

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Why This Naval Visit?

REPORT has it that Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Hamar Greenwood are to get astride two iron-clads and cross to Canada to get us enthusiastic about the navy. One wonders who advised this folly.

If Canada makes an emergency contribution of cash or Dreadnoughts, it will not be due to anything spectacular which Mr. Churchill or Mr. Greenwood may do either in the North Sea or the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Canadians are not babes in a cradle to be amused with a rattle. Besides not all the Canadians who met Mr. Churchill on his previous visit have forgotten his conduct on that occasion. As for Mr. Greenwood, he can afford to wait a while for such glory.

If there is a real German menace, if Germany may strike at Belgium any day, if the German fleet may move through the North Sea any night, if the Mediterranean squadron is needed in home waters, why send a squadron on a foolish outing across the Atlantic? If all these stories of imminent danger are true, why let the First Lord loose upon the Atlantic with a valuable squadron?

Canada has sent her ministers to London and they must take the responsibility of a decision. If they are not prepared to do so, then Canada will soon find ministers who will. We don't want Mr. Churchill to decide this matter for us; we want Mr. Borden and his colleagues to make that decision.

It would be in the best interests of the Empire and an Empire navy, if the First Lord should suddenly find that he has so many important matters on hand that he cannot find time at present to visit Canada.

Two Elementary Parts.

LET us not be confused on this naval question. It is composed of two elementary parts. 1st: Shall we make an emergency contribution? 2nd: How shall we proceed to develop the Canadian navy which we have already begun? The first is the temporary part; the second is the permanent part.

If there is a real emergency, then Mr. Borden should declare that it exists and make proposals to meet it. The ordering of two Dreadnoughts or four, or even six would not dismay Canadians if they were convinced that Great Britain wanted them. Up to date there is no evidence of this. Mr. Churchill's last speech outside parliament was directly against Dreadnoughts and in favour of colonial fleets. If he has changed his mind, let us know.

As for the permanent policy, there can be only one solution—a fleet unit on the Pacific and a fleet unit on the Atlantic, with the necessary dry-docks and ship-yards to take care of these vessels. Mr. Borden and his colleagues may hesitate to come to this, but eventually they must do so. There is no other solution in sight.

Of course the temporary and the permanent may ultimately unite. That is, the Dreadnoughts ordered now may remain with the British authorities until such time as Canada may be ready to take them over.

The Panama Canal.

THE best public opinion of the United States regrets the action of the United States Congress in passing the Panama Canal Bill, which discriminates in favour of United States ships. In spite of the understanding between the United States and the other nations of the world that the Panama Canal should be used on equal terms by all nations, a bill has been framed providing for free passage to American ships, prohibiting railroad-owned vessels from using the waterway, and making certain other provisions of a similar character.

The *London Morning Post* says that this Bill involves not only violation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, but is a repudiation of United States' pledges to England when the Treaty was negotiated. The *Post* admits that it is possible to read into the Treaty an understanding that no nation except the United States and Great Britain shall have any rights under this particular document, but adds, "Certainly, neither legally nor morally, can discrimination be made against the British unless the United States violates her good faith."

In spite of Great Britain's official protest the Bill has been passed by both Houses with considerable majorities. President Taft and Secretary Stimson

have both asserted the right of the United States to remit the tolls or grant rebates to American ship. There is, therefore, little doubt that President Taft will sign the Bill when it is presented to him in due course. Ex-President Roosevelt, also a candidate for a third term at the White House, has expressed himself to the same effect. The only hope, therefore, for the British contention lies in the public opinion which is outside of politics and Congress.

Canada and the Canal.

MOST people in this country who give any attention to transportation problems and their relation to national development have been looking forward to the opening of the Panama Canal with considerable hope. They felt that the water route between Halifax and Vancouver would be a splendid alternative route for the exchange of Canadian produce between the two extremes of the Dominion's territory. They have also believed that it would be possible to ship wheat economically from Alberta and British Columbia via Vancouver and the Panama Canal. The question of tolls on British and Canadian shipping may seriously affect these hopes and possibilities. For example; if the principle of discriminatory tolls is admitted it would be quite possible for the United States to make these tolls so excessive that Canadian shipments through the Canal would be too costly for bulky and heavy merchandise. If the principle of discrimination be admitted, it would also be possible to compel Canada to make these shipments from Vancouver to Halifax and from Vancouver to Liverpool in American or foreign bottoms.

Of course, the United States has built the Canal at great expense and is entitled to some return. It is, therefore, reasonable that Canada should be made pay something for the use of the canal. Neither Great Britain nor Canada would object to paying the same toll as American ships. This was the point which was supposed to be safeguarded by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901. Many people in the United States admit that this was the intention of the Treaty. In that document Great Britain and Canada made certain concessions to the United States and thus in a sense paid a capital amount for the privileges which were expected from equal treatment when the canal was opened. It was, therefore, reasonable that both as a matter of privilege and as a matter of right Canada would pay only a fair assessment for her use of the canal. The present prospect is that this hope will not be realized.

Is the Loss Tremendous?

JUST what Canada would lose by discrimination in Panama Canal tolls, it is difficult to estimate. Opinions vary. Mr. D. W. Campbell, of the Elder-Dempster Line, has had considerable experience during the past six years in the shipment of goods from Eastern Canada, across Mexico on to Vancouver. He expresses the opinion that Canada has little to gain in regard to westbound traffic. He points out that the rate from Montreal to Victoria or Vancouver via the Tehuantepec Railway runs from 40 to 47c. per hundred pounds, and yet the average summer shipments have not exceeded 300 tons a month, while in the winter they have fallen far below this amount. Goods shipped from Ontario points to Montreal and St. John have to pay a fairly high local rate when routed via Mexico. In addition there is more insurance and much additional time in transit.

More noteworthy still is his opinion that grain cannot be shipped from Alberta via Vancouver and the Panama Canal at a lower rate than the present method of shipment via Buffalo or Montreal. It has been generally admitted that this would be the case on grain grown east of Regina, but it has not heretofore been argued that such would be the case with Alberta grain.

It would be well if the Dominion Government would put an expert on this question and give the public some information as to the value of the Panama Canal to Canada. Any person with even small imagination can see the advantage of an alternative all-water route competing with an all-rail route between Eastern and Western Canada. It will, nevertheless, require an official statement before

the Canadian public will be able to make up its mind as to the importance and extent of the loss of gain on this account. One can easily see the tremendous loss to Great Britain, on account of the large part which she plays in the carrying trade of the world. It is not quite so easy to estimate Canada's stake in the present situation. A speedy and exhaustive statement by a Government expert would be decidedly valuable at the present juncture.

Politics in Great Britain.

RECENT by-elections show a falling away from the present government. The Labourites are supporting it but unsympathetically. Any day their support may fall away and Asquith be defeated.

If the Home Rule passes, the Irish representation would be reduced to 40, and the present Liberal majority would be gone. This is the second serious contingency.

Should Mr. Winston Churchill return to the Unionist ranks, the Asquith government would not last long. For some time there has been talk of a new Liberal-Unionist coalition which would have for its immediate object the elimination of Lloyd George and his socialistic measures. George has been going too fast to suit the average Britisher who after all is conservative even in his desire for economic reforms.

Telephone Rates.

WHEN the Bell Telephone Company argued that the larger the city the higher the rate, there were people who shouted "monopoly," "robber," "trust," and all the names that demagogues use. Manitoba bought out the Bell to prove the falsity of the claim, and what happens?

R. L. Barr, Telephone Commissioner for the Province, has filed with the Public Utilities Commissioner, the new rates for places outside Winnipeg. He lays down and affirms the principle that as an exchange grows the cost of each connection increases correspondingly. In Brandon, a business telephone is to be \$40 and a residence phone \$25. In Portage the rate is \$35 and \$20. In Boissevain, Carberry and eight other similar places the charge is \$24 and \$18. In smaller places \$23 and \$15. In all these there is a 24-hour service.

The rates in Winnipeg are as high as in Toronto or Montreal. For large businesses, they are higher. The public can compare the others with places which they know under Bell jurisdiction. But the plain lesson is—that the large public service corporations are not always as bad as they are painted.

And Still Another Lesson.

ANOTHER piece of evidence concerning public ownership comes from Winnipeg. The *Telegram* of that city, which has consistently supported the civic power plant, admits that "a very considerable deficit will in all probability mark the operation of the municipal power plant." It is not "receiving the staunch public encouragement such a public enterprise warrants and deserves."

Slowly but surely it is being forced upon the public mind, that public ownership pays only where there is an acute public consciousness which will ensure business administration of a first-class nature. In other words, the same qualities which make for success in private undertakings must be present in public undertakings. There is no royal road to success.

Professional Lacrosse.

PROFESSIONAL lacrosse is doomed and the quicker the better. The Toronto audiences have fallen to one-quarter what they were four years ago. Montreal has the same story and Vancouver and New Westminster will follow suit. In the language of the sporting writer, "the game is on the toboggan."

But this will be best for the game. It cannot regain the glories of the eighties and nineties, when it was a gentleman's game, until it is dead, buried, and resurrected. The men who play it to-day as a means to an end must pass to the benches permanently, and a new generation of players and managers must be sought.

Curiously enough while professional lacrosse is falling into the trench, professional baseball is becoming more aristocratic. There is less foolish fan talk in the grand stand and bleachers and a noticeable increase in dignity. The best plays on both sides are generously applauded. If the home team loses, the audience does not necessarily go home disgusted. A well-earned win by either side is appreciated.