CURRENT COMMENT

Hudson Bay Navigation

It is difficult to understand why such a dead set has been made against the navigation of Hudson Bay unless there be truth in the allegation that certain railway interests object to the tapping of the interior trade by marine communication that reaches so far into the heart of the Dominion. Hudson Bay has been navigated for centuries. The first settlers of Manitoba landed in Hudson Bay. There has been a more or less profitable and constant traffic through these northern waters since trapping became a fine art and the coureurs du bois carried their primitive civilization into the north-west. These things having been called in question, a special committee of the Senate has been investigating for three years, and has now reported that the Hudson Bay route is not only feasible, but likely to be profitable. If it were not profitable it would never have been used. The traffic can safely be left to the tramp steamer, with such assistance of marine buoying and lighting as may be reasonable and necessary. It is not necessary to consider the investment of capital which would be tied up for two-thirds of the year as in our own Niagara navigation. A proper port in Hudson Bay is also required, and the committee feels, as was pointed out when the decision was made that sufficient care had not been taken in the selection of Nelson as the Hudson Bay railway terminus, and that further attention should be given to Churchill.

Levin, the Autocratic Tyrant

Russia under Lenin appears to be as unreliable as any other autocratic-ridden land. The memorandum which Lenin sent to Britain through the Labour delegation ought to convince all ranks of Labour and Socialism that Leninism is nothing like anything that the civilized western worker is seeking. Ben Turner and Tom Shaw, M.P., British labour leaders, on returning from Russia report that Lenin and his followers have succeeded in establishing the red terror, that there is no freedom of the press, nor of public meetings, while the persecution of social revolutionaries is as bitter or worse than under the Tsar. Workmen have no right to strike or to change their jobs without superior authority. Compulsion is their god, says Mr. Turner, mentioning compulsory military service. Conscription of labour, with the death penalty for enforcement. The duplicity of Lenin is shown in sending Krassin to negotiate trade relations with Britain, while stating his intention to use Krassin to stir up trouble and start agitation for soviet rule in England. He appeals to Sylvia Pankhurst and the mob to storm Whitehall. If Lenin were in England and attempted a coup like that in Russia he would probably find himself treading the same path as Charles I. Tyrants, royal or plebeian, are all the same to Britain. The answer to Lenin, however, is quite diplomatic. His troops have been stirring up trouble in Persia, as part of the program of inflaming the whole of Asia against civilization and settled government. Either the Bolsheviki get out of Persia or Krassin get out of London, was the alternative for Mr. Lenin to consider.

Kipling on the English

Rudyard Kipling's eulogy of the English in his fine speech on St. George's Day is being carefully read by many who perceive that we can only judge of the future by what we know of the past. Kipling has always been somewhat of a prophet, which is his right as a natural born seer and mystic. If at times his prophetic utterances seem incredible we must remember that most history is incredible before it happens. Who believed Francis Grierson or our own Wilson MacDonald when they foretold the great war? Prophecy is merely history reversed. "The things that are are the things that have been; and the things that have been are the things that shall be." Kipling sees the strength of the English in "that they have behind them this continuity of immensely varied race-experience and race-memory, running through every class back to the very dawn of our dawn, which unconsciously imposes on them, even while they deride, standards of achievement and comparison, hard it may be and a little unsympathetic, but not low, and, as all the earth is witness, not easily lowered." These standards, he adds, are taken for granted, "and it is by the things which we take for granted, without words spoken, that we live." All this may perhaps be more fully appreciated by a comparison, say, with Ireland, where native standards are ignored, and artificial and exotic standards have been imposed upon more or less revolting minds for long generations. An exotic religion, an exotic political system, exotic leaders from age to age availing themselves of the habit of revolt that has grown upon the people through the centuries, lead to the social insanity which has too frequently characterized the Irish nation. The Irish do well abroad because they are quick, intuitive and adaptable. They can try experiments in foreign fields which are forbidden at home. The Englishman has no desire to try experiments and is impatient to those who do. He has had his experience and it satisfies him. He knows the ten good rules and is satisfied with the royal game of goose.

Outside Competition Insistent

"It is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." These words of the dramatist may be commended to the attention of labour men who are set upon exacting the last possible cent from the pay sheet. It is a poor argument to cite the example of the capitalist who seeks similar exactions at the other end of the business. It should not be forgotten however that the capitalist rarely dreams of making such a raid on business as is demanded in some of the calls for higher wages. A comparatively slight increase per hour in wage rates spread over thousands of employes quickly runs into millions. If every nation were self-contained and depended upon its own internal trade for all its exchanges and dealings, the adjustments of wages would be a simple matter and would tend to comparative stability. In China through ten or twelve thousand years this isolation prevailed, and fixed conditions became established, so that 400,000,000 people have been able to dwell in a land of 1,500,000 square miles in extent or less than half the size of Canada. Such a social condition is naturally exceedingly delicate in its relations, and any new factor acting as a disturbing element may throw the whole economy into confusion. What then is to be expected of a new nation, full of unknown quantities, susceptible to every influence that beats or blows from any quarter of the globe, and sensitive exceedingly to all trade variation and competition? It is possible to conceive of the whole earth eventually becoming self-adjusted as China did by building a wall around her domain. We fear no competition from Mars or Mercury, but until this globe combination has been effected it must not be forgotten that every nation has not merely to consider local conditions, but learn to recognize the movements without the national boundaries, and to beware of creating conditions that will make trade with neighbours impossible. It might easily be that insistence on too high a scale of wages would make foreign trade impossible, and kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Public Utility Success

Once more an announcement appears that a Hydro-Electric system has reduced its rates. The last case is that of Ingersoll, where the cost of power has been fixed by the Ontario Commission at $21, a reduction of $2. Locally, this works out for the consumer as a reduction from the former rates of 2½ and 1¼ cents to two cents and one cent per kilowatt hour with a minimum monthly bill of 75 cents. Commercial lighting is also reduced and the street lighting is cut from $40 to $30 a lamp of 500 watts. When it is remembered that the Hydro-Electric Commission is the only body on record that steadily reduced rates during the war while all other rates were being raised, the animus with which the commission is assailed in certain quarters is the more difficult to understand. The recent enquiry into the Chippewa Construction showed that the Commission was paying as high a rate of wages as any similar industry, and that the conditions of work had been arranged at the instance of the men themselves. Labour has in many cases not been as considerate of this publicly-owned utility as of privately owned ones, and this again is the less easy to understand since the work is being done for the men themselves and for the community to which they belong. The lack of appreciation of this fact, the missing sense of commercial possession must perhaps be due to a want of training or education, since the attitude of the workmen towards the Commission has not infrequently been hostile, as towards an alien body and not one representing themselves and their own personal interests. Nothing can contribute more to the welfare of the masses than to enjoy the necessities of life at cost price. This is simply impossible under private ownership where a return of dividends is always looked for—profits to the extent that the business will bear. Under such a body as the Hydro-Electric Commission no such profits are extracted from the consumer. He gets his supply at actual cost. As this benefits everybody, including those who live by private ownership as well as those who advocate public ownership there should be no objection to the principle when applied to natural monopolies like Hydro power.

WINS BRITISH TITLE AS BEST MILK PRODUCER

"Celton Secret III," owned by Holt Thomas of England, has just won the title of being the best cow in the British Isle, when in competition she gave 10 1-2 gallons of milk per day, beating all known records there. She is from the Friesian herd breed. American dairymen judge milk by the butterfat contained therein, while the English judge in qauntity.

The Quiet Observer

Clean Hands Wanted

Ontario has nothing to be proud of in the revelations made at the Port Arthur timber limits enquiry. The real difficulty in dealing with the situation or any such situation is the tendency of party politicians of all kinds to shift the blame on someone else, each party blaming the other for what has happened. It has been common knowledge for years among both parties that such things as have been described were going on. The change of party government did not correct the evil. This is the real shame of Ontario. There can be no disclaming of responsibility. Two governments in Ontario have gone down because the people knew that things were being done under these governments that were not in harmony with provincial honour or the provincial welfare. It is a comparatively easy matter to be honest in public life. The trust imposed in governments by the people should inspire the utmost integrity and the strictest justice and fair dealing in administering the public business. It is not necessary to impute guilty knowledge to all members of the governments under which the things complained of happened. But it is impossible to suppose that what was common knowledge among a large part of the public was entirely unknown to those governments through some of their members. There should be concurrence of opinion and co-operation in action to lift administration policies above the reproach of any such possibilities. The people, after all, aim at clean-handed government, and will give it support.

Vote-Catching Unscrupulousness

There is probably nothing in civilized human activity to-day so utterly unscrupulous as the practice of politics. This continues to be the reason for the difficulty of getting the very best men to enter an arena where they would be compelled, if they wished to succeed, to submerge in ordinary cases, or at the best to consent to the suppression or elimination of all those standards of morality and integrity by which they are accustomed to govern their private lives. The end justifies the means is the vicious principle which commands success. If this be more evident in the United States during the years of presidential elections it is no excuse for other countries which follow the precedent in their own way. But in the United States the stakes are so much greater than in almost any other democratic election, and the methods are so questionable and out of date, temptation is perhaps greater than elsewhere to abandon the ideals by which democracy can alone be a success. Mr. Eamonn de Valera, who is a citizen of the United States, having acted as a delegate at the late Republican convention, and who has been the head of a filibustering expedition for the purpose of advancing German interests in Ireland, has had great support from United States politicians, solely for the hope of catching the vote of those who follow the Valera vanity. One leader made no bones about the object of his appeal. The inclusion of an "Irish Republic" plank in the Republican platform, he said, would attract votes from the Democratic party that had never gone Republican before. It is not to be wondered at that the Labour convention in Montreal was treated to similar appeals. It is not the right or the wrong of the question involved that is at issue here, but the unscrupulousness of interfering in another nation's business avowedly for the purpose of catching votes. What would the United States say if the Carlton Club on an election occasion inserted as a principle of the party program some similar interference in United States affairs? Are we in Canada entirely clear of all such tendencies and methods? It is not a party question, but a national question of character and purpose. There may be a thousand and one ways in which the disposition for such actions will manifest itself. The important thing is to have such national pride and self-respect that these things become impossible.

Post Graduates for Ontario

A strong representation has been made from the west as to the advisability of encouraging post-graduate students in eastern universities from Canada's western provinces, instead of letting them go to Harvard and other United States schools. The appeal naturally is to the University of Toronto and to McGill University in Montreal. These are the outstanding institutions where western students might expect, in certain courses at any rate, to find opportunities for which they have been accustomed to look beyond their own borders. In physics at least Toronto presents practically unrivalled advantages. Prof. McLennan, F.R.S., the professor of physics, has done very much to establish post-graduate work as a Toronto specialty, and some of his students have done work that has been recognized and adopted in England by the British government. Many important discoveries used in Admiralty work were the result of Toronto post-graduate work. President Falconer has somewhat resented the suggestion that more encouragement should be given by his university to western men seeking post-graduate opportunities. No institution can afford to ignore the possibility of adding to its friends and no stronger friends can be found for a university than the post-graduate students who are afforded the means of self-discovery which real post-graduate work supplies.

Witchcraft in Ontario

Miss Margaret Pollock was convicted by the County Judge at Goderich that "she did unlawfully pretend from skill and knowledge in occult and crafty science, to discover where and in what manner certain goods" had been stolen. The Appellate Court recognizes Miss Pollock's undoubted good faith, and in view of Dean Harris including spiritism in the occult sciences, thinks that she need not be burned at the stake as the act prescribes under which she was found guilty, and that a suspended sentence would satisfy the law if she would undertake not to work any more witchcraft. With all due respect to the court, the act deals with pretence in occult skill and science and not with actual occult skill and science. The suggestion that "spirits" have anything to do with occult powers is entirely gratuitous. St. Paul is surely a reliable authority and among occult gifts he includes "the word of wisdom" and the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits," and so forth. Miss Pollock has not pretended anything. She has evidently gifts that many others possess. That there are fraudulent pretenders to the possession of such gifts in no way diminishes the virtue of those who really possess them. Our courts do not appear to be able to discriminate between the genuine and the false.

King Edward's Diaries

Nothing so mid-Victorian has happened for many years as the distribution of King Edward's diaries. It is an act of vandalism which history will never pardon, however their contemporaries may excuse those who committed it. Naturally we judge with leniency those who felt constrained to suppress such evidence, moved as they must have been by all sorts of considerations of personal, family, social, caste, diplomatic, state-craft, national and international import. No doubt it might have been unwise to publish in our time the frank observations of such a clear-seeing, level-headed and far-sighted judge of men and events. But in destroying these records two obvious duties were overlooked—the duty to history and humanity, and the duty to King Edward himself. If we can in any degree estimate what he wrote by what he said and did these observations by one of the very shrewdest, wisest and most experienced of the men who presided over the growth of democracy in the thirty years that led to the gigantic struggle between autocracy and the people, would have been of the utmost value in enabling the next century to guage its progress, to correct its errors, and to lay new base lines. The mischief is done and regrets are as vain as over the burning of the Alexandrian library.

BASEBALL'S GAMEST

Babe Ruth, home-run slugger with the New York Yankees, has proved his greatness by his gameness. Sold for the record price of $120,000 to the Yanks, Ruth got away to a poor start—and was "panned" to the limit. Despite this he kept on trying. Then he started hitting and today fans are raving as Ruth is again well on his way to break the record which he set himself last year of 27 homers in one season.

RARE COLLECTION POSTAGE STAMPS

To Be Sold at Auction by French Government

Postage stamp collectors will soon have an opportunity to purchase some of the rarest stamps known to philatelic history, for the French Government, according to a recent report from Paris, is preparing to sell at auction the remarkable collection accumulated at an expense of more than $2,000,000 by the late Baron Ferrary. It has been famous for years as the gratest postage stamp collection in the world.

Had it not been for the war, the collection would have remained intact as a German possession, as it was left in 1917, when Baron Ferrary died at Lausanne, to the Berlin postal museum. The collection was then in Paris, where it had been housed for many years in an imposing building in the Rue de Varennes, bequeathed by the baron's mother, the Duchess de Galliera, to the Austrian Embassy. Seven years after the death of the duchess, Baron Ferrary was adopted by an officer in the Austrian army, R. E. la Renotiere von Kriegsfeld, and in later life he was known as Baron Phillipe la Renotiere von Ferrary

The French Government confiscated the valuable collection as alien property, and it is said that it will now be sold for the benefit of the Government at an early date. Baron Ferrary began stamp collecting as a young man more than sixty years ago, and, possessing ample means, he succeeded in securing copies of both used and unused stamps of practically every postage stamp issued. In its great rarities his collection was unrivalled.

The Best of All.

The gem of the collection is one of the early issues of British Guiana, a one-cent stamp, black on magenta, printed in 1856, bearing the design of a fully rigged sailing vessel While a poor copy, it is the only one in existence, and has been valued at from $10,000 to $15,000. More than 100 of the rare circular stamps of British Guiana of 1850 and 1851 are in the collection, including a superb pair and three single copies of the circular 2 cents rose. A few years ago a pair of these stamps sold in London for $7,200. The British Musuem has one copy in the Tapling collection.

Next to these stamps, the early Mauritius issues are probably the rarest known. Of the very rare one and two-cent issues, 1851, with the words "post-office" in the side margins, there are five copies, including one of the only two known unused one penny stamps. A copy of the two-penny stamp, unusued. was purchased by King George of England, who has one of the best collections in the world, for about $7,250 in 1904.

A Rare One.

The early Hawaiian issues are well represented, including a fine copy of the excessively rare two-cent blue "Missionary" stamp, 1851, valued at $5,000. Barely a dozen copies are known, as practically the entire issue was destroyed by fire in Honolulu soon after it was printed. The early New South Wales "Sydney View" issues are unusually well represented, including a few complete unusued sheets.

There has never been a stamp collector who indulged in his hobby in so princely a manner as did Baron Ferrary. To dealers all over the world he was known as always in the market for any exceptional rarity or choice specimen He was a liberal buyer, and his dealings with one large London firm are said to have represented fully $20,000 a year for many years. He also bought many notable collections, one of the best being the well-known Philbrick collection, for which he paid $40,000 in 1882, and which is said now to be worth $200,000. The sale of the Ferrary collection will be an event in philatelic circles which will attract the attention of collectors in every civilized country.

THE BRAIN BOX

By E. Gunn-Ramsay

IF. What a world of longing is thrown into this one small word "if."

It forms the explanatory link between so many failures of cherished plans It has been made the excusing partner for so many shortcomings. "If only I had seen ahead," "If only I had known before," "If only I had had the opportunity"; saddest of all, "If only time could come over again."

Kipling, in his wonderful poem with this title, used the word "if" to urge, to stimulate and encourage those in the every-day of life.

Not to make it the excuse for slackness, but rather to set it before them as a necessary attachment in the road of their ideal. He says:

"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken,
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss."

"And if you can do all this, my friend," continues Kipling, "you will be a man indeed."

What a picture of the makings of a man—one who has within him the essentials of true greatness. It is a big test.

It is splendid to be a builder, to have an executive job, to be well in the running of things; but the test comes when apparent failure stalks into sight. Here the true man shows himself as able, not only to build up once upon a structure already prepared, but big enough, if all his ships go down at sea and all his barns of plenty should burn overnight, to start over again, to reconstruct from apparent failure.

You started out with an ideal. Where is it to-day?

You once had a plan for your life, for your work. What has happened to it?

You say circumstances, the events of some force unforeseen by you, beyond your control, have cut in upon it, have laid waste and spoiled that which you had intended should be so fair.

Will you let it go at this?

Someone has said, "Not failure, but low aim, is crime." Where did you aim? Why did you aim? And if your arrow once missed the mark, would you for that recall it for all time?

We go along for years building, planning, storing up, cherishing—for what?

What is the price of success? or what is the goal?

You seek it to some end, that you may add to your material comfort or that of someone dear to you. You accumulate; but then what? When the time comes that death rings down the curtain upon your little drama of life, what will you have to show?

The poet who wrote these lines—

"Death comes with a smile, or comes with a pounce,
But it's no matter where or why;
It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,
But simply, how did you die?"

was not, I take it, referring solely to what we call death, but intended the question also to apply to what the world calls "failure."

It is not the fact that you failed that counts; the real thing for you to worry about is, was your motive true? If not—ah! "if" then you have failed indeed. Then it is time to make a fresh start, even if one has "to stoop and build again with worn-out tools."

Get the motive in the right place, then put all thought of failure out of your mind, for you can afford to do so.

The man who has the right ideal can never be written finally as a failure. He may stumble, he may even fall down, he may have to be assisted back into society by way of the ambulance and the hospital, but eventually he will win through; so put this thought into your mental notebook and adopt the title of the good old war song as your motto, interpreting it as the flag of your ideal.

"We'll never let the old flag fall."

Variety is the spice of life—especially in a first-class vaudeville show.

The time-honored bullseye lantern carried by the London police has been replaced by a neat electric lamp.

About $2,000,000 worth of gold has been mined in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland during the past twenty years.

It is reported that a British company is to establish an iron and steel industry in British Columbia to utilize the native ores of the province.

An Ontario girl who is unable to speak above a whisper has had 47 offers of marriage.

MONKEY YEAR IN JAPAN.

Every year in a series of twelve, is known in Japan by the name of an animal, and this is the year of the monkey, writes a Tokio correspondent. Consequently the many millions of New Year's cards exchanged are for the most part decorated with Simian representations of various kinds artists vying with one another in producing the most unique designs. The year of the monkey is not considered a propitious one for marriage, as the word "saru" (monkey) also is a verb which means "to leave," and there is a superstition that all who marry in the monkey year are likely to leave their partners, who might otherwise be partners for life. Consequently all the couples who intended entering the marriage state in 1920 had to rush the ceremony through in December of 1919, keeping country registries and shrines very busy during that month.