

# REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

## Paying Political Debts.

JUST how far a new government should go in paying political debts at the public expense is a serious question just now. The new Federal Cabinet is being bombarded by men who have "grievances" and "claims." Some of these grievances are real, and justice demands that they be remedied. For example, it is rumoured that two or three militia officers who were made to suffer for political exigencies under the old regime, will be restored to their rank and standing. No administration is able to get along without mistakes, and the incoming administration rectifies these and then in course of time makes mistakes of its own for its successors to rectify.

But grievances and claims differ. It is questionable if any person has a "claim" on this new government which necessitates its awarding a contract or a place in the public service to a Conservative with a claim. Senatorships are an exception. These go, and properly so, to men of distinction who have some claim upon the party. Private secretaryships and even deputy ministerships might reasonably go to men with claims, if they have the qualifications. These are confidential positions and a cabinet minister must be left free to retain the old occupants of these offices or to choose new. But other positions in the service should not be so regarded.

A despatch from Ottawa states that Hon. L. O. Taillon is to be postmaster of Montreal. This is hardly credible. Hon. Mr. Taillon is a distinguished politician. He led the anti-Nationalist opposition to Hon. Mr. Mercier in the Quebec Legislature, was twice in a Quebec cabinet, and finally premier. He afterwards entered the federal arena and became Postmaster-General under Sir Charles Tupper. But Mr. Taillon is seventy-one years of age. It is a senatorship he should have; not a postmastership. Such purely administrative and technical positions as customs collectors and postmasters, in the cities especially, should go to well-trained members of the civil service—not to outsiders no matter what their experience, nor what their "claim." It is impossible to believe that either Premier Borden or Postmaster-General Pelletier would begin their administrative career with such an appointment.

## New Chairman N. T. C.

PREMIER BORDEN is to be congratulated upon his choice of chairman for the National Transcontinental Commission. Under the previous administration, there were many complaints that the then commission was weak and subservient to political influence. Whether these charges were true or false will probably be known later. In any case the chairmanship is a place for a strong man. The task of spending two hundred million dollars and spending it economically and wisely is one which will bow even the mightiest shoulders. Such a task involves a watchfulness and an attention to details which few men would care to undertake.

Mr. Leonard, I understand, did not seek the position. It sought him. He is wealthy and has no political obligations to meet. He is experienced in engineering and railway building and has had much to do with contractors. He is the type of man from whom the public may expect much, and he may be sure that if he gives freely of his brains and ability he will earn a high place in the public esteem.

While congratulating Mr. Borden and Mr. Leonard, it might not be amiss to suggest that the public in the long run gets the service it pays for. If the newspapers and the people generally uphold the good appointments and condemn the poor, there will be a preponderance of the former. If the newspapers yield to the machine politicians and uphold by their silence the poorer appointments, then the public service will suffer and good men will not sacrifice their private opportunities for the general good.

## Census Disappointment.

CANADA is considerably disappointed over the census returns. We have been hit in a tender spot. The country is not quite so important as we thought it was. Our jaunty air has been subdued by some official figures.

The Western cities which have been predicting that they would soon be places as big as Chicago, St. Paul and St. Louis have been deeply injured by

the Dominion statistician's published figures. Every one of these cities claims from 10,000 to 20,000 more population than the census authorities give them. There was a similar outbreak of rage after the census of 1901.

Of all the provinces Ontario is the hardest hit by Mr. Blue and his corps of census takers. The towns and cities have increased in population by 344,752, but the total increase in population is only 336,955. Thus rural Ontario has decreased about 8,000. The "banner" province is not going ahead agriculturally. The farms are producing more, but the farmers have decreased in number. It is understood that this topic will be much discussed during the approaching provincial general election, and that the result will be a broad, aggressive settlement policy which will aim at correcting this anomaly in the growth of the province.

## Is the Publisher a Robber?

EVERY now and again some writer takes it upon himself to complain that Canadian publications do not pay respectable prices for their material. It is quite true, speaking generally, that the Canadian writer and the Canadian artist are not paid at as high a rate as the writers and artists of New York and London. The New York writer has a possible audience of ninety million United States people plus seven million Canadian people; whereas the Canadian writer has only a possible audience of seven million. Is it to be expected that the Toronto or Montreal literary market shall equal the New York literary market? United States stories and United States writings of all kinds have free access to Canada and are widely read in this country, and the United States writer gets the benefit of a broad market. Canadian writings are not acceptable to United States readers and are not widely read in that country, hence the Canadian writer gets a smaller fee for his work.

The Canadian publishers and editors regret this state of affairs just as much as the writers and artists. They would be delighted to pay higher prices if they could afford it. Let us suppose that no United States magazines were allowed to come into this market; what would happen to Canadian magazines? Those already in existence would immediately treble their circulations and treble their advertising rates. New magazines would come into existence. New publishers and new editors would come into competition for articles, stories and illustrations, and the prices paid for this work would advance rapidly. Similarly if the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, and other weekly papers were excluded from the Dominion, the Canadian weekly papers would easily treble their circulation, treble their resources and treble their rates of payment.

## The Tariff and the Publisher.

A WRITER sends a letter to the *Toronto Sunday World* in which he remarks, "Canadian publishers insist on trying to get something relatively for nothing," and advocates that Canadian writers form a "union" to force higher rates. Has this correspondent ever investigated the commercial conditions under which Canadian publishers are compelled to struggle? If he knew, he would realize that the wonder is that there are any Canadian periodicals at all, not that publishers pay low rates.

I have already pointed out that United States publishers have full control of their own market and also free access to this market. They have a big market plus a little market. The Canadian publisher does not have even the little market to himself. But there is an even greater handicap. In the United States magazine paper is cheaper than in Canada. The United States publisher buys this cheap paper, but the Canadian publisher is not allowed to do so. The latter must pay a duty of 25 to 35 per cent. on imported paper, or he must take paper from Canadian paper-makers at a price nearly equal to the United States price plus the duty.

This higher price of paper would not be so great a handicap, if the United States publisher had to pay the same duty when entering this market. But he does not. There is one periodical which calls itself "Canadian," but which is printed in New York. It gets the cheaper United States paper, is printed and bound in New York, and is sent into Canada free of duty. This is an example of the

conditions which hamper Canadian publishers.

If Mr. Maclure or Mr. Munsey prints a ton of magazine paper in New York and sends it into Canada, he pays no duty. If a Canadian publisher buys a ton of blank paper in the United States and brings it into Canada to feed his presses and print the writings of Canadians, he must pay a duty running from \$20 to \$28. Now a ton of paper will produce about 3,000 magazines; therefore, in the matter of paper alone the New York publishers can produce magazines at one-half to one cent per copy cheaper than Toronto publishers. On a circulation of 100,000 this means from \$500 to \$1,000 a month.

When the Canadian writers form their union will they please consider this anomaly. I wouldn't suggest that they advocate a duty on United States magazines, but they should understand the situation fully before they indulge in sweeping denunciations.

## Literary Success---How Won.

HOWEVER much we may regret it, literary success has come to no Canadian unless he has secured the United States and British markets in addition to the Canadian. Almost every Canadian book which has brought its author a profit has been published in the United States as well as Canada. I do not think that Sir Gilbert Parker ever had a book set up in a Canadian printing office. I think this is also true of Charles G. D. Roberts, Arthur Stringer, W. A. Fraser, Norman Duncan, Ralph Connor, L. M. Montgomery, E. W. Thomson, Robert Barr, Mrs. Cotes, Lily Dougall, Agnes C. Laut, William McLennan, and Clive Phillips-Wolley. "Songs of a Sourdough," by Robert Service, was, I believe, first printed here, but that is the exception. The Canadian book publishers are protected by a small duty, but unprotected by a copyright act. Hence, like the periodical publishers, they have had a tremendous fight to establish themselves even in a small way.

Is it not curious, to say the least, that Canadians should arise in their wrath and smite reciprocity because they desired to preserve Canadian nationalism, and then should go down town next day and buy half a dozen United States magazines to take home for the entertainment of their wives and children and themselves? Is it not curious that they should spend hours and hours in arguing that the manufactures of carpets and shoes and paper should be protected by a tariff from the energetic, enterprising United States manufacturer, and should complacently leave the publisher, the writer and the artist to the fiercest free trade that ever was known?

## Fortunate Australia.

THERE is one of the British Dominions-Over-Seas which is fortunate in the matter of publishing and authorship. Australia is divided from the rest of the Anglo-Saxon world by several vast oceans. The British monthly is three weeks old when it reaches Australia and the British weekly is out-of-date before it arrives. The same is true of the United States monthly and weekly. Both Australia and New Zealand have publishing industries of their own. The population in each country is smaller than in Canada, but the monthlies and weeklies have larger circulations, are larger, better and more numerous. It is possible for an Australian or New Zealand writer to make a fair living writing for his home publications.

Canada may lose something by having her printing and publishing done abroad, but she also gains something in cosmopolitanism. Whether the gain offsets the loss, must be left to the Canadian public to decide.

## Pushing Back the Frontier.

QUITE striking is a phrase in the *Winnipeg Telegram* describing how "The C. N. R. yesterday pushed Western Canada's frontier back 105 miles" by the opening of a new line from Vegreville south towards Calgary through Camrose and Stettler. Pushing back the frontier is the business of the Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Pacific. Soon they will be joined by the new Hudson's Bay Railway. The pioneer who leads the way into the wilderness, erects his little shack and turns over a few acres of sod is pushing back the frontier, but when the railway construction gang follow in his wake the frontier is even more widely disturbed.

This process of pushing back the frontier means much for Canada, and every one must be grateful to the pioneer farmers and pioneer railway constructors who are opening up new districts for the public benefit. This process means much to the provinces where the work is proceeding apace, and also a great deal to those who live in Eastern Canada and reap some of the benefits that come from a larger and more populous Dominion.