

THE UNEMPLOYED IN CANADA AND CAUSES OF THE TROUBLE

By H. A. Kennedy of London, England, Who Visited Canada in December Last.

The novelty of the words, "out of work in Canada," the land of all lands hitherto to hungering for workers, has so struck the imagination of the mother country that anything printed on this subject finds ready readers. Yet much that has been printed is beside the mark, much creates a false impression, and much is simply absurd. If people here were familiar with Canadian life, they would know how many grains, and often pounds, of salt to add before swallowing the information served up to them. Much of this information comes from men who have been thrown out of work, or who have failed to get the work they wanted, and who (let us hope from ignorance), lay the blame on any shoulders but their own. Some accounts, too, are biased by the natural desire of wage-earners in Canada to keep up the level of wages by dissuading other wage-earners from coming out and swelling the labor supply; while other versions are biased by the equally natural desire of employers for a well stocked labor market in which they can dictate terms instead of being dictated to.

On a recent visit to Canada I made it my business to look into the mid-winter labor situation in the chief industrial centers. I should perhaps say that my equipment for this task consisted of long residence in Canada and knowledge of Canadian ways, a not less intimate acquaintance with the laboring class at home, and an inveterate habit of investigation. As a result I venture to lay before the public no "cyclopaedia of details," still less a dogmatic array of influences, but a simple statement of facts from which the public can draw their own conclusions.

The principal questions to be answered are—What are the causes and extent of unemployment in Canada? Who and what are the unemployed? And what is being done about it?

It is perhaps well enough known, though we have to be occasionally reminded of elementary facts, that in the case of many there must be slack as well as busy seasons in many occupations. This is so even in England—in agriculture and some of the building trades, for instance. The same is true of Canada; and there, as the climatic seasons are more sharply defined, the industrial seasons are more sharply defined also. The trades most seriously affected are, first, agriculture and agriculture allied trades; with a third, railway construction, which is of comparatively small importance in a country already covered with railways, like England, but employs a vast amount of labor in Canada; and, fourth, inland navigation, with the loading and unloading of ships at maritime ports.

Here, however, a word of caution is necessary. It will probably surprise some readers to learn that building, agriculture, railway construction and wharf labor are not altogether suspended during the Canadian winter. Take agriculture first, as the greatest of Canadian industries. The actual cultivation of land, of course, must stop when the land becomes frozen or covered with snow; and the farmer who only raises crops has little to do in winter, but to keep up his fuel supply, to burn wood, to get his machinery and wagons into repair for the next season. On the other hand, dairy farming, or the keeping of cattle for the production of milk, butter and cheese, is practised in almost all parts of Canada on an enormous and increasing scale, and even poultry farming, long scorned as unprofitable, is making good returns here and there. The animals must have attention all the year round, and the more live stock is kept the more labor is wanted in winter. Besides all this many farmers who can possibly manage the winter work themselves are nevertheless willing to engage a good man for the whole year, paying somewhat less per month for the slack than for the busy season, but of course giving free board and wages all the time.

As for building, the digging of foundations comes to an end, and the erection of walls and roof practically ceases when winter has fairly set in. The contractor, however, aims at getting his building rooted in before the frost comes, so that the carpenters and decorators can go on with the interiors regardless of weather. Work is not absolutely impossible, even outside, though it is expensive, difficult, and a little risky. I have lately seen work proceeding with the mercury below zero, on a great office building in Montreal; the vital part of the structure being a steel frame, and its strength depending not on mortar but on rivets.

In railway construction a somewhat similar situation exists. Ordinary earth work ceases when winter begins; but the steam-shovel can excavate even when the surface of the ground is frozen; rock blasting also continues, and many miles of rails have this winter been laid on embankments and in cuttings graded before the earth was frozen or covered with snow. On the Grand Trunk Pacific, construction was still being actively carried on in January. The Canadian Pacific, too, was finishing the rock work required for the doubling of its track from Winnipeg to the head of lake navigation at Fort William, and had been laying rails even after snow-fall, to relieve a particular wheat growing section in the West.

Finally, there is the shipping industry. Although navigation on the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes is suspended for the winter, and the number of ships crossing the Atlantic is much reduced, there is still a great amount of ocean traffic carried on. The steamers which go up the St. Lawrence to Montreal and Quebec in summer go in winter to St. John and Portland, the terminal of the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk railways; and a large proportion of the ship laborers migrate to those ports when St. Lawrence navigation ends.

These allowances having been made, it remains true that a large suspension of

work in the industries mentioned is a normal condition of the Canadian winter.

THIS WINTER EXCEPTIONAL.

The conditions of the present winter, however, are quite abnormal. Let us see why.

The first cause has probably nothing to do with Canada at all. The Dominion, and especially its manufacturing industry, is suffering for the sins of the United States. When the financial crisis occurred in that country, and American banks were shutting their doors, the Canadian banks resolved to take every possible precaution to prevent a similar disaster on their side of the frontier. One of these precautions was a refusal to grant the usual amount of credit to manufacturers. Many of the manufacturers, therefore, having to restrict their operations, either discharged a certain percentage of their employees, or put their works on short time. At any rate lengthened by a week, a fortnight, or even longer, the period during which the works are commonly closed in mid-winter for stock-taking and repairs. The American crisis also hit the Canadian manufacturers in another way. The American manufacturers, unable to get money as usual from their bankers, tried to get it by offering their goods at reduced prices, both in Canada and in other countries where they competed with Canadian goods.

Another but minor cause of depression in the manufacturing industry is to be found in the agricultural misfortune of last year in the West. The season was bad almost beyond precedent; both wheat

growers and cattle ranchers suffered severely. Taking the West as a whole, the high prices of grain may have made up for the shortage in quantity; and the magnanimity of previous normal years enabled the prudent and well-established farmer to stand this exceptional shortage as any other long-sighted and well-established business man can stand an occasional loss. Still, many farmers had not been prudent; instead of laying up reserves, they had speculated in land to the limit of their resources, and often beyond that limit; and they had increased their general expenditure to a scale which would only have been justified if every year was bound to be a fat year. Moreover, many of the settlers, whether prudent or otherwise, were not well established; they had only made a beginning, in fact, and had had no time to accumulate reserves of capital. Accordingly, when the lean year came the Western farmers could not give the orders which eastern manufacturers had been in the habit of receiving from that quarter. The eastern farmers had no such trouble to face; but some of them had a little difficulty of their own. In Ontario and Quebec the dairy industry has grown to vast proportions. It has also been extremely profitable, so that many farmers who twenty years ago were just grubbing along now live in a style which then they would have deemed luxurious. A short hay crop, however, affected the pockets last year. "My father taught me," said one of the leading stock raisers of the Dominion whom I visited, "that a short hay crop may be expected once in five years; so I never sell any. The consequence is, I don't have to buy." These who sold their hay, either from lack of foresight or from lack of cash, have now to buy, and at high figures. One held a short hay crop may be expected once in five years; so I never sell any. The consequence is, I don't have to buy." These who sold their hay, either from lack of foresight or from lack of cash, have now to buy, and at high figures. One held a short hay crop may be expected once in five years; so I never sell any. The consequence is, I don't have to buy." These who sold their hay, either from lack of foresight or from lack of cash, have now to buy, and at high figures.

THE EXTENT OF THE TROUBLE.

It is not easy to estimate, with any hope of exactness, the total number or percentage of men out of employment by reduction of work in Canadian factories. The percentage in different industries, and even at different factories in the same industry, varies greatly. One company making agricultural machinery, and formerly employing a staff of about 1,800, was only employing 1,100 in September, but has since been able to raise the number to 1,300. In a great many cases there has been a reduction of 20 to 25 per cent. though it is a significant fact that some of these works, even after the reduction are still employing as many men as they did a year ago. Some factories which have discharged nobody are only giving their men, say, 40 hours a week instead of 60. Others, in spite of all that has been said, are working not only with full staffs, but on full time.

It is not the manufacturing industry of the towns alone that has had to retrench owing to the causes just mentioned. The lumbermen have felt the pinch too. Now, the cutting of timber is one of the country's most important industries, and it is particularly important from the laboring man's point of view because it becomes busiest just when work in general becomes slackest. Thousands of men employed on farms all summer go to the woods when the agricultural season ends, and spend the winter in the lumber camps, cutting down the trees and hauling them over the snow to the rivers which are to float them down to the saw mills on the opening of spring. If, therefore, the owners or lessees of timber limits have to retrench, the men they would normally employ are driven to seek work in the towns; and this at a time when, even in an ordinary year, there is least work to be had.

Then there are always a certain number of men, employed on farms for the open season, who drift into towns when the term of their engagement ends. If they have been really good farm workers, earning the wages commonly given to experienced men, and receiving also—as practically all farm workers do, whether experienced or not—free board and lodging, they can save at any rate enough to keep them till the next farm season begins. Even a married man in this class, if his wife has taken such casual or regular work as her husband's employer and other neighbors usually have for her, and if both are thrifty, can pull through the winter. In such a case the margin is small, and the discharged farm worker always, in one sense, may be called one of the unemployed, for even if he has saved money he will naturally take the temporary work if he can get it, and therefore he comes into competition with those who are driven to seek work by sheer necessity.

The distinction between those who are out of work and those who are not only unemployed but destitute in consequence must not be forgotten. But this winter the distinction between the two classes

is not so well defined as it used to be. This seems chiefly owing to two causes. First of all, the standard of living has risen. This is so in all classes of society, and on both sides of the Atlantic. Men, and women and children too, are no longer content with the housing, the clothing and the food, which satisfied the last generation. In some details, this is well. In other respects, the change is a change for the worse, in more quarters than one. It seems hardly fair to accuse of extravagance the poor who in adding to their little comforts only follow at a distance the example of the rich who are content with adding luxury to luxury. At any rate, it is my business here not the applicants for relief. Another explanation probably is the extent to which relief has been organized, and the publicity given to it. Many a man who scrapes through the winter by strict economy when there seems no alternative can hardly resist the temptation to join in the scramble when the public purse is thrown open.

LATE IMMIGRATION.

The situation this winter has been complicated by the fact that thousands of old country emigrants went out long after the emigration season should have closed. Even in an ordinary year, a man takes a considerable risk if he goes to Canada late in the season without a definite situation to go to, or money to keep him till spring; unless he joins one of the special harvesters' excursions and is ready to take advantage of the very cheap return fare when harvest is over if no permanent work is offered him for the winter. The time emigrants in the spring, when any man able and willing to do farm work can get employment at all events for the whole of the season then opening. The late-comers were particularly numerous last year, and the consequence, as might be expected when even the older residents were being thrown out of work, were disastrous. It would not be safe to say that most of the unemployed this winter, at any rate in the industrial centres of Ontario, have been late arrivals; according to one estimate, in Toronto about 3,000 out of 8,000 unemployed in mid-January were new-comers; but in new-comers form a very large proportion, and probably a majority, of the unemployed who are also destitute.

A certain number of the new-comers, to be sure, have been able to get work while early immigrants have had to go without. There is no doubt that up to last September, when factories were busy and skilled workmen scarce, employers took on men whom otherwise they would not have looked at. The head of one of the greatest industries in the Dominion asserts that while wages increased 30 or 35 per cent, the efficiency of the working class decreased 40 per cent. Some, and especially, I regret to say, men from English towns, proved not only inefficient, and unable or unwilling to improve their capacity, but unsatisfactory and unreliable in other than technical ways. They knew that if they were discharged they could get the work at once; and they took advantage of the commanding position given to them by the state of the labor market. Now the tables are turned. There is a surplus instead of a shortage in the labor market. Employers are taking advantage of this fact, and replacing inefficient by men of greater skill, or at any rate of greater adaptability and more anxious to please, whether these are old residents or immigrants of yesterday. The greater number of the new-comers, however, hardly possess that marked superiority which alone would induce an employer to make room for them at a time like this.

RELIEF.

Relief is being given to the unemployed by many agencies and in various forms. One of the most striking differences between the Dominion and the old country is that the pauperism which is one of the largest and worst blots on our national life has practically no existence in Canada. The mass of submerged and hopeless humanity which we allow to waste and stagnate in our midst, with the huge and costly apparatus of Poor Law and charitable institutions to palliate its misery—are unknown in that land of hope and opportunity. The exceptional cases of poverty found in every large community, chiefly caused by unsupported old-age or ill-health, are in Canada generally provided

for by private generosity or by "naïveté" on the part of the Montreal, for instance, with its population of 400,000, there are modest homes maintained by the English, Scottish and Irish residents for the unfortunate of these nationalities; besides institutions, generally connected with the Roman Catholic Church, for French-Canadian paupers, and a church to which the large majority of the population belong; a few shelters of more general character established in recent years; and a Charity Organization Society. These as a rule find it easy to cope with their self-imposed task; but this year it has been so easy, in the first fortnight of January the C. O. S. had 230 new cases to deal with, as compared with 68 in the same period of last year. The whole number of new cases dealt with in 1907 was 1660, comprising 333 adults and 1761 children. The society, after investigation, helps the best of these by paying the rent of their lodgings and by providing them with food; others it sends to suit of the homes or shelters as may seem suitable; and even to the worst, under the special circumstances of this winter, it gives a meal. Many of the destitute, including some of the ordinary shelters ever have resorted to the police stations, where at any rate they can keep warm. Most of the people who apply to the C. O. S. are found to be old-country emigrants; and some of these have been so demoralized by the ease with which they obtained charity at home that they are inclined to grumble because they have to come for what they get instead of having it brought to their doors. There are some of a very different class, however; people who make a little go a long way even when they know they can get more by asking for it. To preserve this spirit of self-respect, the society has a policy when it is almost disappeared, and to keep Canada free from the pauperized spirit and the pauper class, is one of the most anxious tasks that the administrators of Canadian charity have to carry out.

Old country emigrants as a rule, however, have no objection to accepting the Province of Quebec, in which Montreal lies. They go on to the English-speaking Province of Ontario, if not even farther west. The charitable societies of Toronto, the capital of Ontario, have been doing their utmost to cope with the emergency. It is a significant fact that in the cutting down of their requirements, the Canadian farmers are sending in more applications for men than ever before—a fact to be noted by any who may have been anxious for the future of Canada because there happened to be a slight crop failure in the season of the year. The farmers' applications, which I examined in some detail, were significant in other respects. Most of them called for men by the middle or end of March; but many wanted help "any time in January," "at once," or "as soon as possible." As a rule, the applicants were experienced farm workers, but would take an inexperienced hand. For a man in the former class as much as \$20 to \$24 (\$4.34 to \$5) a month was offered; but \$15 (\$3.26) was a more usual figure. One farmer offered seven months' work at \$18 to \$22 (\$3.18 to \$4.18), and another supplied nine months' work at \$15 (\$3.26). Many a farmer offered a full year's engagement at \$180 or \$200 (\$31.5 or \$41.13.14). For an inexperienced man, from \$9 to \$12 (\$1.17 to \$2.10), was offered, or \$100 to \$120 (\$20.16 to \$25). In every case free board and lodging were given, sometimes a rent-free house and garden for the man's family were thrown in with fuel for his stove and a promise of extra work for his wife. A number of applications contained such words as "A Scot preferred," or "Scotch or Irish preferred," or "A Welshman or a Protestant preferred." I did not on this occasion catch sight of the ominous words "no English need apply," but one farmer emphatically declared "On no account do I want a Lord." The opinion is strongly expressed by an observer, himself an Englishman, who has had long experience among the poorer classes of immigrants, that rural Englishmen as a rule do much better in the towns of Canada than men bred in the towns of England. This is hardly surprising, for the English townsman, even in his native place, often finds it hard to compete with the free labor pouring in from country districts.

Toronto seems to have attracted the greater number of those who flock into town when work fails them in the country; but other towns have their own unemployed to care for. At Hamilton, for instance, the busy manufacturing city at the west end of Lake Ontario—St. George's, St. Andrew's and other charitable societies have had more to do than usual; and the Relief Officer of the Municipality says that in December he had to deal with 35 or 40 per cent. more than in the last month of the preceding year. The majority were Englishmen who went out in 1907, and who were handicapped by several causes in addition to the untoward circumstances affecting new-comers and old residents alike. For instance, a man without money who brings his family to him has to buy furniture on the weekly instalment plan, giving in the long run perhaps a hundred per cent.

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By Right of Sword will be repeated this evening. At the matinee The Christian will fill the bill.

CHILDREN'S DAY AT THE NICKEL THEATRE

This will be a great day with the kiddies at the Nickel, for the show is exactly suited to their childish tastes. They will certainly be delighted with the views of the Chinese children in their home cities far away in Asia, and the long Edison film Animated Snowballs is a pure wholesome comedy from start to finish. The scenes on the skating lake and when the girl is made to practice on the organ are extremely laughable. The cute little French children and cottager's home in the picture The Workman will be absorbing for the juveniles as well. Altogether the belief is well-grounded that today's matinee at the Nickel will be a record-breaker; two good shows and plenty of nice instrumental music. Last evening in spite of the rain, the big theatre was filled continually with an appreciative crowd of ladies and gentlemen. Tonight Miss Davis and Mr. Maxwell will conclude their hit-songs "Are You Sincere" and "I'm Waiting for the Summer-time and You, Dear."

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PLAYS AND PLAYERS

KIRK BROWN IN "BY RIGHT OF SWORD."

By Right of Sword was presented by Kirk Brown before a large audience at the Opera House last evening. From the applause which greeted the performance it was evidently regarded as a welcome addition to the repertoire of this popular actor. The wholly improbable nature of the plot, which turns on the remarkable resemblance between a dæd-eval American and a cowardly Russian intriguer in no way marred the success of the production, and the exciting situations with which the play abounded sustained the interest to the close.

Kirk Brown as the American, Richard Hamilton, appeared in a lighter role than usual. His characterization abounded in touches of humor and his scenes with Olga Petrovitch, the sister of his "double," and for whom he acquired a more than brotherly affection were cleverly portrayed.

As Olga, Miss Marguerite Fields, made the most every opportunity and acted with much charm and distinction in a somewhat colorless part.

Henry Crosby made Major Devinski all that a villain should be. In the duel scene with Mr. Brown he was at his best.

Frank H. Roy as Bennett, Hamilton's English valet, gave a particularly clever performance and made a minor part one of the features of the play. The remainder of the cast gave excellent support,

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more than if he had been able to pay cash, and remaining in debt very likely for a couple of years. The lack of adaptability shown by too many Englishmen who have been used to working always in one particular way and rather resent being asked to adopt any different way which has been found suitable in the different circumstances of the new world, has often been pointed out. But even a man who is quite willing to learn the new way takes a little time to do so, and in the meanwhile he finds it impossible to earn what he has heard are the usual wages of his trade, and what his Canadian mates are actually earning. For example, a hardware manufacturer finds that in one branch of his business he is paying a good workman about \$5 (20s. 10d.) a day, for piece work, while some of the new-comers, paid at same piece rate, can only earn at first \$1.50 (6s. 3d.) a day. If the new-comer is easily discouraged, this "naturally" discourages him; though a new-comer of the right sort soon acquires the knack and the quickness that are the wages-earning level of his fellow-workers. The right sort of English workman is very good indeed, and his excellence is speedily recognized and rewarded. The wrong sort—well, we know him at home, and we tolerate him as he is not tolerated in Canada. He is a man who is not only unadaptable, but a defect that may be accompanied by many virtues—but, speaking quite frankly, too fond of his beer, and too fond of taking a holiday regardless of the work to be done. Such habits as these not only handicap the man by at once increasing his expenditure and decreasing his income, but put him high up on the list of candidates for dismissal if a time comes, as it has come this winter, when the staff has to be cut down.

As Hogarth's extremely industrious and extremely idle apprentices do not represent the great mass of the working class, so the English immigrants in Canada are not confined to two classes, the first-rate workman and the slacker. In the ranks of the destitute unemployed are men who have worked regularly and well, and have never taken a quite incapacitating amount of liquor, but have saved nothing and find themselves destitute as soon as they are out of a job. Sometimes this is owing to unthriftiness, sometimes to misfortune, sometimes to both. Typical of this class is a young Englishman whom I met at the municipal relief office of a town in Western Ontario. He had lived there for 18 months, earning \$7 (37s. 6d.) a week. The wage was not high, for Canada, but it was probably all that his poor physique was worth; and if his income was low his necessary outgoings were low also. He had been paying \$6 (28s.) a week for the liquor he had been drinking, and his wife. They had no children; they had not had to buy furniture; they lived with in an easy walk of his work; and his clothing was of a common sort which, in spite of the accepted belief that "clothing is much dearer in Canada," is almost as cheap there as in England. Yet before he had been out of work for a month he was not only penniless but a fortnight in arrears with his board.

There is still another class of Englishmen who have swollen the ranks of the unemployed, not through their own fault or incapacity, but even through the stringency of the time, but because their form of capacity is permanently at a discount in Canada. These are the harmless but unnecessary clerks. As it is in the Canadian workshop, so it is to a less extent in the Canadian counting-house—a new-comer may by well certified competence at a desk which many a Canadian youth would like to occupy; and I have known a Canadian bank regularly importing clerks from Scotland. But, taking the class as a whole, the clerk who has gone to Canada in search of a clerkship has made a great mistake. Besides the forms of relief already mentioned, there is one for which the unemployed are indebted to the weather, and another which they have provided themselves. Every heavy fall of snow gives temporary work for thousands of men, and not on the railways only; the tramway tracks and the sidewalks in towns having to be cleared, and the roads in general leveled into a fit state for sleighing. The other form of relief, which thousands of men have chosen, is—going back to the mother country. This has certainly been a relief to Canada. It is a great convenience to the Dominion to be relieved of the necessity of providing for so large a number of the unemployed.

That Pale, Tired Girl

She is in society, in business, at home, everywhere you see her, but always worn and fatigued. She hasn't heard of Ferrone or she would be perfectly well. How quickly it strengthens—what an appetite it gives—what a glow it brings to the pallid cheeks! The nutriment contained in Ferrone puts strength into anybody. Leaning eyes, rosy lips, bright quick movements—all tell of the vitality Ferrone produces. Thousands of attractive happy women use Ferrone. Why not you? A box of fifty chocolate coated tablets costs fifty cents at any drug store.

How far the men themselves have gained, and how far their return has added to the mother country's burden, are other questions. A large proportion have come back to friends willing to keep them for the winter, or with savings enough to keep themselves. Others, it is to be feared, have either swollen the number of the unemployed at home, or taken work away from those who had it. If these returned emigrants meant to stay at home, the outlook would be serious for them and for the United Kingdom, and—except in the case of inefficient—would not be altogether agreeable to the Canadian people. The probability is, however, that a vast majority, at any rate of those who have been on farms or are ready for farm work or railway construction if the full revival of manufacturing activity is delayed, have come back with a firm intention of emigrating to Canada again in the Spring. Meanwhile, to prevent an influx of men who by untimely arrival would add to the number of the unemployed, the Government insists that an immigrant seeking admission to Canada before the end of March, without a definite situation waiting for him, must have at least \$25 (\$5.48.24) in his pocket.

It is quite evident to all who have intimate knowledge of Canadian conditions that the trouble here described is but a passing incident in the Dominion's history, the momentary backwash of a rising tide. A great development of Cana-

dian agriculture and manufactures is as certain as anything in the world. While the setback lasts it is disagreeable; but already there are signs that it will not last long. Just as the causes of trouble, and the trouble itself, have been far less in Canada than in the U. S., so the recovery in Canada is likely to be more rapid. One very healthy sign is the remarkable fact that the number of farmers in the United States who are inquiring for land on the British side of the frontier is larger this year than ever before. He who has a few acres, may have a valuable result. One of the sweet uses of adversity is that it teaches by severe experience lessons that the careless will not learn by any milder means. A famous preacher used to impress upon the world "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." The present adversity has compelled attention to such fundamental but often ignored facts as the rashness of rash speculation, the unthriftiness of unthrift, and the exceeding unfitness of the unfit.

JEALOUSY CAUSE OF ONTARIO TRAGEDY

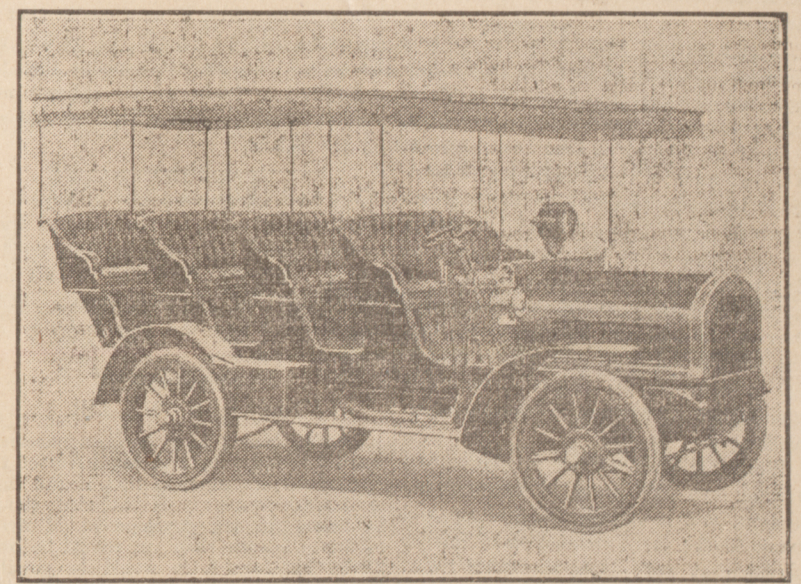
Toronto, May 8.—A dreadful murder and suicide shocked Huntsville today. For a few days Mrs. Nelson Smith, of Allandale, has been visiting her parents there, and her husband arrived today. He chatted with the family and appeared in good spirits. His mother-in-law left the room for a few minutes leaving Smith and his wife alone. Two shots were heard in quick succession and as the old lady rushed back, she passed Smith who ran on the "yard" and with the same revolver blew his brains out.

Jealously is given as the cause. Mrs. Smith was dead when her mother reached the room.

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