

The first charge, it may be presumed, is meant to imply that Mr. Blake had no reasonable ground for opposing the Government, and was therefore induced to keep up an opposition by the pure spirit of faction. It is not easy to understand how the writer interprets the position of Mr. Blake and his party. He complains that the Liberal leader did not "meet Sir John Macdonald either with a policy of his own . . . or with a direct opposition to the policy of his rival;" and yet he also complains of the Opposition "finding fault with everything that was done by the Ministry." If every measure of the Ministry was attacked, that ought to be regarded as opposition direct enough to satisfy any demand for direct opposition to the Government's policy; and in so far as this policy was impugned by Mr. Blake, he gave it to be understood as a matter of course that his own policy would be in an opposite line. There is one measure which is usually claimed as the peculiar policy of the Government, and which the leaders of the Liberal party have made the peculiar object of their attacks; it is the measure which has obtained the astonishing misnomer of the National Policy. On this question which side of politics may fairly claim to have an intelligibly defined policy? On the one hand, can any one tell what the National Policy really means? Before it was introduced it floated in the air as an unsubstantial structure of clouds, out of which any man's interested expectations might shape whatever edifice of desired wealth he pleased. It may be remembered that the First Minister of the Crown was twitted at one time with not definitely explaining the proposed scheme in detail. His reply was memorable, as it was conveyed in language which certainly contrasts with the style of his political opponent: "He was too old a rat to be caught in that trap." The measure, which was thus acknowledged by its originator to have been kept on purpose indefinite in its conception, has been kept equally indefinite in its execution. To the serious injury of all industrial interests in the country the policy is made to shift from year to year. Nor can it be said that, in spite of all its changes, the policy follows the one principle of protecting native industries; every thoughtful Protectionist knows that the indiscriminate protection of nearly all articles of consumption must increase the cost of production so enormously as to prevent the establishment even of those manufactures which are adapted to the country. The so-called National Policy is simply the policy of adjusting from time to time the price of manufactures to suit the wants of the Government's supporters. In opposition to this pliable scheme, that is surely a definite and truly national policy which insists that the taxation of the country shall be adjusted solely for national purposes, and not for the purpose of enriching one class of the community at the expense of the rest.

Of the other charges against Mr. Blake little needs to be said. They are founded on such mistakes as are perpetually made by extreme partisans determined to interpret an opponent's conduct only by the worst of conceivable motives. Mr. Blake is charged with bidding for the French and Irish votes. Let us set aside the vague and abusive language in which the charges are made. The facts to which the writer evidently refers are Mr. Blake's defence of the policy of mitigating the death-penalty in the case of Louis Riel, and his expression of sympathy with the Nationalists of Ireland. In reference to the former point, though I certainly differed from Mr. Blake, I confess it difficult to understand why any one should be held up to execration for maintaining that a Government which had undoubtedly goaded the North-west into rebellion by its unpardonable maladministration ought to have extended pardon to the leader of the rebels. Apparently the writer meant to insinuate that Mr. Blake, while believing in his conscience that Riel deserved death, yet espoused his cause merely to catch for his party the vote of the discontented Conservatives of Quebec. That would explain the writer's horror of Mr. Blake, but what can explain such an insinuation?

In reference to the other point, was it fair, on the part of this writer, to signalise "the spouters of the *Reform* party," as if they alone had indulged in the defence of Home Rule in Ireland? He must know that the "spouters" of neither party are in a position to abuse those of the other on this subject. The farce was enacted by men of all parties, and by nearly all the legislative bodies of this continent. Among the utterances on this subject in the recent session of the Dominion House of Commons, Mr. Blake's speech was distinguished by the moderation of its proposal.

On the last of the four charges brought against Mr. Blake it is impossible to say anything definite, as the charge is itself general, and admits therefore of nothing but a general reply. There is no more common trick of political controversy than that of hurling at an adversary obnoxious epithets like *disloyal* and *unpatriotic*, and the dispassionate spectator knows that they are often just as true of the party using them as of the party against whom they are levelled. It certainly does not appear quite self-evident that Edward Blake, or Alexander Mackenzie, or Sir R. Cart-

wright, are a whit less loyal to the true interests of their country than many of those who are fattening on the generous expenditure of the national treasury.

Mr. Blake has been forced to retire from the leadership of the Liberal party under circumstances which have probably evoked some sympathy in all who have thought on the subject, except his ruthless critic in *THE WEEK*. But the work that has been done by the retired leader forms a significant episode in the political history of Canada. For it is not difficult, if one will look with earnest eyes at the struggles of these years, to see in Mr. Blake's work the old task of Liberalism—a struggle against the old foes of constitutional government in a new form. The foundation and security of constitutional government consist in the minute and perpetual control of the Executive by the people. Mr. Blake won his first spurs in political warfare by his victory over Mr. J. Sandfield Macdonald's Government in Ontario—a victory which vindicated the right of the people to this control. Mr. Macdonald's Government had repeatedly obtained from the Legislature large sums of public money without any specifications as to the localities in which they were to be expended; and constituencies were given to understand, in no vague terms, that their hope of obtaining any portion of these grants must depend on their returning proper representatives to the Legislature. It is an essentially similar policy, on a far larger scale, which has directed the Government in Ottawa for many years; and it is a matter of profoundest regret that the supporters of the Government seem in general blind or indifferent to the issues involved. The bribery of manufacturers by regulating customs duties according to their wishes, the bribery of contractors and localities by extravagant expenditure of public money, the redistribution of seats so as to increase the supporters of the Government and diminish those of the Opposition, various other features of the election-laws which are designed to place the whole electoral machine under the control of Government officials—all these measures contribute to secure the Administration in their place, and to prevent the possibility of any inconvenient check by a hostile representation, even if a gross majority of the people should be on the side of the Opposition. No wonder that Mr. Blake has been unsuccessful in dislodging an Administration which has secured itself by such tactics. The wonder is that any man, not a mere hack of the dominant party, should have no kindly cheer to send after him as he retires from the struggle, no word in denunciation of the system against which he contended in vain.

In vain? Yes, in one sense, but that the most superficial. No honest work ever dies; and there are not a few, in both parties and outside of both, who will bear in kindly memory the public life of Edward Blake as one of the most honest and substantial pieces of work ever done in the political history of Canada. The most fruitful gains of humanity have grown from the labour of men who have gone down in the struggle to achieve them; and when we are loud in our huzzas over the temporal successes of our party, it is well to be reminded of a law of the universe that is deeper than any external success: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

J. CLARK MURRAY.

OUR COUNTRY.

It is with no small satisfaction that we read the report of the Mayor's speech on Dominion Day. Mr. Howland was not only expressing his own deep feeling when he cautioned his hearers against the habit of "belittling the country," but he was the mouthpiece of a very wide and deep public sentiment. We have ourselves more than once drawn attention to the disloyal and unpatriotic conduct of some considerable number of our people who seem to take pleasure in running down their own country, disparaging its actual attainments, and casting doubt upon its future progress. For performing this apparently obvious duty we have been accused of partisanship, as though it needed the presence of party spirit to protest against disrespect towards the land which nourishes us! So far as we know, not one line has been written in *THE WEEK*, by any of its regular contributors, in the interests of any party or any sect, as such. Whatever seems good in any has received, and will receive, approval; whatever we dislike in any we shall take the liberty of condemning.

It certainly is a very strange thing that writers who protest against the "belittling" of the country should be thought to be doing the work of a party. Would it not be better for those who may happen to be accused to clear themselves of the imputation? That the thing is done by certain newspapers, and by certain politicians, no one can for a moment doubt. If these persons and organs do not represent the party to which they profess adherence, the leaders of the party should disavow them with all possible expedition. We have good hopes that they will now do so. Our