



HENRI BOURASSA is a statesman of the study. He is nearly unknown in the smoking-rooms at Ottawa. They complain of him that he does not meet his fellow members at the Club. He declines to sit in the House and let other members bore him with speeches on subjects in which he is not interested. He has no time to waste in this way. Neither is he a garrulous member joining in every debate. He only speaks when he has something to say. Ill-natured critics put it that he will only speak when he can have the centre of the stage and the "spot light." They charge him with being self-centred—if not selfish. Like the French students we were talking of a couple of weeks back, they think that he is hardly "human." Unanimously they accuse him of the great crime of ambition. To this last, it is likely that he would plead guilty. Most men who amount to anything are spurred onward by ambition. That he does not fraternise has probably not occurred to him. Yet that is a dangerous lack. A man who is to lead his fellow-men must not despise them. They may seem to him to lack purpose and to waste time and to give themselves to petty questions and pursuits; but he must disguise this impression and teach himself to dwell upon their lovable qualities. And most men have that in them which is worthy of love and esteem; and the poorest men, after all, are more educative and informing than the best books—if it is among men that you would work.

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George W. Fowler, on the other hand, is a man of the world. He loves and is loved by his fellow-men—and hates and is hated, too. In many ways, he is a primitive man. He has not altogether lost faith in the methods of the Stone Age. Not a shred of hypocrisy hangs about his aggressive form. "Bonhomie" is one of his qualities; but it is the "bonhomie" of the man who is strong enough not to need it in the battle of life. Mr. Fowler could fight his way through without a smile from any man. It is not at all likely that he understands why there is so much fuss being raised over his incidental reference to "women, wine and graft." He probably thinks it is all due to the panic which he has created in Government circles. He entirely fails—I fancy—to appreciate the shock he has given to a hypocritical and propriety-worshipping generation. He was—as he told a reporter—merely "serving notice" on his opponents to leave his private business alone; and serving it with the directness which his nature commends. He probably prides himself on calling a spade a mud-lifter.

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Thus these two men are as far apart as the poles and would never understand each other in a cycle of Sundays. One man takes his point of view from his study window and the other from the street corner. Neither point of view is sufficiently comprehensive to be correct. The delicate-nerved public prefer the Bourassa point of view because it is less likely to shock their sensibilities or to collide with their most cherished prejudices. But Mr. Bourassa must take more account of the human element in public affairs if he is to succeed. Mr. Fowler must become more civilised if he is to get along at all in this highly civilised community in which his lot has

been cast. The strength of Sir Wilfrid Laurier is that he combines the ideal with the real. He takes his range-finding outlooks from his lofty study window; but he has real men in at his fire-side and has never lost touch with the humanity which he leads so successfully. Mr. Borden has this combination, too, to a high degree.

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You will notice that when Secretary Root or Ambassador Bryce visits Ottawa and graciously permits the reporters to approach him, he immediately announces his willingness to talk about anything under the sun except the subject which makes him interesting. He will not talk of international politics. Now what is international politics in its relation to these two men when they visit Ottawa? Is it not the public relations of Canada with her neighbours—chiefly the United States? Now whose business is this? Surely the business of the Canadian people quite as much as of anybody else. Now what relation has Ambassador Bryce to this business? He is the man whom the British people employ to transact British business at Washington; and, incidentally, he transacts ours because we are a part of the British Empire. Indirectly, then, he is our agent transacting our business; and yet he will not take us into his confidence regarding what he is doing about our own business. But he must talk to somebody about it in order to do business at all. So he talks to our directly-appointed agents—our Cabinet Ministers. Thus our agents hold a decisive confab over our business and refuse to tell us a word about what they are doing.

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But we are quite accustomed to being "the silent partner" and the deaf partner in the transaction of our own business. A Cabinet is merely a committee of agents which we have appointed to do our business; but the Cabinet sits with closed doors and swears its members to secrecy, lest the Principal—i.e. the Public—find out how its own business is being done. When the finished product is ready for the public scrutiny, and the various Cabinet Ministers have compromised upon a policy which they have agreed to stand by in common—though few of them like it perfectly—then they let us know what is going to be done about our business; but they never permit us to find out what other policies were urged by members of the committee which did not succeed in pleasing the greatest number. They "fight like blazes" over our affairs; and they will not even give us ring-side tickets. Cabinet secrecy and diplomatic dumbness are quite necessary in the Old World where democracies must fence with despotisms; but are they not somewhat out of date on a Continent like our own?



Very Old Age Pensions.

Ancient Rustic.—"I'm a poor old man, sir, of seventy-five and past work. Can't you do anything for me?"
Right Hon. H. H. Asq-th.—"Capital Idea! But I'm afraid you're too young. Now if you were over eighty I might perhaps manage it!"—Punch.