



Hon. William Phillips, United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Canada, photographed at Rideau Hall, Ottawa. Reading from right to left (seated): E. C. Mieville, Military Secretary to Lord Willingdon; J. G. Foster, former U. S. Consul at Ottawa, and now counsellor to the legation; Lord Willingdon; Mr. Phillips; Dr. O. D. Skelton, counsellor of the Dominion department of External Affairs; J. Pierpont Moffatt, attache to the U. S. legation

IN THE past year the name of Colonel the Honorable J. L. Ralston has appeared in political news sufficiently often to indicate that Canadian life has gained a new personality. Yet, outside the Maritime Provinces, few Canadians know anything about the minister of national defence except his official utterances. That is to say, Colonel Ralston has not yet been long enough in federal politics to have his name associated with the inevitable character-revealing anecdotes which, for better or for worse, cling to public men.

It was obvious in the spring when Parliament prorogued that a new dynamic force was in Parliament in the person of Colonel Ralston. Everyone spoke of it. For a new cabinet minister to take over the defence department estimates—always highly contentious—and succeed in having increases of millions of dollars passed without

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

## Comment about Canadians & Events

arousing violent ire of the pacifists was in itself a remarkable tribute. All who witnessed the calm patience with which he guided his estimates through the Commons and the complete knowledge of the department which he displayed, were aware that the Maritimes had given another big man to Canada.

In appearance the minister is contradictory. To see him rise to his feet in the House, heavy-jawed, heavy-shouldered, one would expect a stentorian voice to boom out vast threats. He pauses for a moment as though he were going to assault the Opposition in reverberating

phrases. Then he surprises those who are hearing him for the first time. For he speaks quietly, clearly and firmly, with definite finality in every phrase. He wastes no words, brushes aside preliminaries, but the traditional courtesies of Parliament, and speaks directly to the point. It is this combination of decisiveness and modesty that impressed the last Parliament.

This summer Colonel Ralston is to be one of the Empire's impressarios. As chairman of the sub-committee of the cabinet in charge of arrangements for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Minister of Defence has assumed one of those positions to which little public credit is attached but which carry appalling responsibility. If the tour of H.R.H. is to be as delightful as the previous ones all will be well and Colonel Ralston will be one of the minor figures in the background. But should something go wrong—

well, that is the sort of position it is!

Colonel Ralston is the first Canadian Defence Minister who ever led Canadian troops in the field. At the age of thirty-four he was commissioned a subaltern in the 85th Battalion C.E.F. (Nova Scotia Highlanders). "For great personal courage" he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was recommended for the Victoria Cross for penetrating forty yards of enemy wire under direct fire to rescue a wounded officer. At the conclusion of the war Colonel Ralston was in command of the 85th Battalion. He was once wounded, awarded the C.M.G., and mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's final despatch for "gallant and distinguished conduct." He returned to Halifax to practice law and maintained his association with non-permanent militia, emerged into public life as chairman of the Ralston Commission which



Col. the Hon. J. L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence



The Hon. Fernand Rinfret, Secretary of State

ty from

ern in Ster-  
mplicity with  
t follows the  
l to modern  
may be pur-  
ne—a collec-  
ed and com-  
e of years.  
dessert forks,  
with hollow  
steel blades,  
\$43.00; soup  
ble spoons,  
ons, \$32.50.  
zen.

Yonge Street