

work for civilisation that must ultimately tend to the peace of the world. One danger would have to be guarded against. The commercial policy of the States in its new possessions must not be so selfish as to arouse the antagonism of other trading countries. From such a selfish policy disastrous results have followed of which many colonial wars are the record. Holland and Spain to-day would have richer colonies had they not sought to monopolize the entire trade of their dependencies. Europe will make it very disagreeable to the States if its trade is cut off with American colonies. It will pay to be liberal in this matter; it will cost less to cultivate friends than to maintain defences against possible enemies. When an American Empire is established and allied, as it would be, in sympathy with the British Empire, there would be a power strong enough to keep the world's chronic peace-disturbers permanently in check.

TOO MUCH POLITICS.

We doubt if any five millions of people in the world are blessed or cursed with so much politics as the people of Canada. This may be partly due to our federal system, which brings into existence so many centres of political disturbance, and also increases greatly the number of the professional governing class. Canadians, have, we suppose, more legislators, more cabinet ministers, more government officials per thousand of the population, than any other people in the world. Without stopping to discuss just now whether this fact is in itself of advantage to the public interest, it may be remarked that this may at least account for the fact that the Dominion in some part or another is nearly always in a state of acute political crisis, which certainly is not an advantage to the public interest. Two provinces are badly shaken up at the present time by political events, and rumour says that the great political cataclysm known as a federal general election is a by no means remote contingency. The most remarkable feature of the situation is that in all three cases, the storm comes very soon after a general election. The present Dominion Parliament is not old; the Ontario and British Columbia legislatures are only in their infancy. In the two provincial spheres, public feeling is already at fever heat.

In a young and sparsely populated country we cannot perhaps expect to find a high type of statesmanship to be very general; especially in a country that uses so many statesmen; although we have some fine types among our public men, more especially in our Federal parliament. But it is rather a healthy sign that there is a good deal of evident public disgust at the scramble for office and patronage into which our politics is degenerating. In this matter, there is nothing to choose between the two parties. On both sides, it seems to be admitted that the be all and end all of political life is office. Hence, we have the indecent spectacle of statesmen tenaciously clinging to

office after the popular verdict has gone against them, and statesmen grasping at office before they have secured the mandate of the electors. It is difficult to conceive of a British statesman of high rank endeavouring to retain office by a "fluke," after he has lost it by an election. Our political leaders would command more respect and achieve greater popularity if they were less grasping. The bitterness and bad manners which characterize our politics are almost entirely due to this office hunger. That our national interests must suffer through it goes without saying. The International Conference about to be held at Quebec is an occasion upon which a very little patriotism would suggest the wisdom, and the imperative duty of Canadians of all shades of political belief, refraining from embarrassing the Government in its negotiations. Sir Charles Tupper brought a perfect torrent of abuse upon his head by stating that he had decided to postpone his political campaign until the Conference was over. No doubt Sir Charles might have postponed his political campaign without saying anything about it, but even that would have been misconstrued. But beyond dispute he is doing the right thing, and if a public man does the right thing it is a stupid impertinence to question his motives. If our politicians were less anxious about office, they would be less censorious of their opponents, and responsible government would be seen to greater advantage in Canada. The principles of the constitution are being strained fearfully in Ontario and British Columbia. It is just as honorable to serve Her Majesty and the country in opposition as in office, and the spectacle of our leaders squabbling over public emoluments is anything but edifying.

MINERAL OIL AND ACETYLENE.

(THE RISKS ATTENDING USE OF SAME).

Of the many contributions towards the dissemination of knowledge of petroleum and acetylene, the paper prepared by Mr. G. G. Henderson, D. Sc., Professor of Chemistry in the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, for the Insurance and Actuarial Society of Glasgow, takes high rank. In view of the fact that so much difference of opinion exists as to the use and danger of both these illuminants, we quote from the more important passages of the paper in question. Mr. Henderson says:—

Paraffin oil or petroleum, and acetylene, the new illuminant, differ widely in their properties, yet there is a certain propriety in grouping them together, because, in the case of each substance, any risks which arise in its use depend mainly upon its character. However, it will be convenient to consider them separately.

Crude mineral oil, whether obtained from natural sources—the "oil wells" which are found in different countries—or prepared by the destructive distillation of so-called bituminous shale, is essentially a somewhat complex mixture of a number of hydrocarbons,