

proposed reorganization of the Empire is not new. It is a repetition of a statement made several years ago by an eminent public man. But we believe it was a statement put forth without due consideration of all that is involved in the problem. To insist on such changes is to intimate to the statesmen of the mother country that if the thing be not done Canada will no longer consent to be a part of the British Empire. We do not believe that such sentiments represent any considerable volume of Canadian public opinion. There is an earnest desire on the part of the Canadian people to promote the unity, the grandeur and the prosperity of the British Empire, and to play their part loyally in all that concerns its welfare. To every movement having that object in view they will give their best consideration. They will cherish a hope that the progress already made in the recognition of the rights and privileges and influence of the Overseas Dominions will continue. They believe that the public men of the mother country, of all parties, sympathizing with the people of the Dominions in this respect, will do all that can in reason be done to respond to the colonial desire. But the people of Canada, we are sure, will recognize the many and grave difficulties of the problem, and will have no disposition to insist on changes which may not be found practicable for a long time to come. To study these questions carefully, to be ready to respectfully consider every proposal aiming at Imperial unity, to co-operate cordially with other Britons who seek by conference or otherwise to overcome the many difficulties—this, and not insistence upon the impossible, should be the attitude of the Canadian people.

Montreal Civic Affairs

THE elections are over and the citizens of Montreal can now settle down to watch the progress of affairs in the hands of an administration that cannot be called new, but which has an infusion of new blood. The new Controllers, Messrs. Villeneuve and Ross, bring to the City Hall the reputations of good citizens and good business men. In association with the older members of the Board they should be able to render much useful service to the city at a time when there is admittedly much need for improvement. The time and the situation call for the exercise of greater care and greater economy than have hitherto been exhibited at the City Hall. The tramways question seems to thrust itself unpleasantly into every municipal contest. If the members of the Board of Control do their duty without fear or favor that question should now be disposed of in a manner fair to all concerned. The tramways company's franchise has some years to run. There is no absolute need for any action concerning it at present. But if the company feel, as they may, that they should know what is in store for them at the end of the term, so that they may make necessary plans for extensions and improvements, they should frankly make their proposals for a renewal of their contract, and the city authorities, in their consideration of such proposals, should seek the assistance of tramways experts of high character.

Nobody should desire the capitalists who have put their money into the tramways system to be treated unjustly. They should receive a franchise on terms which will allow a fair return on the money actually spent in the construction and equipment of the system, a generous return, with due regard to the risks of the enterprise. If there is profit beyond that, it should surely accrue to the benefit of

the community, either in the form of a larger share of the income or in reduced rates of fares. On lines of this character the tramways question should not be a hard one to settle.

If there are people whose aims are of a different character, who would like to give to private interests that which should go to the community, the Board of Control and the City Council will be expected to resolutely oppose such designs. Better let the question alone until the present franchise expires than be rushed into an agreement in which the privileges owned by the city are to be exploited for the benefit of private interests.

Shipbuilding in Canada

A FEW days ago Colonel W. I. Gear, of the Robert Reford Company, issued a statement, in which he declared that the cost of building ships in Canada was prohibitive, and that he did not see any future for such an industry in this country. In a day or two, Colonel Thomas Cantley, President and Managing Director of the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, is to address a meeting of manufacturers in Montreal on this question of ship building in Canada. While we do not know all that Colonel Cantley will say in his address, we have learned sufficient in a round-about way to feel satisfied that he will take a view diametrically opposed to that taken by Colonel Gear, and it would not be at all surprising if he were shortly to announce that the company of which he is the head, has commenced the manufacture of steel ships.

Canada has learned much in an industrial sense during the past year or two. As one prominent manufacturer put it, "the Canadian workman for the first time in his life learned what the one-thousandth part of an inch meant," meaning thereby that the old haphazard easy-going methods were things of the past, and that skill and exactness took their place. A year or two ago no one ever thought of making shells or war munitions in this country. Now shells are being turned out by the thousands daily. Within the same time we have built submarines, made time fuses, and, generally speaking, developed a skilled class of mechanics. We have now car making plants, locomotive works, steel rail mills, a number of ship building plants on the Great Lakes. It will be gratifying if practicable ways can be found to overcome the admitted difficulties of the question, and Canada can go more generally in for the building of big ships. Perhaps Colonel Cantley means to revive the importance of Nova Scotia as a ship building centre. In the old days of wooden ships that Province was one of the greatest ship building centres in the world. Its ancient importance may shortly return.

Publicity in Civic Affairs

THE Board of Commissioners of Montreal—commonly called the Board of Control—has decided to conduct the greater part of its business in private, meeting in this way four times a week, and holding each week two other meetings at which delegations will be heard in public. This decision has evoked much sharp criticism from the press. Where the public are shut out from matters of public business which have in the past been conducted with open doors, criticism and suspicion of the change are inevitable. It must be admitted, however, that there is much force in the argument for the change which has been advanced by Mr. A. G. Ross, one of the new members of the Board. He points out that the business of the Board in the past has been much disturbed by the presence

of the public, who indulge freely in conversation and in smoking. There is truth in this, but it does not form a strong reason for the change. There should be no serious difficulty in maintaining order and decorum in meetings at the City Hall. More serious, however, is Mr. Ross' statement that there are times when the open discussion of affairs works to the disadvantage of the public interests. In the case of proposed acquisition of property for public purposes and proposed financial operations, he says, public discussion at the outset may enable parties to take advantage of the situation for their own benefit. Certainly the executive body of any private corporation would not regard publicity in such matters, at their early stages, as beneficial to the concern they represented. Indeed, it would be well understood that such premature announcement of what was contemplated would be most inexpedient.

Publicity is one of the checks and guards which the people have in the administration of public affairs. But it may be carried too far. One can easily understand that in connection with civic affairs there may be occasions when it will be to the advantage of the public for the members of the Board to discuss matters with a frankness that is not likely to be employed when there are reporters present to take down every word spoken. Through such frank discussion misunderstandings and friction may be removed and wise conclusions reached. It would therefore be a mistake to condemn the Board for the holding of some of its meetings for this purpose with closed doors. It is, however, very desirable that, as far as is reasonably possible, the business of the Board shall be done in the open. The general rule might well be for open meetings, with occasional private meetings when the public interest in the matters under consideration may seem to require such privacy. Perhaps four meetings in private every week are more than the Board will find necessary for its purposes.

American Opinion

WHATEVER measure of sympathy there may have been in the United States for Germany in the early days of the war, before all the facts of the case were known, has now to a very large extent disappeared. Indeed, it is substantially correct to say that, apart from the citizens of German birth and extraction, the American people to-day are nearly all favorable to the Allies, and look forward with earnest hope to the complete defeat of the German-Austrian-Turkish combination. In times past there has been a large measure of anti-British feeling in the States, some of it due to the teaching of the school books, which still contain stories of the revolutionary days that are calculated to breed such feeling, and some of it due to the work of agitators whose purposes were served by the twisting of the British Lion's tail. Much of this spirit is passing away, and Young America is learning that, whatever may have been the situation in '76, to-day the British nation stands for the world's liberty. The Russia and France of to-day also are held in high regard by thoughtful people of the United States. Germany's conduct from the beginning of the war has been such as to alarm liberty-loving Americans. The resolutions adopted at the recent mass meeting in Carnegie Hall, New York, under the auspices of the American Rights Committee are a powerful summing up of the opinion of the best class of the American people. One of the most active leaders in this movement is the eminent publisher, Mr. George Haven Putnam, who has been delivering a series of lectures in support