

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Experts or a Commission.

OPINIONS vary greatly as to what the Borden Government intends to do in regard to a tariff board or commission. It is probable that the subject will be discussed for some time, since opinion seems to be so divergent. Some believe that an independent body like the railway commission should be created to take charge of all tariff matters. Others are in favour of an advisory board of tariff experts, with the responsibility resting as now upon the Cabinet. Others again are opposed to any change in the present system.

In his manifesto issued last August Mr. Borden had as his sixth plank "the establishment of a permanent tariff commission." It will thus be seen that he has not committed himself too definitely. He is pledged to make a change in the present system but is not too definitely pledged as to the form which that change will take. Giving him all the latitude, which it is usual to accord to public men who make anti-election promises, it can hardly be asserted that Mr. Borden is in favour of a full-powered commission as against a board of tariff experts. Similarly it cannot be said that he is in favour of experts as opposed to a general commission. His policy will probably be announced after he has read the various views now being expressed in the press and after he has consulted with his ministers and leading supporters in the House.

The United States has favoured a board of experts rather than a commission. Their Board is composed of three members. The chairman was formerly a professor of political economy at Yale. Another member was formerly assistant secretary of the treasury in charge of customs. The third was previously editor of an agricultural journal. This Board employs about eighty experts, each of whom is given a definite line to investigate.

There is much to be said in favour of the United States plan. It gives the Executive and Congress the latest and most accurate information with regard to the relation between tariffs, and industry, and it gives this information in a thoroughly practical and understandable form. It is not interested in the political attitude of one party or the other. It aims merely to gather information from which the public and the publicists may draw conclusions. It makes no recommendation. While this system may not entirely satisfy those who would like to see the tariff taken out of politics, it is probable that it is a reasonable compromise between two extreme positions. It also has the advantage of having a purely scientific basis.

Investigating the Trusts.

FOR some years the United States has had as its special political feature a programme of trust investigation. Whenever a magazine publisher or a public man needed a topic of discussion he chose this particular one. It has been productive of more speeches and more magazine copy than any other topic of the decade. They are still at it. Indeed, it looks good for another twenty-five years.

Two or three writers have contributed to the CANADIAN COURIER articles suggesting that the time to regulate trusts and corporations is before they are formed. Another such article appears in this issue. The point is well taken. The way to stop the ravages of tuberculosis is to prevent the people getting the disease. As our grandmothers said, "prevention is better than cure."

A case is now being tried in Canada where this rule would fail to work. The United Shoe Machinery Company, a United States corporation, controls practically all the shoe-making machinery in Canada. It has been charged that this company is operating in such a way as to cause a "restraint in trade." Some months ago the Quebec shoe manufacturers lodged a complaint under the Dominion Combines and Mergers Act, and demanded an inquiry. Mr. Justice Cannon, of Quebec, made a preliminary investigation and upon his report a Royal Commission was created for further inquiry. The Company tried to prevent this and carried an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The appeal was unsuccessful and the investigation is proceeding. It was reported that the new Government, being sympathetic with the manufacturers, would stop the inquiry, but Judge Doherty, Minister of Finance, has officially denied this report. He

says the investigation will proceed.

Here is one case where the very best legislation might have failed to act as a deterrent against a trust or a monopoly. Nevertheless, it would seem advisable that the Borden Government should proceed at once to put laws on the statute book which would tend to prevent the creation of vexatious monopolies and mergers and would especially limit the creation of large corporations whose capital stock contains a considerable percentage of water. It should also prevent any public service corporation from issuing new stock at less than the market price of its present stock and also from issuing bonus stock. All the men connected with corporations in this country are not dishonest and not greedy, but enough of them are to make such legislation a pressing need.

Intercollegiate Football.

ANNUAL athletic contests among the students of various colleges is an ancient idea. It is also sound. College students in age, weight and manners are much the same, no matter where the college is situated or by what name it is known. Consequently they meet on nearly equal terms, socially and athletically. Their contests, therefore, should be fair rivalry and productive of a broad college feeling which will embrace all the colleges represented in the schedule.

Of course the schedules should not obtrude on the main purpose of college life. The athletic union of Toronto's high schools has decided to do away with their annual football schedule because it imposed too great a burden upon the boys and upon those in control of them. The schools were too numerous and the schedule too complicated. This decision is undoubtedly wise. A football union with more than four teams in it is likely to have too many contests and to defeat its own purpose.

The greatest intercollegiate union in Canada is that which includes McGill, Ottawa College, Queen's and Varsity, and the contests this year have been exceedingly interesting. The new rules, introduced in recent years, have created a game almost equal in openness and skillfulness to the British game. Brute strength which predominates in the United States game is made subsidiary to brains, fleetness and the ability to "boot" the ball. The final game last Saturday between Varsity and Ottawa College was equal to anything ever seen in Canada. For three-quarters of the time Father Stauton's light, well-trained men from Ottawa College held the heavier, more experienced Varsity team by sheer pluck and skill. In the final quarter, the inevitable happened. The hard-tackling Varsity men had worn down their plucky but lighter opponents. Age, weight and experience told and Varsity rolled up a tremendous score. Ottawa College were beaten, but beaten with a record which will long be remembered.

Agencies for Filling Offices.

A WRITER in the *North American Review* states that in the United States the political "parties have no principles and are simply agencies for filling offices." He explains the reason. Even when a political party wins a great victory on a principle, it cannot give effect to that principle because of the "rigidity" of the United States constitutional system. The House of Representatives may be impotent because it cannot control the Senate and the Executive. In Great Britain and Canada, the House of Commons is supreme. The Upper House and the Executive or Cabinet are its servants.

Nevertheless, every victorious political party in Canada is to a great extent an agency for "filling offices." Every newly elected Conservative member from Halifax to Victoria is now being besieged by office-seekers who desire berths now held by Liberals recently vacated, or likely to become vacant. They are also being pursued by contract-hunters of various kinds. Some of the members like the game, but the majority of them would prefer to have this patronage eliminated from political life. If this could be done, it would be a great moral and political gain.

It is interesting to notice how five important positions in the "Inside" or Ottawa service, under control of the Civil Service Commission, were recently

filled. These positions were worth from \$1,200 to \$1,800 a year. They included an architect, a topographical draughtsman, a custodian of geological instruments, an assistant botanist and an assistant entomologist. If these had been subject to the "patronage" system, they would have been filled with aged or time-worn politicians. Under the Commission's system, an examination was held, and the positions awarded to young men with special knowledge of the work to be done. No person asked about their politics and, for all the Commission knows or cares, they may all be Liberals.

In contrast to this, the postmastership of Montreal was filled the other day. This is the "outside" service and not under control of the Civil Service Commission. It was therefore a matter of political patronage and was given to a politician seventy-one years of age. His work will be done by the assistant postmaster. The new appointee will merely see that the patronage of the Montreal post-office goes to people recommended by the local patronage committees. The country generally will receive no value for the salary which it pays this estimable gentleman.

Holding the Lawyers.

CANADIAN electors are doing well in holding down the legal element in the House of Commons. There are more members in the new House than in the old, but there are just seventy-five lawyers in each. The farmers come next with an increase from thirty-one to thirty-two; the merchants are third, but with only twenty-seven as against thirty-one in the previous House; the doctors also show a decrease; the manufacturers have increased from twelve to thirteen and the lumbermen from seven to eleven; the journalists just hold their own with a total of ten representatives.

Lawyers make useful members, but it is well that all classes should be adequately represented. Probably when the manufacturers, doctors, capitalists and merchants know as much about political economy and the science of governments as the lawyers, the latter will not enjoy their present pre-eminence.

Home Missions Weak.

WHEN I wrote several articles in favour of home missions as against foreign missions, some good people got quite incensed. The religious press hammered me hard, and several broad-minded individuals wrote sarcastic letters. One minister went so far as to ask me if the CANADIAN COURIER would print a reply. He got the necessary promise but he never sent the article.

Now the Rev. J. H. Edmison, secretary of the Presbyterian Assembly's Home Mission Committee comes out with a similar argument. In an address, delivered in Hamilton during the recent Layman's Missionary Congress, he is reported to have said:

"The weakness of home missions to-day is the lack of the right kind of men and women to lead. The indifference of the American settlers in the North-west is heart-breaking to the missionaries. We are now reaping the bitter corn that has grown as a result of the United States church negligence of its opportunities a decade ago. They are starving missionaries in the North-west, while those in foreign fields are treated twice as well."

At the present juncture, Canada should devote all her money contributions to domestic missions. We have not a cent to spare for foreign missions, nor will we have for twenty-five years to come if immigration continues at its present speed. Those who are following Mr. J. Campbell White, of New York, are being sadly and grievously misled.

Prince Arthur of Connaught.

KING GEORGE and Queen Mary have sailed for the Delhi Durbar, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught are in Canada, and Prince Arthur of Connaught is the sole adult royalty left in Great Britain. Should Premier Asquith or Sir Edward Grey require royal advice during the absence of the King, they must go to this twenty-eight-year-old Prince. If there are bridges to open, foundation-stones to lay, or foreign royalty to be received, the duty will fall on Prince Arthur. There is no Princess to help him, for he is still single and Princess Patricia will shortly sail for Canada.

This, too, at a time when China is in a state of revolution such as has not been known for centuries, when Italy and Turkey are engaged in murderous combat, and when politics in Britain are in a fairly active condition. However, the young man has a level head and an amiable temper, and he will probably carry his troubles without creating complications.