian, Carleton Place (Ont.); A. E. Calnan, The Gazette, Picton (Ont.); Edgar Laberge, Le Spectateur, Hull (Que.); J. S. Giles, Watchman, Lachute (Que.); W. W. Walker, Courier, Perth (Ont.); C. M. Mundy, The Reformer, Oshawa (Ont.); W. R. Young, Freeholder, Cornwall (Ont.).

Membership Committee—J. J. Hunter, The Reporter, Kincardine (Ont.); J. E. Hebert, Le Peuple, Montmagny (Que.); W. Jordan, The Review, Revelstoke (B.C.); A. R. Brennan, The Journal, Summerside (P.E.I.); Miss Forbes, Tribune, Windsor (N.S.); F. W. Galbraith, Advocate, Red Deer (Alta.); Roy G. Ashwin, The Mail, Milestone (Sask.); J. L. Cowie, News-Express, Carberry (Man.); F. E. Jordan, Gazette, Chatham (N.B.).

Postal and Parliamentary—A. H. Moore, The News, St. John's (Que.); F. A. J. Davis, Central Canadian, Carleton Place (Ont.); W. A. Fry, Chronicle, Dunnville (Ont.); Col. Hugh Clarke, The Review, Kincardine (Ont.); H. J. Pettypiece, Free Press, Forest (Ont.).

Job Printing Committee—F. B. Elliott, The Herald, Alliston (Ont.); A. R. Brennan, Journal, Summerside (P.E.I); W. C. Walls, The Examiner, Barrie (Ont.); J. H. Keefer, The Register, Norwood (Ont.).

Editorial Committee—C. H. Hale, The Packet, Orillia (Ont.); L. J. Ball, The News, Vernon (B.C.); H. T. Halliwell, Progress, Estevan (Alta.); Alex. Dunlop, Press, Neepawa (Man.); Geo. Gordon, Herald, Ponoka (Alta.); C. Kerr Stewart, St. Maurice Valley Chronicle, Three Rivers (Que.).

Circulation and Subscription Rates Committee—P. G. Pearce, Star, Waterford (Ont.); J. M. Marshall Review, Weyburn (Sask.); John McKenzie, Standard, Strathmore (Alta); J. Fortin, L'Eclaireur, Beauceville (Que.); Fred Stevens, Observer, Hartland (N.B.); E. E. Reynolds, Banner, Gravenhurst (Ont.); J. C. Bates, Fraser Valley Record, Mission City (B.C.).