

# A Thrilling Spectacle

Tor.

By THE OBSERVER

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WAS there ever such a parade as Toronto's centennial parade, not merely in Toronto, but in Canada? I fancy that the general run of the spectators were, like myself, astonished as well as delighted beyond measure.

I have heard much about the wonderful pageant given at Quebec's tercentenary in 1908, and no doubt in some respects its elaborate reproductions of Canadian history excelled anything before or since attempted in Canada, but there were features in the Toronto pageantry that could not have been present in that of Quebec. There could have been no body of "Old Contemptibles" and "Old Originals" to give dignity and pathos to the display in 1908 as they did to that of Toronto Thursday. Nor could Quebec in 1908, a little city though an ancient one, and with few colonies from Europe, have contributed the extraordinary variety of beauty and historical interest embodied in Thursday's parade by the picturesque and resplendent companies representing the many nationalities that have come to enrich our city's life and culture.

FOR sheer beauty Toronto streets, I should suppose, have never known anything like the long line that passed through banks of admiring spectators. An eye like my own, more given to dwelling lovingly on a pleasing or interesting spectacle than to swiftly grasping it in detail, leaves me able to enumerate only a small fraction of the costumes that charmed by their beauty or recalled great ages in the past. But I was particularly captivated and astonished by the large Chinese contingent. It was in part exotic and weird and its prevailing loveliness seemed to light up even the sunshine-filled street. Very beautiful too and historically very impressive was the display made by the Greeks. I have never before enjoyed such an opportunity to appreciate at once the picturesqueness of the modern Hellenic garb and the grace and dignity of the costume of ancient Hellas, most artistic and intellectual of ancient peoples.

But from the Armenians, who had the first place for alphabetical reasons but who deserved it as sharing with the Jews the honor of being the most heroic of peoples, to the more familiar but varied and interesting Canadians at the close of the national displays, every company made a most attractive display. I am sure that the unique spectacle left everyone who saw it eager to see it again and a keen regret on the part of those who missed it. Surely we must not be condemned to wait till the sesqui-centennial in 1984 before we can have a similar thrill.

I WOULD most earnestly urge that if it be at all possible these national displays be repeated at the Exhibition in August. There must be many thousands of Toronto people who were out of the city Thursday or otherwise unable to witness this unrivalled pageant. There will be many thousands of people outside Toronto who will hear of this and be rejoiced to see it. The long walk through the streets must have been found trying by many of the marchers. Would it not be possible to have all the companies taking part yesterday some afternoon or evening at the Exhibition pass in review before the grandstand? This would be physically less exhaustive and might permit a larger number to take part in some of the groups. In one of the papers the suggestion is made that the parade would have been still more effective if each company had had its national anthem in passing the review. It is also

various new features could be added under such conditions and after the experience of Thursday.

I think such spectacles as that presented Thursday can do nothing but good. Some Canadians unfortunately have a very imperfect idea of the artistic culture and of the historical greatness of some of the smaller nations some of whose members we are glad to welcome to Canada. There is too, I am afraid, perhaps, a touch of arrogance in our Anglo-Saxon stock. But I cannot conceive any Canadian with the slightest spark of imagination thinking patronizingly or contemptuously of the Chinese or Armenians or Greeks or Italians or Bulgarians or Ukrainians or any others of these resplendent companies.

I was delighted to see a company of Germans, which included, I thought, some representatives of those charming people—the mountaineers, either of Bavaria or of the Tyrol. Perhaps we have too few people from France or Spain or Japan to furnish a contingent, which would have been welcome, and people of the United States are perhaps so much like ourselves that their participation would have presented some difficulty. But one may hope that we shall have the opportunity to witness in August an even larger and more representative review of all the races and nations now making their home in Toronto.

I AM sure no thoughtful Canadian would resent these people from other lands who have paid Canada the compliment of making a new home here, cherishing affectionate recollections of the land of their fathers, nor of preserving the national costume and national traditions and acts. All Canadians delight in the highland costume and I have no doubt that many Americans envy us the gallant spectacle that highland soldiers and pipers present with their distinctive garb and music. These "new Canadians" from Europe will love their new land the more and be worth more to it if they find in Canadians no jealousy of the lands they first learned to love.

A tip for our sister metropolis. What a superb tercentenary Montreal will be able to produce in 1942 if she takes a large leaf from Quebec and another from Toronto!

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