

Mayfair's Ottawa Letter

By Rideau

TELL us about the opening of the Ottawa Season," writes the editor of *Mayfair*. And we feel like being vulgar and replying, "There ain't none." Which is quite true at this minute, for Social Ottawa will be resting from a hectic summer until about Christmas, and then gathering its forces for what is always the real opening of the social season—the Opening of Parliament and Their Excellencies' State Drawing Room. Usually this takes place at a fall session of Parliament, but this year, thanks to a comfortable body politic, Parliament will not sit until the New Year. Meanwhile, aside from the usual private parties and possibly a few larger dances, the real season waits.

Of course, we have just concluded a brief brilliant season with the two Princes. Several debutantes came out, and the remaining buds of the season will blossom at the Drawing Room which is always notable for its number of *debs* with their "first presentation" cards, their gorgeous flowers, and lovely white dresses.

Social Ottawa, it may be explained for the benefit of those who live in distant and larger cities, is divided into many parts although all these parts have common meeting grounds. The most common, probably, is the social side of parliamentary sessions. While the parliamentary set is distinct from the older social set of the city, many friends are common to both.

There are, too, many common members between the highly exclusive Country Club and the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, and all members of the Cabinet are honorary members of the former. Also a fair number of "best people" find it economic to take their golf at one of the newer clubs. The Chaudiere is popular, and the Hunt and Golf Club, younger child of the old Hunt Club, has had a positive boom this year, distinguished as it was by visits from Their Royal Highnesses, Their Excellencies, and Colonel Lindbergh.

There is overlapping of all sets in the various social and patriotic organizations, of which Ottawa has a generous number. Then, again, one finds old established families who, having all the equipment for taking a leading social part in the Capital's life, are content to live the quiet home life. Many are the second and third generations of men who served Canada as Ministers of the Crown or in great pioneer enterprises, men whose descendants would have every claim to social prestige. Yet except for the life which centres around the vice-regal residence, they disregard the usual round of social activities of the Capital entirely. The comparatively short term of Governors-General really makes impossible the establishment of what might become "Government House sets," such as often menace the free social life of other dominions beyond the seas. As it is there are always a few who are closer to Government House than others, for even Governors-General must be allowed to have personal friends, but this coterie changes with changing Governors-General.

The same thing is true of the Cabinet sets, which change with changing Governments. This is a society immediately dependent upon the individual Cabinet Minister maintaining his position. Should he resign, or for some reason

find himself out of the Cabinet during some re-organization, his wife's initiative in social matters, as a usual thing, ceases at about the same moment. During her husband's reign, the Cabinet Minister's wife assumes strenuous social office. Her receptions must be frequent and smart, and the intervening time is pretty well taken up with returning calls even if she only assumes the position of postman, dropping cards on a well planned route. Then there are the larger social affairs, teas, luncheons, bridges, dinners and dances.

In late years the Liberal Cabinet Ministers' wives have followed the happy plan of giving a reception and dance in the Hall of Fame of the Parliament Buildings, during the mid-parlia-



—Underwood and Underwood

Irving Nelson Linnell, U. S. Consul General for Canada, formerly consular agent at Prince Rupert, B. C., and vice-consul at Vancouver. He married Miss Lillian B. Fraser, of Prince Rupert, B. C., and has a son and daughter. He comes to Ottawa immediately from the state department at Washington, D. C., to which he has been attached since 1923

mentary season. Fortunate is the daughter of debutante age in a Cabinet Minister's family. Her position gives her a fine running start in the social game, and it usually helps her long after her parents may have left the limelight of politics, for, after the manner of youth, she has formed her friendships and they remain with her for at least a few years.

So much for the Ottawa social scene—a social scene which possesses less rigidity than that of most large cities.

The season promises an unusual number of debutantes. Already a fair number of mothers have decided upon the mid-winter Drawing Room for the social launching of their daughters. Many of their families are or have been connected with the Government.

Musically, the season promises unusually well. Ottawa has not been noted as a musical city; frequently touring artists of note have passed it

by knowing that a visit even under vice-regal patronage might not mean a paying audience. Worse still, local musicians have largely had to seek appreciation elsewhere. However, this coming season brings Galli-Curci, Edward Johnston, Fritz Kreisler and Rachmaninoff—an unusual feast for the Capital. There are also to be concerts by the Hart House String Quartet and the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. And the Geraldine Farrar is coming.

Some think the change is due to the carillon—and it would be nice to think so. Certainly Mr. Price has had amazingly large audiences for his twice-a-week recitals which are largely composed of classical music. Seemingly the bells have done more to foster a community musical spirit than years of artificial stimulus.

Speaking of the bells, Mr. Jeff Denyn, principal of the carilloneurs' school at Malines, Belgium, and reputedly the world's greatest carillonneur, gave two late autumn concerts here.

But, alas, winter brings problems in the Singing Tower. Nobody knows yet just how our zero weather will affect the bells, and the tower is anything but a warm place in its present unfinished condition. If he attempts to play Mr. Price will certainly have to add something to his gymnasium suit. For the present, at least, recitals are to be discontinued. It is announced that the carillon will peal forth on Thanksgiving Day and on Christmas Day, and I understand there is also some possibility of special programmes being broadcast by CNRO.

In any case, Carillonneur Price says he has given as many recitals in the last three months as are given by the average carillonneur in the year. Until I heard that I had devised what I thought was a very good plan for directing some of the surplus heat and warm air from the Houses of Parliament upward to the Singing Tower.

TO APPRECIATE him you must see him at work in the Senate. There, at the age of sixty-eight, he leads the government supporters with all the zeal and gusto of a member of the young "Rouge" group in Quebec in the eighties. Senator Dandurand is perhaps the most vivid French Canadian character in the public life of this country to-day.

His voice is rasping and yet arresting. His sentences rip out in a brisk manner that commands immediate attention, always several laps behind his thoughts. His wit is unflinching and he has a magnificent sense of compromise. Since 1921, Senator Dandurand has had the difficult task of guiding government bills through the Upper Chamber in the face of a Conservative majority. Destiny, it should be said, has helped the government for the Tory opposition has dwindled from something over twenty to about ten. But the life or death of government measures has rested in the hands of this majority. Senator Dandurand has met this situation session after session and won in most cases.

Above all things he is independent. In his young days with Laurier and David he was one of the extremists of the anti-clerical young "Rouge" movement. Even to-day he is not too party-bound to state frankly in the Senate that he thinks the Commons have [See also page 54]