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FOURTH SECTION

"A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST"; COL. H. R. SMITH'S REMINISCENCES

The Late Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons Tells of Incidents That Happened During More Than Half a Century of His Public Service.

The following reminiscences by the late Colonel Henry R. Smith will be read with increased interest by many old friends, now that this kindly old public servant of Canada has passed away. Here is what the Colonel wrote several years ago:

I entered the parliamentary service of old Canada on the first day of May, 1859, the seat of Government being at that date, in the city of Toronto. The Government then in power had assumed office on the 6th of August, in the previous year.

There was a Legislative Council of 54 members, of whom 24 were elective; twelve of these came from each of the two provinces, Upper and Lower Canada. The Legislative Assembly consisted of 130 members, and my father was Speaker of what was then called the Lower House.

What struck me forcibly was the general good style and old-fashioned courtesy of both Houses, as well as the excellent tone of debate, and the almost total absence of personal references. These legislators of long ago were men of good breeding and polite manners, and during the years that have passed I have often felt that, when any politician aimed at becoming a statesman, he could not begin better than by being a gentleman.

At the modest cost of \$28 a month I found comfortable quarters at Ellah's Private Hotel, situated on the corner of Front and Bay streets, where my father was living with Alexander Campbell (afterwards Sir Alexander), a member of the Legislative Council, John Ross, President of the Council in the then Government, and several other gentlemen mostly members of either House.

A Woman Masquerades.

Among those I met at this most pleasant hotel was a doctor, serving in the Royal Engineers, with the relative rank of Major. Of our large circle, this officer was the only one who, later, turned out not to be a gentleman, though possessing much of the same style and bearing as the rest of our party. Wearing two war medals and several clasps for active service, with the reputation of having shown great bravery and of having been a cool principal in a duel when the opponent had been wounded, the astounding fact was revealed by death, a few years later, that this medical officer had been a woman. Very pathetic seemed the story of this lonely lady, who, in some mysterious way, had lived more than a dozen years wearing the uniform of Her Majesty's Army; and, amidst stirring scenes and much activity, had concealed the secret of her sex.

One of my earliest experiences was a ball at Government House, then occupied by His Excellency Sir Edmund Head, who, in 1854, had been appointed Governor-General of Canada.

Time has somewhat dimmed my memory, but this was my first ball, and I can recall many of its scenes; among these, comes the charming vision of a lithe and graceful partner, whom I secured for an early waltz. She was a French-Canadian lady, and as energetic as she was fair to see. The Dawn of Love was the name of the waltz; the lady had faded from my mind, but I pray she may be now a grandmother with feminine descendance as beautiful as she was then.

The soft strains of the exquisite music rose and fell, and my partner seemed to be floating while I remained but a dull cloud of earth cursed with heavy, all-pervading feet—"I want"—I said eagerly—and paused breathless.

"What is it you want?" said the soft voice close to my ear, "I want to stop"—I gasped sadly—and a welcome pause enabled me to explain that I was wearing a most adhesive pair of rather countrified India rubbers.

Later, at supper, I tasted for the first time a famous vintage of champagne, and I learned that its name was "Clicquot," the product of a vineyard owned by a lady of that name, and only familiar as a beverage to the crowned heads of Europe. My father had told me not to drink more than two glasses, and I remember that I was careful to obey him. The wine of Madame Clicquot and your humble servant have been strangers ever since.

The Other McNab.

Among the notable men of that day was Sir Allan McNab, a typical Scotch gentleman and a Baronet, who, afterwards, became Speaker of the Legislative Council and continued in office until his lamented death, a few years later. As though it were but yesterday, I can see his broad breast covered with a bright red tartan. Once, I happened to follow in his wake at some social function, where each guest was announced at the drawing-room door. He was accompanied by his brother, the Chief of the Clan McNab, who went first. When the servant asked his name, the tall Scotchman drew himself up and answered impressively: "The MacNab." "And yours, sir?" said the man in livery to Sir Allan, who with a twinkle in his eye, responded: "The other MacNab."

A few months later, we were ordered to Quebec and the first session opened there on the 28th of February, 1860. Ottawa had been determined upon as the future seat of Government for Confederated Canada, and about this time the Public Works Department undertook the construction of the splendid buildings which are now occupied on the hill, to which many additions have since been made.

Quebec was a most delightful station in those days, having a large garrison consisting of the 2nd Battalion, 17th Regiment, the 4th Battalion, 60th Rifles, and four companies of the Royal Canadian Rifles, with two Batteries of Royal Artillery and a detachment of Royal Engineers.

Parliament was prorogued on the 17th of May, with the understanding that it would meet again to welcome Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, during the coming summer.

On the 18th of August, 1860, His Royal Highness was received at Quebec amidst general rejoicing, and on the 21st the two Houses of the Legislature presented joint addresses, expressive of loyal devotion and attachment to the good queen his mother.

The Prince of Wales had been vested with the power of conferring Knighthoods and both Speakers, Sir Narcisse Belleau and my father, received this honor.

Presented to Prince of Wales.

There was a dinner party in the

evening, and I was presented to His Royal Highness, who looked very slim and youthful in his well-fitting scarlet uniform. He gave me a cigar of delicious flavor, and some sensible people told me that I ought to keep it always, and hand it down to posterity. Unhappily, I was young and foolish, and getting away into a quiet place with a young officer, proceeded to smoke with fastidious deliberation. My memory is dim as to what followed, but I do remember that, at the last, the ceiling began to wave softly, and the floor to slant in various directions, so that standing on it became a matter of acrobatic skill; and when, later, my mother came to me, I could only express a fervent wish to lie down and die. This was my first and last smoke for many a day.

In the days of which I am speaking there were no typewriters or telephones, and I have to this day a pewter inkstand which was given me when I joined the service in 1859, a quaint old memento which has stood on my desk for more than half a century.

In 1861, Sir Edmund Head returned to England, and was succeeded by Viscount Monck, whom I remember as a very genial and energetic Irishman, who was generally popular.

Lord Monck was the first Governor-General who occupied Rideau Hall, when the seat of government was fixed at Ottawa, in 1867, and I have a vivid recollection of doing duty in an old-fashioned sentry box near the front door, during the first Fenian Raid, being at that time a private in the Civil Service Rifle Corps.

At First Parliament.

We reached Ottawa early in the year 1867, and the first Dominion Parliament assembled on November 6th of that year. It was pleasant to be the occupant of such fine offices, and we were greatly struck by the natural beauty of the city as well as by its stern morality.

The police were very busy making people good, and there were awful stories of how wicked citizens used to kill each other, and quietly drop the corpses over the cliff behind the Parliament Buildings. No doubt; these tales were exaggerated, but there certainly had been religious quarrels, and I remember hearing a most distinguished jurist regret that, having a good shot at a famous statesman, he had missed getting him by the untoward accident of a bad percussion cap.

Is it not strange that the bitterest quarrels emanate from questions of piety, and remind one of that Irish Roman Catholic priest who, viewing his flock engaged in a physical discussion on parish matters, remarked: "Just look at the darlins' down there bating each other for the love of God."

Reminiscences of McGee.

About this time I met Thomas D'Arcy McGee and greatly admired his eloquence and genuine Irish humor. There were none so bright and witty in the House at that time, and seats were always well-filled when it was known he was going to speak.

I well remember a certain evening when, in his usual original style, he attacked the then acting leader of the House, Sir George E. Cartier. "Suppose, Sir," said he, "any honorable member had a friend in town whom he wished to entertain, do you think, Sir, for one moment, that he would bring him here to this House to show him the Ship of State drifting helplessly and hopelessly along with such

a figure-head as that at the prow? No, Sir, he would take him anywhere else—to a fire—if there happened to be one that night."

Again, I recall a rather festive night at Duggan's Private Hotel, which was situated on the corner of Sparks and Bank streets, where a number of us lived and enjoyed ourselves, as young men are apt to do. There were cool drinks and tobacco, and some revelry, when we heard a step on the stairs, and a moment after, Mr. McGee appeared: "Gentlemen," said he, in his rich Irish voice, "I happened to be passing on the opposite side of the street, and I saw the house with its cold stone walls and closed doors, and a warning voice whispered to me as I lingered: 'Thomas, you ought to go home' but I looked again, and heard the clink of glasses and the sound of merry laughter, and another, and a stronger voice said: 'D'Arcy, you'd better go in'—and here I am."

His welcome was warm and the fun went on with added zest. Presently, a young Civil Servant, who was under the impression he could recite, attempted "The Bridge of Sighs"; Mr. McGee was all attention, and those who sat near him saw that he was apparently moved by deep emotion. His handkerchief was in his hand, and he, who were close to him, heard him murmur: "Poor girl—poor girl—she's murdered again."

Months later I walked home with him to his rooms on Sparks street, which were not far from my own. The night was a remarkable one, for it was the fourth of April, 1868, and later I learned that we were dogged to his door by those who, on the following night, shot and killed him. Then he was alone, having parted from some friends at the adjacent

corner of Sparks and Metcalfe streets. And so, twenty-four hours later, he died a martyr to free speech and the country he served so well.

At Whalen's Execution.

It fell to my lot in due time to be present at the execution of Whalen, who was convicted of this murder, and I can recall that the jail yard was lined with troops, and that each man carried a proper supply of ball cartridge, but the scene was quiet and solemn, and no excitement marred the last stern enforcement of the majesty of the law.

Early in 1872, I became Acting Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, and of those whom I then saw in the Chamber, but one remains there to-day, in the person of the Hon. John Haggart, who is now the senior member of the House.

Parliament in session is an interesting study, but above all, it is full of esprit de corps. Members have certain rights and privileges, and would beget the man who attempts to curtail or interfere with them. I Liberal will fight for a Conservative, or vice versa, if any member is attacked or unjustly treated, outside the line of politics.

The Speaker thus generally receives the greatest deference and respect, and his rulings are rarely questioned or disputed.

The Mace.

There is, too, one inanimate object in the House which must always awaken historic memories, and which is found in almost all legislative bodies: I mean the mace, which is the emblem of the power and authority of parliament.

History records that, in the House of Commons at Westminster there

have been but three maces; the first one disappeared when Charles the First lost his life on the scaffold, and its ultimate fate remains a mystery. Later Cromwell ordered another mace to be made, and it is remarkable that some years after, he scornfully referred to this same mace as "The Bauble," desiring it to be removed from the table during that eventful session of 1635, when the great Protector dismissed the Parliament; this so-called "Bauble" also disappeared. The third mace, which is now in use, has no late inscription, beyond the initials "C. R." It first appeared in the House on the Restoration of Charles the Second, in 1660.

I cannot trace the mace of the Commons of Canada further back than 1841, the date of the union of Upper and Lower Canada, and there is good reason to believe that it was manufactured at that time, the cost being \$1,500.

Through all its shining years, the Canadian mace has remained intact and unscathed, and has had but two surprises, one being at Montreal in 1849, when the mob burned the Parliament buildings, and carried it to Sir Allan MacNab's rooms, in the Donegana Hotel. The second surprise was in 1905, when Speaker Sutherland gave orders to have the time-honored initials "V. R." removed, and those of the reigning sovereign substituted. "The date," said the then Speaker, "should be changed, and this order was also given. The idea was quaint and original, but was not seriously regarded, and, happily, no change was made."

The prayers of Parliament are always uttered with close doors and proper solemnity and solemnity in French and English.

I remember an English Speaker, who, perhaps prematurely, appealed to Heaven in the former tongue, and the witty comment of Alonzo Wright, M.P., who expressed a hope that God understood what was being said, as he felt sure no one on earth ever would.

Cabinet of Antiques.

Mr. Davin was in his way, a source of great amusement to the House, and held a high place as a humorous and original speaker. He, like D'Arcy McGee, was often most entertaining, and his Irish wit and quick repartee never failed him. I can recall a very pointed attack which he made on a certain government which had incurred his temporary displeasure. "What is it," said he, "Mr. Speaker, that I see before me; a Government, it is true, but one which delegates its powers to a Deputy Minister who rule it. Sir, I cannot fill these empty skulls with brains; men style them a Cabinet, but to my mind, Sir, they are only a Cabinet of Antiques."

I remember two scenes in the English House of Commons, in which Irish members figured, on both occasions exhibiting the peculiarities of the most amusing people on earth. A member had been addressing the House at fire-some length, and became annoyed at frequent interruptions. "Sir," said he, "I regret to call attention to the unseemly noises which appear to be coming from both sides of the House, and I wish to tell honorable gentlemen, here and now, that I am not addressing them, Sir, I am speaking to posterity." And then there came from far back in the Chamber a thin Irish voice, which said: "They'll be listenin' to you soon, if you go on."

The other is an allusion to the supposed grasping character of land owners in Ireland. "Mr. Speaker," said this orator, "such is the rapacity of the Irish landlord that, if placed alone upon a desert island, his first act would be the despoiling of the pockets of the naked savages."

Specimens of Robust English.

Here, too, we have some specimens of robust English from members of our own House. Away back in the seventies John Hillyard Cameron, an able and distinguished lawyer, speaking in defence of Sir John Macdonald, during a fierce debate when political feeling ran high, eulogized his chief with warm eloquence. "Sir," said he, "I do not believe in these cries of corruption which come so glibly from honorable gentlemen, and I do believe that for every dollar we spent, the opposite party spent two dollars; and when I hear honorable gentlemen getting up and boasting about their purity, I confess I don't believe them for my experience of life has taught me that the man who is most virtuous usually says least about it. Sir, we were boys together, and from that day to this day, I have stood here at his back, a humble but, I trust, a useful follower; and in all these years, whatever may have been said about my right honorable friend's tendency to bring members from that side of the House and place them upon this side, this fact stands out in clear prominence, that he is here before you to-day, a poor man and a pure man."

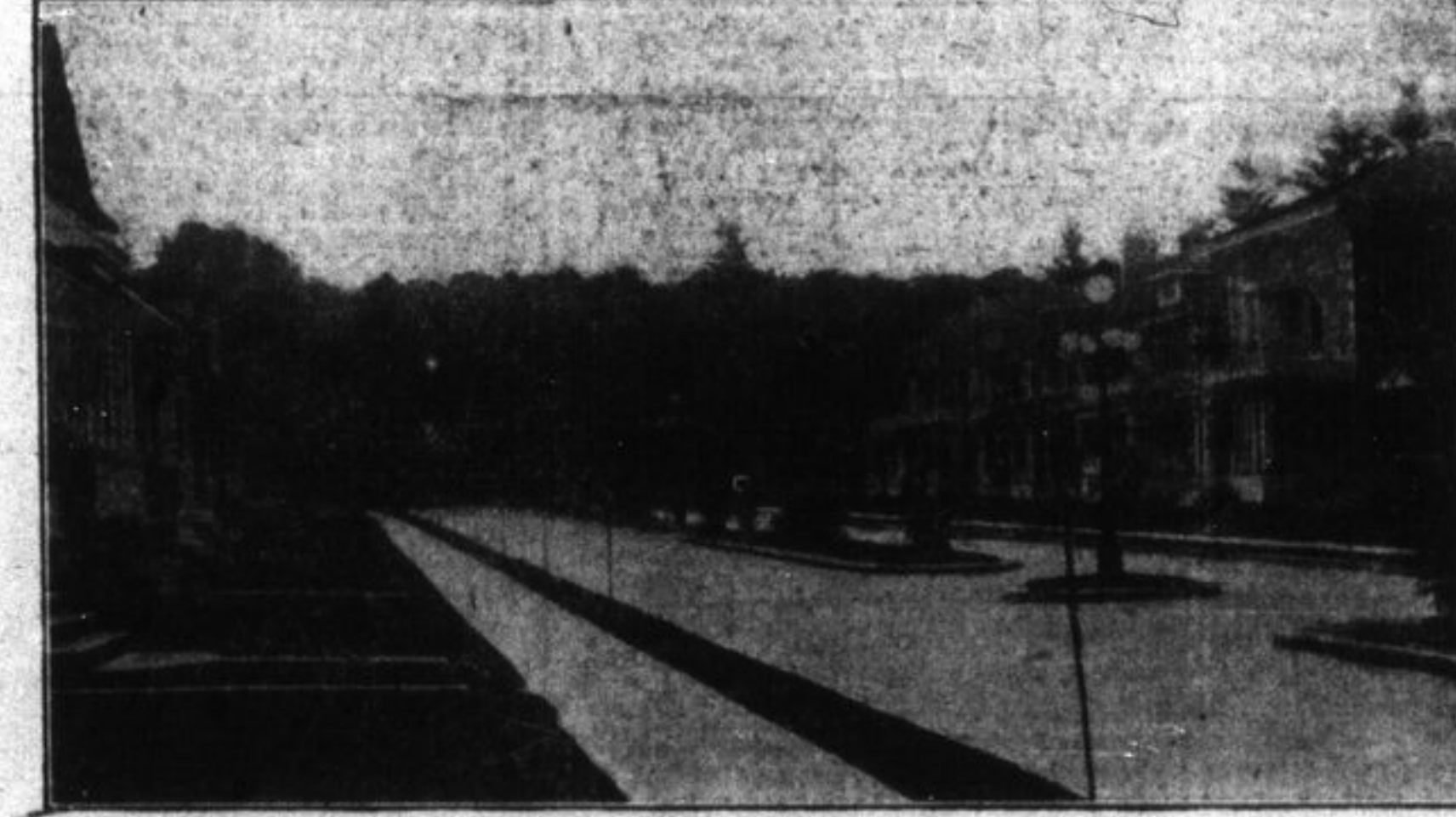
Alexander Mackenzie was no less warm in his fervent Scotch earnestness in regard to the loyalty of any which seems to have been with us ever since. "Sir," he retorted on a later occasion, "I am sick of the continued cries of disloyalty which come with such a bad grace from the opposite side of the House, and in replying to them, I cannot do better than quote the words of a great English statesman, who, upon being similarly taunted, replied: 'Mr. Speaker, I hold myself second to no man in loyalty to my gracious queen, but because I am loyal to her, I do not think I should also be loyal to her man servant, her maid servant, her ox and her ass.'"

Many years have passed since I listened to those earnest voices—now forever silent—but their very tones are still fresh in my memory, for every word was uttered with the sincerity of conviction, and none who heard them could doubt their strong devotion to the opposite parties which they served so faithfully and so long.

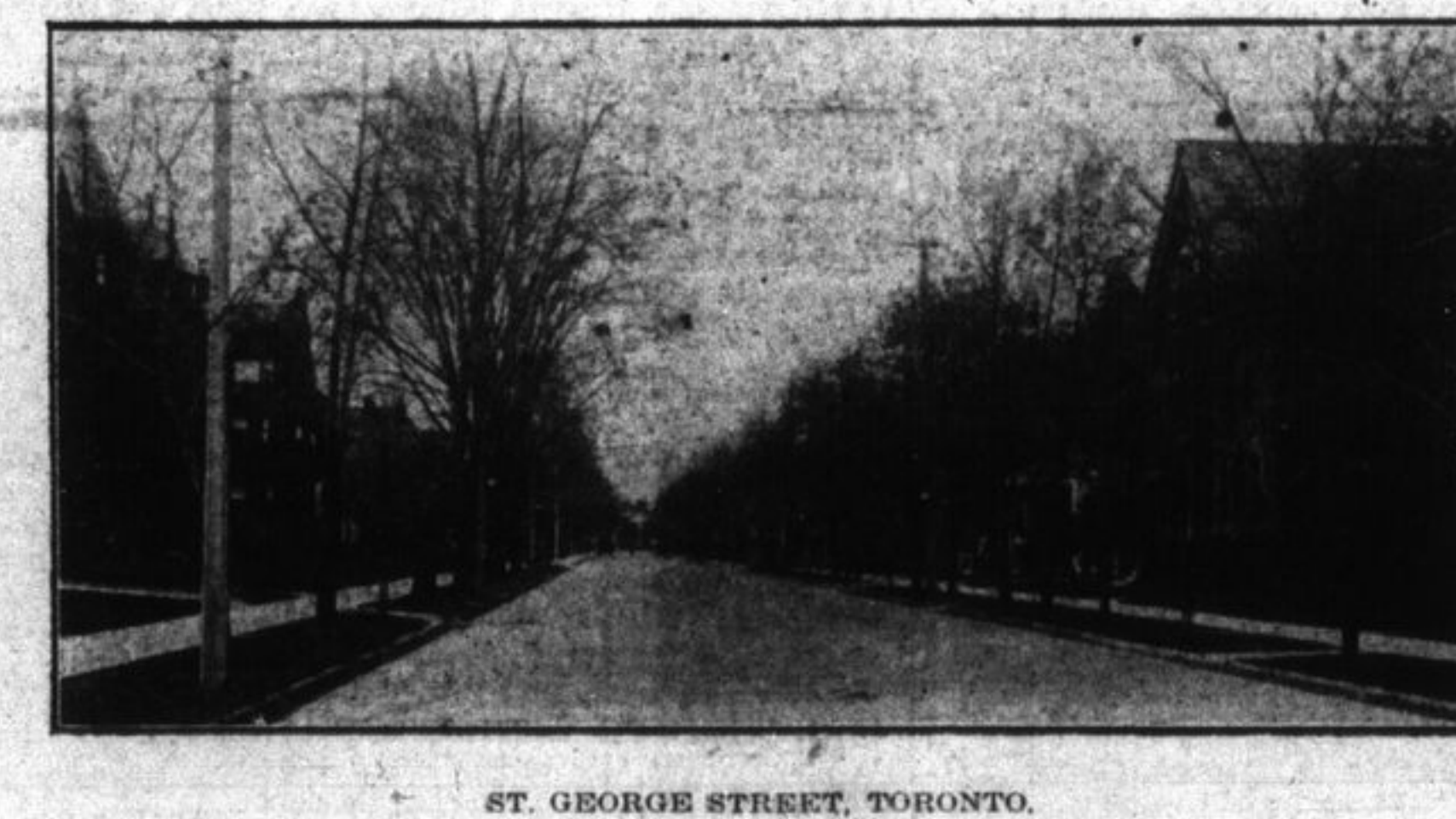
Modern Streets and Improvements

Views of Streets in Various Cities, Published in the Report of the Department of Public Highways, Ontario, and Reproduced in the Whig by Kind Permission of the Deputy Minister.

Pictures which will confirm the desires of those who want the plans and specifications of the City Engineer with regard to University Avenue carried out in their entirety. Mr. McClelland is clearly abreast of the times in this matter and ought to be most cordially supported by the citizens and council.



BAINSDALE BOULEVARD, HAMILTON.
Sheet asphalt surface on a 4-inch concrete foundation laid in 1914. The park space is 10 feet wide between 18-foot roadways, and the grass spaces adjacent to the curbs are 5 feet wide. The sidewalks are 6 feet wide.



ST. GEORGE STREET, TORONTO.
Sheet asphalt surface 35 feet wide on a 4-inch concrete foundation, laid in 1904. The sidewalks are 6 feet wide and the grass spaces adjacent to the curbs 7 feet wide.



WILSON AVENUE, ST. THOMAS.
Two concrete pavements 18 feet wide and 7 inches thick, laid in 1913. The track allowance is 20 feet wide. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide and the grass spaces next to the curbs are 12 feet wide. The width between property lines is 100 feet.



BRANT ROAD, GALT.
Tar filled macadam surface 26 feet wide on a broken stone foundation, laid in 1911. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide and the grass spaces next to the curbs are 3 feet wide.



QUEEN STREET NORTH, KITCHENER.
Bitulible surface 35 feet wide on a 5-inch concrete foundation, laid in 1912. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide and the grass spaces adjacent to the curbs are 3 feet wide.



PARK AVENUE, GUELPH.
Water-bound macadam roadway, with surface application of cold tar, 22 feet wide, laid in 1915. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide and the grass spaces next to the curbs are 7 feet wide.

Parliamentary Amenities.

May I close these reminiscences of parliamentary amenities with a couple

(Continued on page 21.)