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Comments on the Cartoon.



READY FOR THE START.—There is good reason to believe that Sir John has made up his mind to dissolve Parliament and appeal to the country during the present year. Amongst the signs which convince the politically weather-wise of this is the fact that the secret workers of the Conservative party are already busily engaged upon the preparation of the campaign literature. This is as trustworthy a premonition of an early "disturbance" as the appearance of the stormy petrel is of bad weather at sea. Just what the forthcoming documents may contain it is futile for us to attempt to foretell, but the man who bets that they will be devoted chiefly to the laudation of Protection will stand a

good chance of winning his wagers. As Sir John intimated in the opening debate of the session, he is not convinced that the feeling in favor of freer trade relations with the United States is yet strong enough in the country to make it worth his while to throw over the N.P. and come out for unrestricted reciprocity. As a means of retaining office he believes that his present "principles" are, on the whole, safer, though he told Mr. Laurier and the House with refreshing frankness that those "principles" could be changed, if necessary, to serve that all-important end. It may be concluded, therefore, that in the approaching race Sir John intends to trust himself once more to the sturdy shoulders of the monopolists. The rings, combines, and other interests that have been gorged and fattened at the expense of the Canadian consumer, do not seem built for speed in such a contest, but on a former occasion they "got there all the same," and Sir John has faith that, with clever jockeying, the feat can be repeated. Laurier's mount, on the other hand, looks like a flyer, and if he does not win the race it will be due to bad riding. The lightning of the burden of taxation and the extension of the

markets of the country are two items of the Grit programme that ought to appeal very powerfully to the mass of voters, especially now that a long experience has made it clear that a high tariff can do nothing for the vast majority beyond enhancing the cost of living. But the race is not always to the swift. There is a fable about the Tortoise and the Hare which is just now worthy Mr. Laurier's profound study. Notwithstanding the long legs and good staying qualities of the Unrestricted Reciprocity horse, he will be beaten unless he is ridden for all he is worth.

ANOTHER ROYAL PROCLAMATION.—The seat for the county of Haldimand having become vacant, a great struggle has been for years going on between the two parties for its possession. Messrs. Montague (Con.) and Colter (Lib.) have gone to the polls no less than four times, but hitherto the member elect—sometimes one, sometimes the other—has not been able to "stay put." In the contest just closed, Mr. Colter was successful by a majority of thirty-nine, and unless the customary appeal is taken and evidence of bribery brought forward, he will represent the riding for what remains of the present Parliamentary term. If the successive trials before the election judges are a fair criterion, it is certain that the constituency has become notoriously corrupt. The Indian vote, which is an important factor in the case, has given rise to some new political tricks. These have not been confined altogether to one party, of course, but, so far as recorded, the Conservatives have certainly displayed the most striking originality. For example, in the third campaign a proclamation, bearing the royal arms and signed "Queen Victoria," was distributed amongst the untutored red electors, directing them to vote for Her Majesty's "dear friend Dr. Montague," and there was no sign that these newly-made Canadian citizens had any doubt of the genuineness of the document. This incidentally shows how much better qualified the Indians are for the franchise than the women of the country!

SOME of the items in the Auditor-General's report under the head of House of Commons expenses would be more appropriately termed Common House expenses. It puzzles us a good deal to know why Parliament needs to purchase "trousers," "pillow shams," and other domestic articles. And when we are informed upon this point we would then like to be told why such fabulous prices need be paid.

HERE is a pointer for the prohibitionists of Canada. We respectfully ask Bro. Jamieson, M.P., to paste it in his hat:

HARRISBURG, Pa., Feb. 5.—In the House to-day a bill was introduced making it an offence punishable by a fine of not less than \$50 or over \$100 for anyone to treat another to intoxicating liquor.

SAYS the Charlottetown Patriot: "We have nowhere seen more concise or clearer definitions of the trade questions discussed in Canada during the last few years than those given by GRIP." The reason we blush is, that we can't deny it. There is no use talking, if you want clear definitions and sound doctrine, this is the very shop for it. Only \$2 per year.

AS the Jesuit Bill was passed by Grits and assented to by Tories, both parties are equally "in the soup." This ought to make it all the easier for sensible, patriotic Canadians, whatever their political connection, to unite for the defence of our civil rights. And we can see no reason why citizens of the Roman Catholic faith who believe in equal civil rights for all, should not go in heartily as well. The question has no connection with their religious belief.

MR. SIMEON JONES' report upon the results of his mission to South America in the interests of Canadian trade, has been laid before Parliament. His recom-