

standing, edited by Mr. H. W. Massingham, one of the leaders of British journalism. If it is free in its criticisms of the Government of the day, that is no more than is to be expected in a country which has always placed a high value on independent criticism. If a journal is lacking in loyal support of the Empire's cause in the war, if it give aid or comfort to the Empire's foes, it may properly be regarded as an enemy and dealt with accordingly. But that cannot be the case with the Nation, which is a sterling British journal, representative usually of a considerable volume of British public opinion. We hope to find that the restraining of the Nation is the work of subordinates, whose action will not have the endorsement of Mr. Lloyd George's Government.

### Civil Service Reform

IN the campaign which resulted in the defeat of the Government of British Columbia, Mr. Brewster, then leader of the Opposition, very strongly condemned the patronage system, and promised that if placed in power he would abolish it. Some opponents questioned the sincerity of his attitude, and some friends thought he had given pledges that were perhaps incapable of fulfillment. Mr. Brewster is now in power, and dealing with the matter in a manner which gives the fullest assurance of his desire and determination to effect, as far as possible, a reform of the system which he so warmly condemned when he was asking the confidence of the people. Patronage, the conferring of office, business or favor of some kind upon one's political friends—can never be wholly eliminated while the party system remains. Under any system that can be devised there will be found occasions when the filling of some places calls for an exercise of the discretion of the Government of the day, and it is almost inevitable that in such cases the Government will prefer its friends above its opponents. There are limits within which patronage used in that way is not inconsistent with the public good. While the complete abolition of patronage is not to be expected, there is much that can be done to cure its most prominent evils, and Mr. Brewster is evidently resolved upon a large measure of reform. He has introduced into the Legislature of British Columbia a bill designed to bring the whole Civil Service of the Province under a system of competitive examination. Having resolved upon the reform, Mr. Brewster took the wise step of asking the assistance of Dr. Adam Shortt, Chairman of the Dominion Civil Service Board. The Dominion Government having consented to loan him for the purpose, Dr. Shortt entered upon his duties, making, however, the stipulation that, as he was the paid servant of the Dominion, he was not to receive any compensation from the British Columbia Government. Dr. Shortt's experience at Ottawa, as well as his general study of public questions, makes him exceptionally well qualified to advise in any movement in the direction of Civil Service reform.

The bill prepared by Dr. Shortt has not yet reached us, but from the explanation of it given in the Legislature by Mr. Brewster, it appears to be a very comprehensive and efficient measure. The Dominion law requiring competitive examinations, one of the substantial reforms of the late Government, covers the inside service, that is, the service at Ottawa. The application of it to the whole Dominion seemed at the time of its enactment to be impracticable, and perhaps is still impossible. But it should be possible to adopt the com-

petitive principle in the case of some large sections of the outside service—such, for example, as the Post Office department in the larger cities. In British Columbia, where the geographical problem is less difficult than in the Dominion, the proposal of Mr. Brewster seems to cover the Civil Service of the whole Province.

Mr. Brewster deserves much credit for his courageous step in grappling with one of the admitted evils of the party system, and for the wisdom he exhibited in placing the matter so largely in the hands of Dr. Shortt. We may reasonably hope that, when the bill has been fully discussed and received such amendments as may be found expedient, British Columbia will have a model Civil Service Act.

### Uncle Sam's New Property

QUIETLY, without opposition from any quarter, the flag of Denmark has been lowered and the Stars and Stripes have been raised over the hitherto Danish islands of the West Indies—St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. Some years ago Uncle Sam could have had the islands for five million dollars. The United States Senate balked at the treaty, and the proposed transfer was dropped. When Uncle Sam found himself in a more favorable mood, and desired the islands, he learned that there had been a tremendous rise in real estate. The Danish Government demanded twenty-five millions for the soil which they had been ready to sell for five millions some years before. Uncle Sam came to the conclusion to meet the market, and pay the high price asked. The transfer of allegiance has been effected with the consent of the people, who are hoping that under the administration of the new rulers there will be greater progress.

St. Thomas, the principal island, was in former times a place of considerable commercial importance. Its chief place, Charlotte-Amalie, was valued as a great repair port in the days when sailing vessels were numerous, and before the various islands of the West Indies were connected and brought into communication with the rest of the world by telegraph lines. The sailing vessels, which often suffered damage from the heavy storms of that region, found St. Thomas a convenient haven to make for repairs. With the passing away of most of the sailing ships, the substitution of steamers, and the construction of telegraph lines which enabled owners to make prompt arrangements for the management of their vessels in distress, much of this repair work, at one time very profitable, ceased. But even now the business of the port is the life of the island. St. John and St. Croix are more devoted to agriculture.

The Danish rule of the islands was a very liberal one, and many of the people have therefore viewed the Danish abandonment with much regret. The chief object of the Americans in acquiring the islands is to have command of a naval station within convenient distance of the Panama Canal. There is some fear among the islanders that in the carrying out of this naval object the American Government may pay less attention than is desirable to the commercial and industrial possibilities. It is not likely, however, that the new rulers will ignore the wishes of the people in this respect. Porto Rico under American rule, and Cuba under a nominal independence closely related to the United States, have made great progress. There is not much room to doubt that the Americans will stir up activities in the Danish islands and that the new order of things will be marked by a progressive policy.

### States and Provinces

WHEN the Colonial Secretary in London, Mr. Walter Long, was reproached for giving the State Governments of Australia representation on a certain public committee while the Provincial Governments of Canada were not so recognized, he remarked by way of explanation, that the Australian States were "sovereign States," while the Canadian Provinces were not. Somebody, who is described as "an eminent King's Counsel," has taken the trouble to furnish the Canadian Associated Press agent in London with a reply to this, which has been cabled to Canada. According to this eminent authority, Mr. Long's statement was "all rot," a form of expression somewhat unusual in the opinions of distinguished members of the legal profession. Under our constitution, he points out, the only sovereign State is Great Britain, and he claims that there is no material difference between the positions of the Australian States and the Canadian Provinces. As the Agents General of the Provinces have since been added to the committee in question, there is no longer any grievance on the subject. It is well, however, to have the difference between the Australian States and the Canadian Provinces made clear.

The Australian system undoubtedly was intended to give the States a larger status than is assigned to the Provinces in the Canadian constitution, but it is far from certain that the difference is, on the whole, an advantage. In Canada specific powers are assigned to the Provincial Legislatures; other powers are specifically assigned to the Dominion Parliament; any power not thus expressly dealt with belongs to the Dominion Parliament. In Australia the rule is reversed; specific powers are assigned to the Federal authority, and all powers not so expressed belong to the State Legislatures. This tends to increase the importance of the States. If the Canadian system gives less prominence to the Provinces, it has the advantage of creating a stronger central authority. The difference between the two systems is in this respect somewhat technical, and if it were the only material difference it might not attract much notice outside the circles of students of constitutional questions. But there is another difference between the Australian and Canadian systems which is more striking, and which is the real reason why, in the eyes of official London, the Australian States fill a larger place than the Canadian Provinces. There is no direct connection between the Provinces and the Colonial Office. The Agents General of the Provinces in London are officially ignored by the British Government. High Commissioners for Canada, who have not often manifested the highest appreciation of the rank and authority of the Provincial representatives, have not been inclined to encourage any such official recognition. There has been no such question as respects the Agents General of the Australian States. The Governors of the States are not appointed by the Federal Government, as in Canada. The Governors are still appointed by the Imperial Government, and sent out from England. The States thus have a direct official connection with the Imperial Government. This naturally leads to relations between the State Agents and the Colonial Office, such as do not exist in the case of the Agents General of the Canadian Provinces, and tends to give the States more prominence in London eyes than the Provinces have. It was this condition, we may be sure, that led to the Australian States first receiving a recognition in the appointment of the committee that was not accorded to the Canadian Provinces.