

The Quebec Festival

I sometimes wonder if enough Canadians and particularly the people of Ontario, wholly appreciate the fact that in the dance and folk song festival held biannually at the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, they have an event whose quality of unique charm cannot be duplicated on this continent and one indeed that compares most favorably with European festivals of the same nature. After all that has been written it does seem rather unusual that so many Canadians who journey to Europe in search of folk color and atmosphere are oblivious to the existence, on their own door-step, so to speak, of just such color and atmosphere. We are too accustomed to believe, I fancy, that we are a raw, new country and that if we seek traditional beauty, we must go elsewhere. Yet in settled French Canada that traditional beauty is part and parcel of everyday country life.

The service that the Canadian Pacific Railway and Mr. J. Murray Gibbon are performing in the presentation of the festivals at Quebec (and elsewhere for that matter) cannot be lightly estimated. They have reminded us that Canada cannot be described wholly in terms of trade and commerce, that the robust joy in mere living is here and can be found in the gracious habits and manners of the French-Canadian people.

The third dance and folk song festival which took place at the Chateau Frontenac Oct. 16-18 was less pretentious than its predecessors and rightly so. Looking back, one feels that there was for a time a danger that the attempt to use modern concert methods in presenting the folk songs and dances would result in the sacrifice of natural charm in favor of sophisticated artistry. The use of professional artists not native to the province of Quebec was, I think, a mistake, for however gifted they were, they lacked that native spirit and understanding that after all, are essential to give life and fire to the interpretation of the songs and dances of the people.

The artists who took part in the 1930 Festival were all French-Canadian, professional and amateur, and one could not help but notice the difference; it was their festival and the natural charm and gaiety of their behaviour were a constant joy and delight to the Anglo-Saxon visitor whose inhibitions and prohibitions had made him a stranger to such spontaneity and unaffectedness.

One was immediately struck on entering the Chateau with the enchanting atmosphere of carnival engendered by the occasion which rendered that spacious edifice less of a hotel and more of a feudal castle which had been given over to the people for three-days merry-making and song. It was an atmosphere that stayed with one till the end and followed one out and down the narrow streets to the station, to linger with one for days as a delightful and unusual memory.

There were four concerts, so filled with many delectable things that it is impossible to deal with them all fully. But first one must refer in passing and in gratitude to the musical arrangements of Mr. Harold Eustace Key, right-hand man of Mr. J. Murray Gibbon in staging the festival, Mr. Oscar O'Brien and Dr. Healy Willan, as well as others, which were always a delight and in spiritual keeping with the origins of the music.

Perhaps of the greatest historical interest were the traditional country dances of provincial France — Normandy, Brittany, Auvergne, Limousin and Poitou — which were presented by groups of Quebec children trained under Madame Duquet and by the "Disciples de Massenet" directed by Chas. Goulet. It is upon these dances, of course, that the folk dances of French-Canada are based, and it was a charming experience to watch the zest and skill with which the children and young people went through the various movements. The children were particularly bright and gifted and possessed an ease and natural poise that would have been the envy and dismay of a professional performer.

Diverting also were the "Visions Canadiennes", in which the themes of some of the chansons were pictorialized with an engaging naivety by Emile Boucher and Germaine LeBel. The pastoral flavor and quaint legendary character of the particular chansons enacted were most refreshing.

THE BYTOWNS

One who was sadly missed at the present Festival was Charles Marchand, who died earlier in the year. Those who attended the first festivals will never forget the robust artistry and winning personality that made his singing of the chansons an unforgettable memory. To his enthusiasm and labor a great deal of the success of the festivals was due, and the present festival bore unmistakable signs of his inspiration. His place with the Bytown Troubadours is taken by Lionel Daumas, who while not as overwhelmingly magnetic as his predecessor, is an unmistakable artist, as his fine handling of a group of folk-songs on the second program gave ample evidence. He with droll Emile Boucher, Fortunat Champagne and Miville Belleau, sang the rollicking river and work songs of French Canada on many occasions during the festival with a verve and spirit and natural artistry that were always enchanting.

THE METIS

Among the pleasantest features of the festival, and one which instantly caught the popular fancy, was the folk dancing of the Metis or halfbreeds from St. Paul des Metis (near Edmonton). The Metis are descendants of the early voyageurs who adventured to the Far West and have been racially influenced not only by the Indians but by the Scottish fur-traders. Their dances, originally the country dances of France, have also been modified by Indian and Scotch

influences, the tunes played by the fiddlers often highly reminiscent of highland reels and jigs. The group at the Festival was composed of four women and five men (the men quite Indian in appearance and the women petite and French) with a fiddler who kept up an amazing double beat with his feet. In such picturesquely nomenclatured dances as the Red River Jig, the Duck Dance, the Reel of Eight, etc., they whirled and spun on lightning like feet with a rolling rhythm that was a positive joy to watch. And their excited cries and the spirited calling off of their leader, J. F. Dion, made one want to forget Anglo-Saxon restraint and take a hand in the proceedings.

THE OPERAS

Of notable interest on the programs were the two ballad operas, each incorporating a number of folk songs, "Une Noce Canadienne-Française in 1930" ("A French-Canadian Wedding in 1830" and "L'Order de Bon Temps" ("The Order of Good Cheer"). The former, revealing in rollicking song and dance, the gaiety that characterized a country wedding in French Canada of a hundred years ago (and even now, no doubt) was a captivating show that stirred the audiences to great enthusiasm. The humour of the songs (often of a frankness that dismayed the translator) evoked roars of laughter from those that understood them (and even those who did not — quite). The players, from "La Societe d'Operette" of Montreal and under the direction of Mr. H. Vaillancourt, gave a brilliant performance, entering into the spirit of the piece with an abandon and *joie de vivre* that could hardly have been equalled if the wedding were actually taking place.

"The Order of Good Cheer" was the name of the society founded by Champlain at Port Royal in 1606. The winters were long and bitter in those days and the Order sought in good fellowship, good food and wine to take the edge off the dullness of their existence. The opera, which takes its name from the society, depicts a typical feast at the garrison with Champlain at the head table and visiting Indian chiefs who came to join the festivals of song and dance that followed the luxurious dinner. The opera was originally written by Louvigny de Montigny and revised by Robert Choquette, with musical arrangements by Dr. Healy Willan. It was beautifully staged and beautifully sung by members of "La Societe d'Operette", and the picture it gave of the gallantry and spirit of the pioneers left the audiences in a very thoughtful mood.

And one must not forget Phileas Bedard who sings the chansons as no one else can, and Pierre Guerin who despite his more than three score and ten years, can dance for twenty minutes on end, and the lovely St. Lawrence singers, four attractive young ladies who harmonize most sweetly.

The decision to quit coining gold pieces may not seem tragic now, but wait until you try to decide what to give Cousin Sue next Christmas.

Negoceating for a...

(Continued from page 1)

Meanwhile the Imperial Conference sub-committees are continuing their study of the quota scheme as applied to British purchases. Their explorations tend to show that the quota scheme is so difficult to control as to prove almost impracticable, except in the case of imports of wheat and flour. This view, if confirmed, would rule out suggested quota purchase of dairy products fresh fruits and canned fruit, and canned fish.

Wheat, however is in a different category. The wheat trade passes along more defined and centralized channels than the other classes of goods. The application of a quota could be controlled through the British millers. There is not, therefore, thought to be the same difficulty in applying a wheat quota as to such products as butter and eggs. The attitude of the Canadian delegation towards the wheat quota is one of desire to study and cooperate in any scheme which is likely to promote Empire trade. While Canada considers reciprocal tariff preferences are the most practical means, Canada will not turn down any reasonable alternative.

Canadian National Train...

(Continued from page 1)

The passengers although excited were not panic-stricken and they came off the wrecked cars in good order.

Some twenty other passengers suffered slight injuries which did not necessitate their removal to the hospital. They were given the necessary treatment and care by the First Aid Members of the C. N.R. and then proceeded.

Only the much lowered speed of the train upon entering Drummondville saved it from more serious damages and injuries.

Two wrecking trains arrived early on Monday morning and have by now practically repaired the damages.

Empire Chiefs Leave...

(Continued from page 1)

held subsequently by the Empire Parliamentary Association. Here Prime Minister Bennett, of Canada, said the Dominion motto was "each for all and all for each."

J. H. Thomas, Dominions Minister, said the problem of the Imperial Conference was to square Mr. Bennett's "magnificent phrase" with another familiar saying, "ourselves first and the other fellow afterward." During the next few days, Mr. Thomas added, they would arrive at an unanimous decision.

General Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa, said that supremacy of the white man's rule there was essential if he was to retain either his birthright or his civilization. He continued:

"Not only, therefore, must the policy of the paramountcy of the native or of his interest be immediately ruled out as impossible of application where the white man

has established his home in Africa; the same fate must be shared by the equal rights doctrine which some good people are so insistent in prescribing as a panacea for all native ills."

Such policies, General Hertzog said, would not leave a shred of good-will with the white man for the native and all genuine consideration for the well-being of the native would disappear and hostilities between black and white would follow.

General Hertzog said he recently supported a South African colleague who urged that the British Government should not without consulting the South African Government introduce any new principle or change in policy regarding African natives which might affect the position of South Africa.

"I do not wish to interfere with matters concerning Britain," he said. "Neither does my Government ask to help in governing East Africa, but in problems common to both eastern and southern Africa we wish to work hand in hand with the home Government so that our policies might be mutually helpful."

The policy of the paramountcy of native interests in Eastern Africa, he added, was almost certain to have a disturbing effect in South Africa. He added that Britain and South Africa should have acted in close harmony from the first.

Wheat Import Are...

(Continued from page 1)

Baron Mitsui, Japan's wealthiest and biggest business man, entertained the delegation at a garden party.

On Thursday the Japan-Canada Society, formed for the express purpose of welcoming the Canadian delegation, completed its organization with a banquet, Baron Sasaki, former Finance Minister, and

president of the society, presided. He gave a message of goodwill to Canada and expressed appreciation of the growing trade between the two countries.

Hon. Mr. Marler was made honorary president, and he replied to the greetings of Baron Sakatani, reciprocating his words of goodwill. The luncheon was attended by a brilliant gathering, including several ministers of the Government, and financial and business leaders.

Establishment of New...

(Continued from page 1)

In yesterday's discussion at 10 Downing Street the question arose whether the court should be compulsory or voluntary. The general sense was that it should be voluntary. If two parties have a dispute, therefore, both must agree to arbitration before the court is established, but the decision of the court, once it is established, will be binding. The competence of the court is limited to justiciable disputes and is not concerned with political disputes. Although there would be nothing to prevent arbitration of political disputes should the parties agree to it.

The project of establishment of an Empire appeal tribunal first appeared as a suggestion in the report of last year's conference on the operation of Dominion laws. But the necessity of its establishment was emphasized by the signature of the optional clause of the world court statutes providing for reference of justiciable disputes to the international court at The Hague. British and all the Dominions, except the Irish Free State, made reservations which ruled from the jurisdiction of "The Hague court disputes between units of the Commonwealth."

The Empire Tribunal may sit anywhere in the Empire as agreed

upon by the parties to each respective dispute. The original idea of appointing the tribunal from selected panels has disappeared. There will be no

creation of panels from members of the court may be. The proceedings in the tribunal will be in the nature of arbitration.



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