

ANNUAL MEETING OF BANK OF MONTREAL; BUSINESS SITUATION

Sir Vincent Meredith Expresses Belief That Canada Will Prosper—Country Offers Inducements to Immigrants Vastly Superior to Those of Other Countries.

Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor Points Out That Canada Must Put House in Order—People Must Insist on Government Practising Policy of Economy.

The 107th annual general meeting of the Bank of Montreal was held at the Head Office of the Bank in Montreal. The board of directors was increased from eighteen to twenty, the new positions, however, not being filled at the present meeting.

Sir Vincent Meredith, President, in his address to shareholders, said in part: "During the past year continued confused world-wide conditions have been a deterrent to business generally, yet, despite relative dullness of trade and the heavy burden of taxation imposed on financial institutions, I am happy to be able to say that we have earned our dividend and bonus."

Sir Vincent went on to say that he was satisfied that general conditions were improving, and he prophesied bright things from a business point of view in the future. He said that the past year had shown a better demand for steel in various forms, especially from railroads, that textile trades were gradually recovering from the slump and that dealings in hides and leather had broadened.

Figures of Canada's foreign trade, he remarked, are encouraging. In the twelve months prior to October 31st the aggregate value of this commerce was \$160,000,000 greater than in the preceding year. This, said Sir Vincent, was attributable in no small degree to the enormous grain crop of 1923. Flour products have always been the largest contribution to Canada's export trade, being greater than the combined value of all other commodities.

The other outstanding item in respect of export trade is forest products. In the seven months ending October 31st shipments of wood and wood products, including paper, declined in value about \$15,000,000, as compared with the previous year, this decrease occurring in lumber and not in paper.

A favorable trade balance is shown by the excess of exports over imports amounting to \$120,000,000, as compared with an excess of only \$15,000,000 in the corresponding period last year. Foreign competition, which for some time past had been anticipated, is now being keenly felt in several basic Canadian products in neutral markets.

Immigration has been disappointingly small, and without increase in population, increase in production will remain obstinately slow. The problem belongs to other hands than mine, but I am convinced the day is not distant when this favored land of Canada will be sought by the surplus population of Great Britain and Europe, as well as by those thrifty classes who will here find opportunity for further improving their condition.

A Word of Confidence.

My last word is a word of confidence and encouragement. The interests of your Bank are more closely bound up with those of Canada than ever before, and unless Canada prospers, the Bank cannot expect the prosperity it should enjoy. I believe Canada will prosper. It offers inducements to immigrants vastly superior to those of other countries, which are at present endeavoring to attract citizens. It stands third amongst the countries of the world in natural resources. We possess half of the forest area of the British Empire; our mines produced in 1923 \$14,000,000 worth of metals, and the surface is scarcely scratched. Canada stands second in the world in coal deposits. Her water powers are estimated at 18,000,000 horse power and she enjoys unequalled transportation facilities. For those with some capital and a willingness to work, the cheap, rich lands of western Canada offer a means of healthful subsistence and, in time, a better competence than can be obtained elsewhere. Yet cardinal virtues must be practised and I would again stress the necessity for hard work and economy, so often preached and seldom put into practice, and the need for immigration. Given these three things, I look forward with the utmost confidence to Canada's future.

General Manager's Address.
Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor, General Manager, in a review of the

DON'T LET YOUR BOWELS GET CONSTIPATED

A free motion of the bowels every day should be the rule of every one who aspires to perfect health, for once the bowels become constipated and clogged up, all the other organs of the body become deranged.

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"THE THIEF OF BAGDAD"

BY AHMED ABDULLAH

Based on Douglas Fairbanks' Fantasy of the Arabian Nights, by Eton Thomas

"What?" interrupted the Prince with rising excitement. "You don't mean to say that it is really..."

"Yes! I mean it! There is no doubt of it! It is the magic carpet! Stand on it! Sit on it! Squat on it! Then tell the rug where you wish to go! And—swish, swish, swish! like the shooting of dragon-flies—it will rise into the air, it will cut through the sky, high up, above the roofs, above the clouds, and carry you wherever you command. Ha!—ho—hee!" he laughed vindictively, triumphantly—"for years it has been in this bazaar—for all the world's fools to spit on and wipe their feet on. And none knew! None knew!"

"Thank you, thank you!" exclaimed the Prince, while the servants stowed away the magic carpet in the litter. "Name your reward!"

"Don't thank me—yet!" sneered Hakim Ali. "For, doubtless, you will win Zobeid with this rug."

"That is just why I am thanking you!"

"That is just why you should not thank me! Woman? By Allah! Has it not been said that woman is an affliction of grief in love as well as in hate? Has it not been said: 'Among the philosophers, the Chinese; among the beasts, the fox; among the birds, the jackdaw; among men, the barber; and in all the world woman—is the most crafty?' Has it not been said, furthermore: 'The beauty of the lark is in its song, good manners are the beauty of an ugly man, forgiveness the beauty of the devotee, and the beauty of woman is virtue—but where shall we find a virtuous woman?' Wah!" he rumbled on. "I have always considered the female of the species a sort of walking, two-legged pest, whose mission on earth, like the mission of mosquitoes—here he flicked a mosquito away with his tail—"is only to prevent our being too happy! No, no, my lord! Do not thank me!"

And the Hakim, still laughing disagreeably, was carried away by his slaves, while the Prince of Persia, reclining in his litter, left Shiraz.

He was serene and happy. The end of the first moon—and already he had acquired the treasure wherewith to win the Princess' hand. Why—he thought—he was in no hurry to return to Bagdad; would be able to stop for a couple of months at Kerman. For this was the season when the purple plums and purple melons of Kerman were ripe! Ah!—he smacked his fat lips— lamb, stuffed with nuts and raisins and roasted whole; a heaped platter of plums; a bottle of golden Khakettian wine; and a melon—perhaps two melons—as dessert! Life was worth the living indeed!

He fell asleep, while the little slave girl, curled at his feet, crooned a lilt, hissing Alghan love son, and while the Mongol Prince's spy, who had watched and listened, rode swiftly toward the North to make report to his master. On he rode; over the ragged, bitter crests of the mountains, across sudden valleys, flanking the dwarf dikes of poppy fields, on through the huge, grey flar of the upland desert that was seamed with wide sheets of tufaceous gypsum shining like mirrors; on, ever hurrying, grudging the hours of rest spent in camp and towns by the way; galloping his shaggy pony no matter how rough and steep the road; knowing well that the Mongol Prince, while punishing cruelly those who disobeyed, rewarded liberally those who obeyed and rendered fair service.

And it was an ironic twisting of Fate that, without knowing it, the spy passed within a short distance of the Hill of Eternal Fire, the Hill of Pride, where the Thief of Bagdad was facing his second ordeal.

This Hill—wrongly so called—was an enormous defile, cleft between towering black walls, and in the centre of it a great, seething, rockined caldron of flames, perhaps three miles across, fed by the pride of unjust men and fallen Angels.

Hard was the road up the defile to the stepping of Ahmed's feet. Stronger and stronger, as he toiled upwards, his lungs beating like a hammer, the heat from the caldron, as he approached it, sucking through the defile as through a chimney and scorching his face, grew the temptation to return, to give up this pilgrimage. Was Zobeid, his love for her and her love for him, worth this terrible suffering of his flesh and his soul? Was anything under heaven worth it?

"Return, O fool! Return!" whispered his brain. "Go back to Bagdad! There is a life of ease and plenty waiting for you in bazar and marketplace! Why strive for the unobtainable?"

But while his brain reasoned, his soul—prayed; mechanically at first; then ardently, fervently; until—dimly, gradually—he began to comprehend that Allah was something far greater, more immeasurable, more vast, both more merciful and more kindly, than hitherto he had been able to grasp. Something there was in Allah's will, he knew, he felt, which gave unity and coherence and reason to all, even to sufferings and martyrdom, and he might some day lay hold of this something, the Infinite, through his faith, and thus vaguely, but truly and indeed, see the shining face of God.

Reasoned his brain: "Return, O fool!"

Said his soul: "Keep on your road! For everything is of God—you yourself, your weakness, your strength, your love for Zobeid, your faith, your doubts!"

So with the understanding of God's eternal omnipotence, humility came to the Thief of Bagdad while step by step as he neared the seething caldron and while his flesh suffered ever more intensely with the enormous, cruel, splintering, heat, the temptation to return, to give up his pilgrimage, vanish-

ed and thinned and disappeared completely; was only a drab memory when at last he reached the caldron—and looked down—and shuddered.

Around the rim of the caldron the flames licked up like speckled, blotched, luminous reptiles; like cobras with dripping lips, stained crimson and scarlet by the blood of sacrifice; coiling about the souls of the unjust men and the fallen Angels, with the destroying heat of their flaming bodies, cleansing the sin-scabbled spirits as in a crucible; while smoke, blue, black, grey—the sins of these souls released from the pure, spiritual matter—rolled on and up in gloomy, grotesque, sinister garlands. Farther toward the centre of the caldron the flames peaked a thousand feet high in a supreme travail and martyrdom, melting the rocks here and there, bursting them asunder, so that they tumbled down, loud-booming, like the black crack of doom. And still the blaze roared up, spread up, twirled up, forked up; red-headed, blue-tipped, yellow-frayed; and ever and anon, when the black-winged Angel of Death tossed another soul of pride and injustice into the caldron, there would come an immense shrieking and yelling, and the flames would shoot higher—ever higher.

Ahmed looked. He stared. How might he cross? There seemed no way, except to swim across these flames as across a river. And again temptation touched him. He would return. He was too weak to face this ordeal.

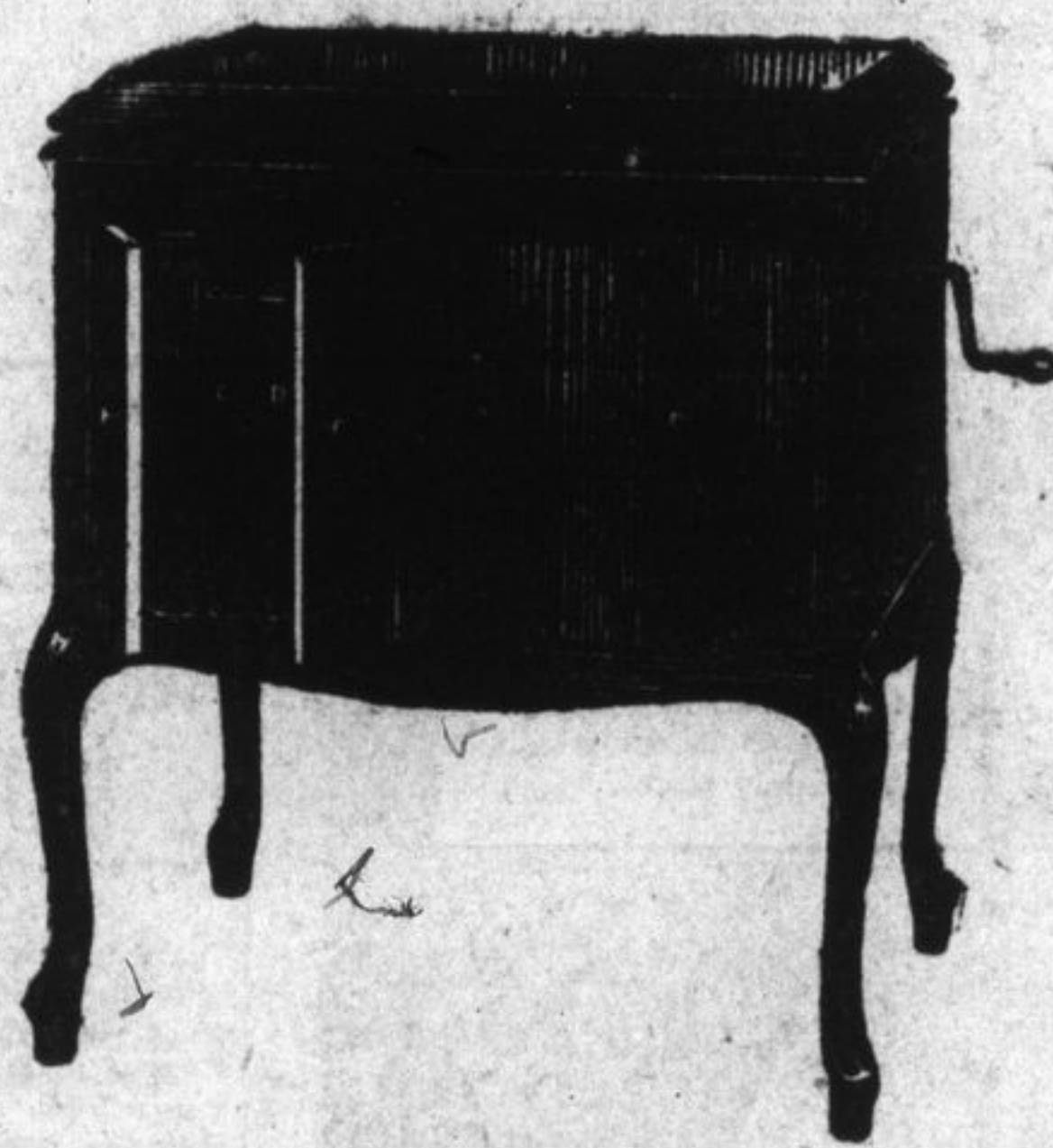
(To Be Continued.)

Sale Of A Farm.

Kepler, Dec. 3.—The open fall has enabled farmers to finish their fall ploughing. Percy Potter sold his farm recently to Mr. York, who will take possession in the spring. Born to Mr. and Mrs. William Cayley, on Dec. 1st, a fine baby boy, William Herbert. Mrs. John Wood will entertain the Ladies' Aid this afternoon. Miss Mabel Orser has returned from spending a few days at Syracuse, N.Y. Recent visitors: Sydenham, at W. Orser's; Miss Lillie, Miss Edna Lee, Cole Lake, at John Mrs. Young and daughter, Edith, Gues, Sydenham, at A. Townsend's; Lee's.



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SKATING IS ENJOYED.

It Is a Favorite Pastime Now at Ardoch.

Ardoch, Dec. 2.—Flurries of snow are seen frequently, which makes us realize that winter is approaching. Skating is a favorite evening pastime. James Derrus has purchased a team for his stage route, and has Allan Watkins engaged as driver. On Sunday, Mrs. J. Hartman and Mrs. F. Hartman were called to the bedside of their mother, Mrs. Lawrence Schonauer, who lies in a critical condition resulting from a stroke. Dr. J. Adams, of Denbigh, is in attendance.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Weber and family have returned from a few months' stay in Waterloo. Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Smith returned to Barriefield after a short visit with the former's parents here. Herbert Hermer recently spent a few days in Madoc.

The teachers of No. 1 and No. 3 are preparing for Christmas entertainments to be held in their respective schools. Madonna Scullion left for Kingston to join her sister in the Hotel Dieu. Michael Schwager is engaged erecting a hen stable for M. Weber. After visiting her parents in Hariowe, Mrs. S. Gray returned home.