

THROUGH A MONOCLE

CAN WE AFFORD TO BE "INSULAR?"

I ALWAYS hesitate to call the attention of my fellow-Canadians to anything which goes on outside of their own country and which is not translatable into "more immigrants" or a flattering assurance of their superiority to the rest of the world; for I too often find that they are not interested. Can it be that we are "insular?" The term "insular" was adapted by the people of the Continent of Europe to describe the lack of knowledge and interest shown by the inhabitants of Great Britain in her palmiest days in Continental affairs; but it will generally be admitted that the average Englishman is a keen and industrious student of both Continental and World politics when contrasted with the average Canadian. He has to be. The poor old Mother Country would have been submerged long ago if her voters had gone "blinkered" with the sweet contentment so common with my countrymen. And yet the British Foreign Office has trouble enough, in all conscience, with those sections of the electorate which it must please who are always engaged in some sentimental crusade or other with little reference to the needs of British policy or the limits of British power.

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HOWEVER, I have decided to venture asking the "forwards" who read THE COURIER to consider so important a development in world-politics as an entire change in the alignment of the nations, and, consequently, in the balance of power. This—in a word—is found in the passage of Italy from the Triple Alliance to the Triple—or is Quadruple now?—Entente. The adhesion of Italy to the two Germanic Empires has been more or less dubious for some time, it is true. It always was an unnatural alliance; but, when France was hostile, it was the sole possible guarantee of Italian safety. But for years now, France has been friendly; and the *rapprochement* between France and Britain has made it easier for the Southern Kingdom to move nearer to her blood brother and away from the Austrian Empire whose occupation of Venetia is still remembered and whose occupation of Italian settlements about the head of the Adriatic is still a reality and an exasperation.

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BUT nothing decisive occurred until the initial Italian expedition sailed for Tripoli. The first soldier of the "Royal Government" who landed on the Tripolitan beach, set his foot on the Triple Alliance. It died in an hour. If Italy were in doubt where her interest lay before she went to Tripoli, she cannot feel the smallest hesitation now with the flower of her army locked up in this North African adventure and absolutely dependent upon constant support and reinforcement from the sea. For Italy to quarrel to-day with Britain and France, the two powers whose navies control the Mediterranean, would be to sacrifice her army in Africa and her African ambitions. A battleship fleet which should steam quietly in between Taranto and Tripoli, cutting all connection between Italy and her soldiers, would inflict a staggering blow upon the Italian Government, finally balk her Colonial aspirations, and give Tripoli back to Turkey.

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GERMANY and Austria could save her no more than they could keep the German cruisers at Agadir. On the other hand, they dare not attack her when defended by her own army and backed by the three powers of the Triple Entente. So, automatically, by the supreme law of plain self-interest, Italy is lifted out of the Triple Alliance and transferred to the Triple Entente. Nothing so important has happened in world-politics since the crushing of military Russia between the upper and nether millstones of Japanese attack and domestic revolution. Slowly Russia is recovering herself, redressing once more the balance of power which the Bosnian affair proved to be so hopelessly upset; and now Italy has stepped to the other side of the "saw horse" and brought it decisively down to firm earth again. The consequence is that the feeling of apprehension which has constantly hovered over the French and British capitals for many a day, is dispelled; and the powers which regard themselves at all events as "the peace powers" are once more in command of the situation.

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JUST how far they are "peace powers" is open to fair debate. Russia is to-day taking advantage of the situation to tighten her hold on Persia;

and Britain has no choice but to accept the Southern portion of that feebly governed but comparatively valuable land which is within her "sphere of influence." France has just added Morocco to her splendid North African domain; and Italy—as we have seen—is casting her shoe over the last of the North African lands to be left to the Arab. It is quite possible that in Berlin they do not regard all these incidents as convincing proofs of a spirit of peace. But, however that may be, it is a shift in the balance of power which it is important that we should see. The reason why it is important for us to understand these things is because it is in this field that the British Foreign Office does its work; and we in Canada are coming to have a decided effect upon the course of the British Foreign Office. No formal machinery yet exists by which we can impress our opinions upon the British Foreign Minister; but, nevertheless, they listen in London for such echoes of our judgment as get across the Atlantic.

No British Government would—if it could help it—take a path in foreign politics contrary to strong Colonial opinion. They want Canada, Australia and South Africa to be with them when they move. But it is impossible for us to deliver an intelligent opinion on the duty of Britain in any regard if we do not take the trouble to understand in some

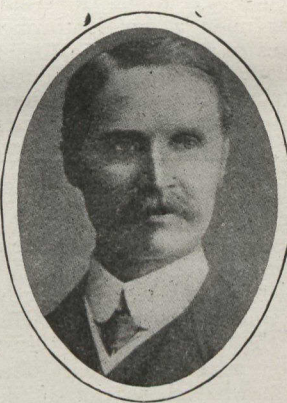
fashion the problems which confront her and the difficulties she must meet. We are a young people and a tender-hearted people, and we are especially susceptible to the sentimental appeal which so often sets the non-Conformist conscience astray in Britain. Let me give one example which will make clearer what I mean than much argument. The Congo atrocities were fearful things. "Red Rubber" was a sickening revelation. Naturally and properly the good people of England were stirred. We would have been aroused here if we had experienced the Morel campaign. But when the leaders of this crusade badgered and bombarded the Foreign Office to send a cruiser to the Congo and put a stop to it, they did not sufficiently weigh the fact that this would bring Britain into conflict with Belgium, whose late King owned the Congo; and that that might be fatal to the British Empire. As a matter of fact, the very threat of British interference probably caused that secret treaty with Germany signed by King Leopold in which German forces were given free access to Belgian roads if they should desire to turn the flank of the French defences. Now if Germany, at the height of her power, had taken advantage of this treaty and conquered France, and then turned the French fleet against us—but you see the argument. We must recognize that there are some things which Britain cannot do. And we can only be sure that we will be found in the hour of trial with the cool statesmen, and not with the warm-hearted but reckless crusaders, if we keep carefully informed as to the position on the international chess-board where Britain plays always for her life.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

ANDREW BONAR LAW--CREATOR OF POLICIES

By DONALD B. SINCLAIR

ANDREW BONAR LAW, M.P., has been chosen leader of the Opposition in the British House of Commons. Some years ago, a thick set, effervescent lump of a boy called Law, with a shock of bushy hair, played ball



and studied latin at the Grammar School in Richibucto, New Brunswick. Sometimes, after school hours, he sat on the docks and watched the clumsy square-riggers load up with lumber and put out to sea. It may be he thought of being a lumber king or sailor some day. But Bonar Law, the Richibucto school boy, has become an historic personage—the first Canadian, or colonial, to attain to the leadership of a great political party in the United Kingdom; perhaps an omen of the days when a boy from Halifax, Capetown, Calcutta or Melbourne, may sit in the seat of Pitt and Gladstone in the historic room at Westminster.

The accident of his being a Canadian is not, alone, the claim Mr. Law has upon public interest just now. That did not gain him the leadership. Bonar Law is chieftain of the Conservative party to-day, because he is the most outstanding and brilliant exponent of a movement, which shows symptoms of becoming a dominant issue in British politics. He is the king-pin of the tariff reformers. Mr. Balfour found that the movement of tariff reform was getting too strong for him; he decided to hand the control over to a younger, more aggressive and virile man. Balfour, dreamer, dilettante and dialectic, tried to ride both the horses of the tariff reformers and those opposed to their doctrine. Bonar Law's convictions are all in the direction of protection; he is the uncompromising, unhesitating supporter of tariffs.

The new leader is a son of the Manse. His father was Rev. James Law, a Presbyterian minister in Rexton, Kent County, New Brunswick. Law, the statesman, arrived in the world in 1858. He was brought up in the atmosphere of the Kirk and public schools at Rexton and Richibucto. When he was twelve years old, his aunt took him to Glasgow, Scotland, to finish his education.

Since then, Mr. Law has resided mainly in Glasgow, though he frequently comes to Canada, and has always been proud of his Canadian rearing. On his mother's side he had a number of Glasgow

relatives called Kidston, who conspired with his aunt to start him in the iron business in Glasgow. He prospered at it, becoming at length Chairman of the Scottish Iron Association. Incidentally, he gained knowledge of more matters than iron. He learned to think after the Scotch mode. In the city of Adam Smith, father of political economy, Bonar Law began to be enthusiastic about theoretic questions of trade and commerce. In the year 1900, a parliamentary deputation got after him to contest Blackfriars, Glasgow. Law captured the seat. His aptitude for politics was such, that, two years later, he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. The Conservative party ran on the rocks in 1906, and Law went down in a landslide, hurled by a labour vote. Since then, he has sat for Dulwich Division of Camberwell and Bootle Division of Liverpool.

From a New Brunswick kirk manse, to leader of the Opposition in the British House of Commons, with a fighting chance of being Imperial Premier some day, is a rise without record. In eleven years' parliamentary experience, this Canadian has proved his qualities for leadership among the best brains and blood in the capital of the world. Old Joseph Chamberlain picked him out as an impressive figure years ago. Bonar Law's personal appearance subtly suggests intense earnestness more than anything else, in the heavy brow, the bull dog grip of the mouth and the fixed eye glance. His speeches have the ring of responsible utterances. There is little play of fancy in them; few generalities. They all concern "dry" topics, such as corn taxes, coal duties—tariff reform. They bristle with statistics. Mr. Law has something to say and he can compel a bearing on solid subjects without appeal to passion. As a writer says of him: "His audience would rather listen than cheer." His capacity for getting down to the roots of tariff schedules made him a sort of bibliography of new arguments to his former leaders, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain. This is what caused Earl Percy to once remark of Bonar Law: "There is no one who has rendered more yeoman service to his party." It is significant that the choice of the Unionists is a preponderantly unanimous one. The party has been somewhat under the handicap of not being able to agree on certain policies or their protagonists. It will be Mr. Law's task to organize his following into a united, concentrated, definite force. He knows his party; that is why he has been selected as its constructor.

Whatever Andrew Bonar Law, creator of policies, contributes to the thought of the Empire, will be watched with keen interest in every part of it; and the not least in that part, "which lies beyond the seas."