

THE PLATFORM OF THE NEWLY MADE BORDEN GOVERNMENT.

AFTER weeks of negotiation Sir Robert Borden has eliminated from the Cabinet several of his former ministers, by giving them first class permanent and highly remunerative positions and taking in their place a number of gentlemen some of whom were recognized as active Liberals, others as Liberal in their views—and the balance unknown in the political world. This so-called Union Government has issued a statement setting forth in a series of paragraphs its policy. This document contains very little if anything new and so far as it applies is practically a reproduction of the Borden Halifax Platform of 1907 and 1911. It purports to deal with the various matters connected not only with the War but at the same time with problems confronting the Government after the war.

With this announcement no particular objection is raised but we may say that having heard and read of these high sounding platitudes for so many years we have serious misgivings about the fulfilment of any promises the Borden Government may make.

The platform as given out on the 19th of October, 1917 is as follows:

1. The vigorous prosecution of the war, the maintenance of Canada's effort by the provision of necessary reinforcements, the immediate enforcement of the Military Service Act and the most thorough co-operation with the Government of the United Kingdom and of the other Dominions in all matters relating to the war.

Civil Service Reform.

2. Civil Service Reform, with a view to extending the principle of the present Civil Service Act to the Outside Service, and thus to abolish patronage and to make appointments to the Public Service upon the sole standard of merit. The Civil Service Commission has already been directed to make a report to the Prime Minister as to the necessary steps for that purpose. Such arrangements will be subject to the existing regulations, which give preference in appointments to returned soldiers who are duly qualified.

3. The extension of the franchise to women with suitable provisions for enabling married women to determine their nationality and to obtain naturalization notwithstanding marriage.

Taxation of War Profits.

4. Adequate taxation of war profits and increased taxation of incomes, as necessitated by the continuance of the war.

5. A strong and progressive policy of Immigration and Colonization, accompanied by suitable provisions to induce settlement upon the land, to encourage increased agricultural production and to aid in the development of agricultural resources.

6. Effective arrangements for demobilization, for the care and vocational training of returned soldiers, for assistance in enabling them to settle upon the land and for adequate pensions to those who have been disabled and to the dependents of those who have fallen.

7. The development of transportation facilities; the co-operative management of the various railway systems so as to ensure economy in operation, to avoid unnecessary construction and to secure the widest and most effective use of existing railway facilities; the encouragement and development of the shipbuilding industry and the establishment of steamship lines upon both oceans and upon the Great Lakes; co-operation with the various Provincial Governments for the improvement of high-

ways; the investigation of the possibilities of Air Service for important national purposes.

Avoidance of Waste.

8. The reduction of public expenditure, the avoidance of waste and the encouragement of thrift.

9. Effective measures to prevent excessive profits to prohibit hoarding and to prevent combination for the increase of prices and thus to reduce the cost of living.

10. The encouragement of co-operation among those engaged in agricultural production, with a view to diminishing the cost of production and marketing so that the price paid to the producer may conform more closely to that paid by the consumer.

11. The general development of all the varied resources of Canada, and their conservation and utilization to the best advantage of the people with the co-operation and assistance of the State in every reasonable way for that purpose.

12. Adequate consideration of the needs of the industrial population; the maintenance of good relations between employers and employed, and such conditions of employment as will ensure suitable standards of living among the labouring classes.

In dealing with the various items of this statement, we may say in passing that it is hoped that the action of the present Government in prosecuting the war will be in striking contrast to the awful record of the Administration from the commencement of the war to the present time. Our hope may be in vain, however, while a majority of the present Cabinet who were members of the old Borden Government remain.

Civil Service Reform has been apparently a matter of vital importance in Sir Robert Borden's opinion for some years long before and during the war—but up to the present time about the only reform accomplished is the appointment of about 12,000 more officials than when he formed his Government in 1911.

The extension of the franchise to women is promised, but under this head the question arises,—how was it when at the recent session of Parliament an Act was passed giving certain women the right to vote—the Act was made so restrictive in its operation? Surely there are hundreds and thousands of Canadian women loyal and true who may have no immediate relatives at the front but whose heart is for the winning of the war, and who have worked day and night in various ways towards that end. Why were they not allowed to vote? These women and their sympathy demand an answer.

We are also told that adequate taxation of war profits will be considered. The word "adequate" arouses suspicion. Adequate in what sense? For the benefit of the profiteer or for the public good?

We have serious doubts as to the probable success of a policy of immigration and colonization so long as the present Prime Minister and some of his old colleagues remain in the Government.

When hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens against whom not one word is raised regarding their conduct since the war began are disfranchised by the recent Act and especially when of these a large number have offered themselves or have joined for service on behalf of the Allies, it is difficult to see how a Government, upon whom the responsibility for such legislation rests, can carry forward