The Acton Free Press

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1919

THAT TYPEWRITER

I have a new typ-Writer,
Andd it is my delight
To patter on it gaily
And write, and writell and write$
It aides me in my labors?
When I'm in WorkING vein"
It makes a GREat improvEment½
I write So velty plain.
It oPerates nonw!FLY$
that when you find you're STUck;
and CannoT GND the litder
Justdjab—and-trusT to luck$$(?
It's Eany ——— VEry easHY———
To operHAte it then;;;;?¾%%?
Now where on earth's that colon?
* * *
Give me my ink and pen!

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

A problem which has been long confronted Canada, and, which it has been the aim of all the governments, Dominion and Provincial, for the past quarter of a century and more to solve, has been how to secure and retain population. Governments in the past have, unfortunately, devoted more attention and spent more money in endeavoring to secure population when secured, and more particularly to retaining in Canada our own Canadian born.

With enormous unsettled tracts of land only awaiting settlement to become productive and wealth-producing the Dominion government adopted a free homestead policy, created a most extensive immigration department, and spent millions in advertising and other propaganda to induce people in all countries to come to Canada. For years these efforts met with little success, and the recurring decennial censuses revealed the fact that Canada was not even retaining its own natural growth in population.

Naturally, but nevertheless unwisely, governments at Ottawa and in some of the provinces, both Liberal and Conservative, in their efforts to secure immigrants neglected to exercise care in the matter of quality of new Canadian citizens and devoted their energies to various sects and groups of people, and conferring upon them exemptions from the discharge of national duties which all British and Canadian born subjects were called upon to fulfill. Exemption from military service was granted; special privileges in regard to language, education, and peculiar religious beliefs and other national customs were freely given, and the right to live in isolated communities apart from other citizens was not only admitted, but even encouraged.

As a result of these policies, Canada has received thousands of people who claim, and have a legal and treaty right to claim, special rights and privileges which are denied to Canadian born citizens. Even before the Great War thoughtful Canadians, anxious about the future welfare of their country, were becoming seriously alarmed over the resultant situation, and it only took the Great War, with all it demanded of patriotism, sacrifice and service on the part of Canada and its people to arouse the whole nation to the danger which threatened its future if these policies were persisted in and Canada become the home of numerous and even increasing groups of unassimilated races adhering strictly to the language, customs, passions and prejudices they brought with them from foreign lands.

It is no use merely lamenting over the mistake of the past. At the time these policies were adopted and put into effect they were approved by parliament and a majority of the Canadian people. Nor is it right to blame these non-British born people. Canada invited them to come here, and of her own free will granted them special rights and privileges in the event of their coming. As a nation we must honorably live up to the agreements we then made and the pledges we gave.

But all such agreements and undertakings should be terminated forthwith and should not apply to any future immigration to this country. From this time onward Canada's policy should be absolutely against granting special privileges or conferring special rights on any individual or class of individuals. "Special privileges to none" must be our watchword. All Canadian citizens should enjoy equal rights and equal privileges, and should be called upon to assume equal responsibilities; there should be no exceptions. Furthermore, all residents of Canada should, while they are residents of this country, be Canadians pure and simple and nothing else, without special privileges, exemptions or favors of any kind.

Every resident of Canada, whether he be Canadian or British born, or of alien birth, should be expected and required to render full and loyal service to Canada at all times, in the emergency of war as well as during the happy times of peace. At the same time all present alien residents who are loyal and sympathetic to Canada and law-abiding citizens should be treated as Canadians. Because of their nationality they should not be treated harshly or unjustly. And the loyal, sympathetic law-abiding among these people constitute, without question, the vast majority of their number. But those who are disloyal, whether aliens or British and Canadian born, should be deported or forced to be law-abiding.

Any immigrant to Canada who is unwilling on entry to take an oath that he subscribes without reservation to all the obligations of Canadian citizenship as they may be determined from time to time by the proper authorities, and that he asks for no special consideration by reason of his language, his religious faith or his national customs, or who entertains any belief or renders allegiance to any foreign potentate or organization or is bound in any manner whatsoever to disregard the law of Canada, should be denied admission to Canada.

Canada still needs and must have population. We need quantity, it is true, but above all we must have quality, and if we cannot have quality with quantity, then quantity must be sacrificed. Canada can better afford to wait than make the mistake of filling up her unsettled areas with people who are not willing to become real, out-and out Canadians. Canadian citizenship must be a prize to attain and value; not something to be given away at bargain counter rates in order to secure immigration. The mistakes of the past must never be repeated.

EASILY LED

Why is it when we say that girl is easily led, we invariably mean that she is led in the wrong direction? Very often she resists the appeals of father and mother, disregards their advice, and goes against such helpful influences that one wonders she has the necessary resistance. So many people have tried to lead her in the right direction and have made a failure of it, that it seems absurd to say that she is easily led.

Whether you choose the wrong way or the right way, you will have to resist something. If you follow the path in which your fathers and mothers are trying to lead you, it will be necessary to resist temptation and harmful influences. And if you are led by some of your thoughtless companions, you must resist the authority of your father and the tender love of your mother and all the good influences that have clustered around you since you were born.

THE FUTURE OF THE SMALL TOWN

Much is said and written these days about the small town and its future. In particular, attention is being devoted to present and future prospects of the town and village retail merchant in the face of the increasing competition afforded by the large retail houses in big cities. Many of these local merchants take a gloomy view, and are somewhat inclined to blame the farmer for lack of loyalty to those who, they claim, have extended credit and carried them over bad years, who buy their butter and eggs, and are ever ready to render them small services, whereas the city houses insist on cash in advance and render no local service to them whatever.

The future of the small town or village is inseparable from the prosperity of their retail merchants. If the retail merchant goes, it will not be long before the doctor, lawyer, banker, newspaper, hotelman and others follow suit and with the passing of the "local" centre the farmer would quickly discover he had sustained a loss, the value of which he had not fully appreciated until too late.

Like every other matter, there are two sides to this question, and it is in the interests of all that both sides should be studied. The local town and the local merchant have certain responsibilities towards the farmers of their district, and the farmers have a certain duty towards these towns. An effort should be made to determine what these duties are and to discharge them.

First of all, the town should be made a real community centre and the necessary facilities provided to make it an attractive meeting place for the farmers of the surrounding district and their wives and families. Too frequently it is to be feared, farmers are rather given the impression that all the town cares about them is the money they have to spend. On the other hand, the farmer is apt to compare the lower prices quoted by the city houses with the local merchants' prices without giving heed to anything else.

When the farmer buys from a city house he is compelled to pay cash in advance, nor has he the privilege of first inspecting the goods he purchases. When he buys from the local town merchant he thoroughly examines the goods in advance of purchase, and frequently buys on credit, and would even resent being asked to pay cash. Yet it is a well-known fact that goods cannot be sold as cheaply on credit as for cash.

The local merchant is immediately at hand for every small purchase and in all emergencies; the city house is far away. The average farmer expects, and receives, accommodation from the local merchant when he needs it, and relies on him to take certain of his produce in exchange for goods, but he would never think of asking the city house for similar accommodation and assistance, and would not get it if he did ask for it.

This situation has existed for years, yet the farmer is educated to cash payment—to the city houses. Why, therefore, should the local merchant not adopt the same method, and, as one writer puts it, say: "Mr. Farmer, I've been on this spot serving you for years. I've given you many favors. But you make your most important purchases by mail—pay cash in advance. Now, surely, it is only fair that you pay me cash in advance also for the small purchases you now make here. Every time I pay cash the jobber gives me a discount of 2 to 5 per cent. Each year he allows me also 9 per cent. for prepayment of my bills. You pay me cash and I'll turn this advantage over to you. Both of us will be better off." And the discrepancy between city house prices and those of the local merchants would largely disappear.

The local town or village should do its part. It should identify itself more with the lives of the farmers upon those whose trade its exists. It should provide an attractive rest room where the farmer's wife and babies can gather out of the cold, or wet, or hot sun for an hour or two they are in town. It should be equipped so that the mother can care for the children and tidy up and refresh herself after a long drive in the wind and dust, or wet and cold. It should have facilities where she can make a cup of tea or coffee, and some books or magazines to read. Farmers and their families should be welcomed and encouraged to take an active part in the social life of the town. In a word, the farmers and their families should be made to feel that they are welcome for themselves and quite apart from the money they have to spend.

The community aspect of the problem of the small town is easily the most important aspect. Were the city houses called upon to support every public enterprise in all the towns in which they sell goods as all the retailers do, and are expected to do, a considerable hole would be made in their profits, and their increased overhead expenses would result in increased selling prices. What the local merchant does for his community in these days should not be overlooked.

The more the city house is patronized, the more difficult it will be to build up a bright, attractive, prosperous local community; the more the town merchants are patronized, the better service they will be able to render, the greater variety and volume of stocks they can carry, the closer they can make their prices because the overhead charges of conducting the store would be less in proportion to the volume of business done.

This is an age of co-operation, and farmer and town merchant should make it practice to loyally co-operate the one with the other. Both have everything to gain and nothing to lose by such action.

HE UNDERSTOOD HIS PROFESSION

The professor of jurisprudence in a Western University was lecturing to a hundred embryo lawyers. He asked whether anyone in America could own property. One fellow answered, "No, a criminal can't own property."

But the professor said, "Suppose a man owns a ranch, gets into trouble with his neighbor, assaults him, and is put into penitentiary, does he still own the ranch?"

The class was unanimous that he did.

"If he did not continue to own it," went on the professor, "what would become of it?"

That was supposed to settle the discussion, but one boy called out, "The lawyer would get it!"

There was a hearty laugh, of course, and the professor added:

"We learn two things from that apt remark—be a lawyer, and not a criminal."

RELIC OF THE ROMANS

There is a showcase in the British Museum that is proving very interesting to soldiers who are waiting for their discharge certificates. It is a case in the Roman British section containing the discharge certificates given to soldiers in Britain in the time of the Romans. The bronze certificates are quaintly worded, and record the fact that the holders, "discharged honorably after 25 years of service," are granted Roman citizenship if not already held, "and the recognition of their marriage with those who are their wives, or, in case of unmarried, any wives they may subsequently marry, provided they only have one each." The last sentence, in particular amuses the khaki visitors.

THE OLD MAN OF THE BIG CLOCK TOWER

Last Thursday evening found me at the soldiers' reception in the town hall. I always enjoy these affairs, but occasionally there are things which I think might make them more enjoyable. There seems to be a stronger tendency at every meeting to make a "rough house" of it. I have not seen it growing at each meeting, but refrained from saying anything in the hope that they would be more orderly. I am not blaming any of the committee, or any one in particular, for this seeming lack of authority to control the audience, but it seems to me that unless a strong hand is taken in the matter these functions will not retain the dignity and propriety becoming them. Think it over and act accordingly when you attend and help keep these gatherings up to the standard in the matter of order. Speeches also seem to have had their day at the receptions, and the singing seems to be going to take its place. I believe this is well. The boys who return always seem real flustered on reception night and unable to tell us the many things they had planned to mention, and our citizens who have carried the burden of making speeches seem to have run out of material and would find it a relief to have the duty changed to something that all might take part in.

The presentation by the Junior I. O. D. E. of a beautiful flag to the town saw the culmination of one of my favorite dreams.

I have been dreading the twenty-fourth coming with no new flag to grace the town hall tower. Now we shall see something worthy the name float from the mast head. I don't know how the young ladies raised the funds, but it does not seem to me they called upon public support to any great extent. And then the fine address accompanying and the public presentation to the town of the flag at the reception just "put the cap" on the whole thing. I found out on-ting, however, that I didn't know until that night. The Reeve hasn't been reading my effusions. At any rate he evidently wasn't aware that the town was in need of a new flag for the town hall, and I am sure all my readers had that pointed out quite emphatically a few months ago. I had always hoped he was reading this column, as numerous things I have suggested will necessarily have to come to him for consideration. However, this has nothing to do with the new flag. I for one give my hearty thanks for this emblem that will show our town loyalty.

One of those nice warm days last week I took a stroll out the mill pond road and on my way out I noticed the club house building, and strolled over to inspect it. Jimminy Christmas! What a wreck it is! It doesn't seem to me more than a few years since this neat little structure was erected and seemed to run along in a flourishing condition. I can well remember of many very enjoyable affairs being "pulled off" there and the fine membership list it once boasted of, and the serene future that seemed promised for it. Interest in the club lagged, the membership seemed to diminish, and it was finally closed and all the windows securely boarded up and the doors locked. It might have remained there in fairly good repair for a number of years. But Acton has vandals as other towns have. The boards have been torn off the windows; the doors are burst open. I don't believe there is on whole pane of glass in the place, and the interior is more than wrecked. I can hardly bring myself to think that any grown person in his sane mind would commit the depredations done here. Neither can I think that such destruction could be wrought by small boys, as some of these acts seem past their strength. Who did it I do not know, but it would make a striking example if the culprits were found out and prosecuted. Time and time again I have watched vacant buildings go through this state of destruction. They seem to receive help from some source. Panes of glass do not drop out of their own accord, nor have we ever had any storms of severity sufficient to break windows. Yet almost every vacant building is minus the window panes. Prosecution seems the only remedy to my mind, and the sooner it is carried out and the culprits made to repair the damage done, the sooner such actions will cease. Now observe carefully my continued historical sketch of Mill Street and don't forget to remind me of any omissions, the rest of you "old duffers."

Proceeding up Mill Street the other day I was reminded of an incident of that thoroughfare of nearly fifty years ago. In those days the local doctors were the dentists for the community as far as the aching molars were concerned. The only treatment given was to extract them. On the occasion in question a lad—who is now one of the prominent citizens of Acton—called upon Dr. McGarvin at his drug store to have an aching tooth "out". It was a dull afternoon and the Dr. took the lad to the open door the better to see which tooth. The forceps were placed and with a mighty yank the boy standing there was relieved of the molar and an agonized yell simultaneously. Three or four lads across the street, looking on, declared it was "as good as a circus" for them.

In the place where Deverell's cafe and residence now stands there was a house in which Mrs. Wilds and her two boys lived. On Saturdays Jim and George had wood to cut, and of course it was easier to cut it with the other fellows to help. One day they had Al. Nicklin, Geo. Hynds, Henry Moore and Ward Lightheart helping with the wood. It was "baking day" for Mrs. Wilds, and in the middle of the forenoon the batch of newly-baked bread came from the oven. Generously this mother, who understood boys so well, cut a new loaf into generous slices, buttered it with gilt-edged dairy butter, and distributed the slices among the lads. In a trice Ward Lightheart's portion had disappeared. He sidled up to the open kitchen door and exclaimed, "Mrs. Wilds, that new bread and butter was 'bully.' I believe I could eat another piece." Needless to say another supply was promptly forthcoming for all.

The lot now occupied by McLean & Mills' general store and Soper's grocery and provision store, was originally bought from the Adams' estate by Mr. Houze. He built a store on the corner and a warehouse where the Soper store is. In those days the stores kept both dry goods and wet goods. Many a barrel of old-time whiskey went into the cellar of what was in those early days called "The Glasgow House" in company with barrels of molasses and vinegar. Back in the sixties Charles and James Symon bought the female property and business. Mr. Charles Symon was the father of Mr. James Symon now of the hardware store in the Johnstone block. They did a large business. Acton was then the centre of a big lumbering business, and the Symons' store supplied groceries, etc. In those days sugar came in great hogsheads holding half a ton or more. The hogshead was opened in the warehouse and the daily supply carried to the sugar box behind the grocery counter in the store. Often when the boys and girls were returning home from school the store's errand boy would be in the warehouse getting supplies of sugar. The sweetness was tempting and many a good-sized lump of that splendid muscavado went from the big hogshead to the hand of a blue-eyed Acton maiden, or into the pocket of a venturesome boy of half a century ago, by the medium of Joe Dickson, or Jack McRae or some other of the Symons' store boys. Naturally the route past the open warehouse door was popular with the school kiddies.

The two lots opposite, now occupied by Noble's flour and feed store, Acton Creamery and Mr. N. Forbes' residence were occupied in those days with a beautiful flower and vegetable garden presided over by Mrs. Symon, in which much of the work was done by "Uncle Jimmie" in his leisure moments. Mrs. Record and Mrs. Symon constantly vied with each other as to who could produce the most attractive results in their beds of flowers.

In 1872 the Symons' business was purchased by D. D. Christie and David Henderson, of Milton, and continued in the family with occasional changes for 45 years. During that time various firm names prevailed: Christie & Henderson, Nelson, McRae & Co., Henderson & McRae and Henderson & Co. When Mill Street was widened a dozen years ago the Messrs. Henderson rebuilt and improved the premises. It was gutted by fire from burning rubbish in the yard four years ago and again rebuilt. Two years ago Conway & McLean purchased the business. A few months ago Mr. Conway retired and Mr. Chas. Mills took his interest, and Messrs. McLean & Mills are doing a thriving business in this old established store.

The building across the street was erected by the late James W. Mann, a former clerk of the Symons'. He conducted business there for a number of years and then removed to Guelph. Various business men followed and then the late J. H. Pearson bought the property and improved it. He was followed by Johnstone & Co. and later Morris Saxe opened a store there, had a fire and then veneered the building with brick. Several Jewish store keepers also did business here. A couple of years ago the Robert Noble estate purchased the property.

Well, I am driving up Mill Street rather slowly, but really when I get thinking of the old days events of greater or less importance crowd upon me. It looks as if it may take me a month or two to get up to the Grand Trunk Railway where I first saw the old wood-burning "Bullgines" crossing Mill Street on the newly completed line over sixty years ago.

A DARING DEED

The Lokal-Anzeiger, a newspaper of Berlin, tells the story of a daring deed performed in the air by a machinist named Richard Lulkhardt. The young man was a member of the crew of a Zeppelin that was engaged in the bombardment of Liege and Nepon, and that also took part in the siege of Antwerp. On one of its trips the airship was spied by a lookout on the fort below, and immediately became the target of a number of high angle guns.

At last a shrapnel shell exploded behind the airship and damaged the staging that supported the rear screw. Immediately the screw sagged, and the ship and its crew were in peril of their lives. Some brave fellow must get out, saw off the iron cables, and release the half-destroyed staging; for the balance of the airship was seriously affected, and it would soon turn over. At once Lulkhardt volunteered to go.

Taking a metal saw and a file, he clipped out of the car and worked his way along the frame of the airship to the damaged staging. It took half an hour to clear the broken staging away, but the brave fellow stuck to his post, and at last saw the ship right itself and come under control again. Not satisfied with his feat, Lulkhardt further risked his life by mending the rip that the exploding shrapnel had made in the cover of the airship. As a reward, he received an Iron Cross of the first class.

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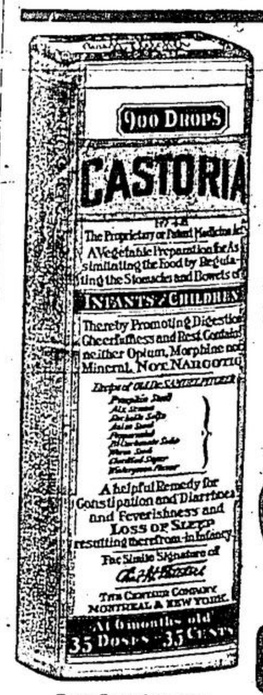
UNFINISHED RUINS

On a splendid bluff, overlooking a broad river in a western state, stand the ruins of an unfinished dwelling. Everything shows that it was started on an ambitious scale. The foundation is deep. The walls of stone. The plan of the ground floor rooms suggests that an architect of more than ordinary ability designed that building. But for some reason the work was abandoned before the second story was reached. It stands there sadder than an ordinary ruin, a thing unfinished, useless, a monument to effort thrown away.

That uncompleted building, falling into ruins, without ever having been finished, seems typical of many a life. For innumerable people go through life without ever finishing anything worth while. Some of them, as was the case in the house referred to, plan service on a high scale. They are ambitious to do big things, to count in the world. But before they have more than made a start, they meet some discouragement that daunts them, or encounter some difficulty they regard as insurmountable, or simply lose interest. The lives that have carried to successful fulfillment the purpose with which they started, are in the minority.

There is something sad in the sight of any ruin. We stand before an old house crumbling to decay, and try to picture the life that went on under that sagging roof. Faces looked through the broken windowpanes and smiled a welcome to friends who came up the path. Once fires crackled on the old hearth. That tangle of weeds was a garden where flowers blossomed. But if an atmosphere of sadness envelops a ruined home, there is dignity in its desolation. Once it sheltered a household. It played its part, and ruin came upon it after it had fulfilled its purpose. The ruin of an unfinished building has no such dignity. It is futile, contemptible, because it represents not usefulness at an end, but something that never was of use. The life which has not accomplished its purpose, which stands for incompleteness has something contemptible in its tragedy. Stick to your purpose. Do not make an ambitious start and then give up. Guard against vacillation and indecision. Refuse to be baffled by difficulties, or daunted by discouragements. It is to our lasting shame if our life-work falls into ruin without being finished.



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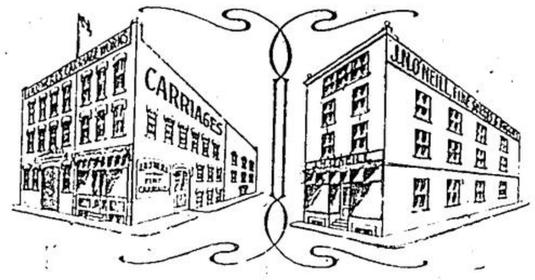

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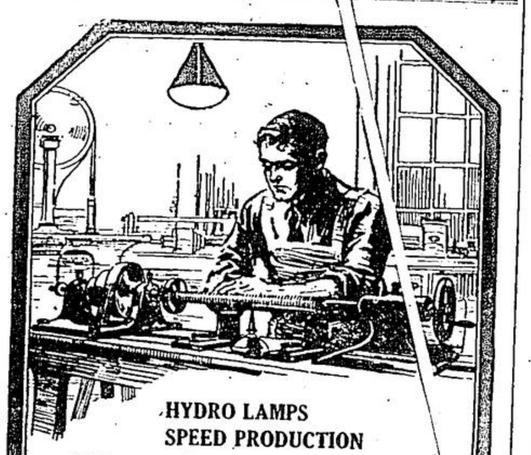

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