

der Liberal rule as it was under the administration of the Conservatives. Nobody in England, Liberal or Conservative, likes to admit that there is any intention of adopting the principle of protection, especially against the Dominion. Yet it must be apparent to all that this is what is being done in the case of cattle, and that the story of disease is mere camouflage.

A veteran of the Canadian cattle trade, Mr. Bickerdike, a former M. P. for Montreal, interviewed by the Montreal Gazette, speaks out in strong terms. "Let me," he says, "repeat what I said in the House of Commons fifteen years ago: 'I think that I know old John Bull probably as well as any other member in this House. I have been doing business with him for over thirty years, and I would venture to say there is not a particle of sentiment in any of his dealings. John Bull would buy from a Hottentot just as readily as from loyal Canada. With him it is a well laid down principle that business is business, and this principle underlies all his transactions, and always prevails.'"

Mr. Bickerdike puts the case rather strongly. It is true that as a rule there is little sentiment in the British trader. He is not, however, quite as cold-blooded as Mr. Bickerdike said. There is a large and ever increasing class of people in Great Britain who are willing to allow sentiment to have some influence even in business. If it were a question between the Canadian and the Hottentot we fancy there would be a desire to patronize the former, though we must not forget that the Hottentot is one of the Imperial family. But in this case the conflict is not between the Canadian and any foreign person. It is largely between the Canadian and the Irish cattle men. And even if our Irish brother is not now behaving quite as well as we might wish him to, we doubt if the British authorities will add to his sorrows by putting him into competition with the Canadian. The British Government may be hard put to find some really good reason for maintaining the restriction; but they are not likely to abolish it.

The Hunger Strike

A very gratifying piece of news in the latest telegrams is that the nine prisoners in the Cork jail who have been engaged in what is called a hunger strike have given up the strike and are now partaking of food. For the extraordinarily long period of ninety-three days, they refused to take any nourishment. That they did not die, as did several of their friends whose fast was not so long, is a marvel. Now that they have resumed a natural mode of living they may be expected to soon be restored to health, though it is not improbable that some of them will never fully recover from the effects of their fast.

One result of the recent hunger strikes is

likely to be that in the future that method of resisting the law will not often be resorted to. It was in the case of the imprisoned suffragettes in England that the hunger strikes were first undertaken. Those who devised the scheme undoubtedly had in view a "bluffing" of the authorities.

The expectation that the authorities would release the prisoners rather than see them dying was not unwarranted. The spectacle of men and women dying or likely to die of starvation is not a pleasing one. What wonder if the authorities were moved to pity and decided to release the prisoners rather than see them die in this way? So the suffragettes were successful. Their "bluff" won.

It is not surprising that other prisoners at a later period tried the same method of resistance, expecting, no doubt, that release would soon come. But where was this thing to end? If prisoners could defeat the law by the simple process of refusing to take food, what was the use of the law? What was the sense of having courts and prisons if offenders could so easily set them at defiance? Clearly if law and order were to be upheld, it was necessary that everybody concerned should be made to understand that the hunger strike could not hereafter succeed. Those who approved and encouraged the method seem to have believed that it would still prove a winner—that the British authorities would again back down and release the prisoners who were refusing food. Several of the misguided men persisted in their refusal to eat, and in death paid the penalty of their error. At last the fact dawned on the surviving hunger strikers and their friends that the British Government were resolved not to allow that method of resistance to succeed. So the hunger strike is abandoned.

The persistency with which some of the hunger strikers adhered to their policy commands admiration in some quarters. It was, in a way, a kind of heroism, and one has a measure of admiration for those who, even in a cause that is not approved, show their sincerity and devotion. It is well, however, that this form of resistance to law has been marked by failure, and therefore is not likely to be often adopted in the future. All concerned are now possessed of the fact that hunger strike means suicide. Hereafter those who desire to commit suicide will probably find a more convenient way of doing so.

A Time for Caution

The President of the Canadian Bankers' Association, Mr. Bogert, at the annual meeting last week, asked his brother bankers to be as considerate as possible of the position of their customers who obtain loans against commodities. The advice is good and it will probably be followed by the banks generally. These are anxious times for business men. The consuming public, who have

complained long and loudly of the high cost of living, are hailing with satisfaction the reduction of prices, which is evident in many lines. But that which is so agreeable to the consumers must be a cause of much anxiety to many traders who hold stocks bought at a high cost. That there must be a continued fall in prices is clearly seen, but if the fall comes too quickly, it will bring a business situation that will be regrettable. Under the best possible conditions the readjustment of prices will involve many traders in loss, a loss that they must face with the best possible grace. Let us hope that the profits reaped in prosperous years will enable them to bear the loss and adapt themselves to the conditions of the present and future. It is much to be desired, even in the interest of the consumer, that the reductions that are inevitable shall not be brought about by a panicky situation, but gradually and in a manner that will allow the merchant an opportunity to adjust his business to the changing situation. A too tight money market would almost certainly bring about sacrifice of commodities and a general unhealthy business condition. The banks, it is safe to say, will fully appreciate these difficulties and, as their President suggests, do all that they can, consistently with safety, to assist deserving customers in meeting the situation.

The Home Rule Bill

The British Government have pressed through the House of Commons and sent to the House of Lords the new Home Rule Bill that was introduced some months ago. Probably there never was a bill of equal importance carried through the House with less enthusiasm, less faith in its value. It would hardly be too much to say that the bill satisfies nobody. The people of the North of Ireland do not want it; the most that can be said for them is that they may be willing to submit to it. The people of the South are more emphatic in their view and they are strongly opposed to the whole measure. In such circumstances it is not to be expected that anybody will enthuse over it. In one respect it gives Ireland more Home Rule than anybody dreamt of a little while ago. It gives Ireland not one Parliament, but two—one for the North and one for the South. The people of the North will reluctantly take up the work of organizing the new Parliament in which, while the Ulstermen will be the controlling party, there will be a minority large enough to guarantee a lively time. In the South the difficulty will be to induce the people to use the new legislative machine that is to be given to them.

The new Home Rule Bill thus does not give much promise of settling the old Irish question. But it is an honest effort in that direction and perhaps it is all that any Government could do under the prevailing conditions.