

PROVINCIAL MISMANAGEMENT

MISMANAGEMENT under the provincial governments is almost as prevalent and wide-spread as under the Dominion Government. Much of the mismanagement which exists is due to civil service inefficiency. On another page in this issue a high authority touches on this point in relation to the Ontario service. And yet the Ontario civil service is probably equal to that of any other province. The cure is civil service reorganisation under an independent commission in each province.

Every provincial civil service, like that of the Dominion, is largely composed of men who have gained their situations through political party service. They are clever, perhaps, but they are not trained. Their ability to perform the particular work which is required of them was not considered when their appointments were made.

The other day a deputy-minister remarked to the writer that his greatest difficulty was to get the men under him to understand that they were public servants and that when the public asked for information and guidance it was entitled to get respectful and gentlemanly replies. The ex-politician does not make a good public servant. He has paid for his berth and he too often sits down, folds his hands, and proceeds to take life in the most unserious manner possible. To be polite and obliging is an effort which he does not care to make. Moreover, he knows that so long as his party remains in office, his position is secure no matter what his conduct. If his party goes out of power, he can cry "injustice" and "cruelty" if he is threatened with dismissal.

Civil service reform is necessary in every province. The recently enacted legislation at Ottawa, which was approved by both parties, should be followed by similar legislation at each provincial capital. An independent commission would abolish patronage, would fill the service in time with well-trained, ambitious and efficient public servants, and would effect a great saving in all departments of provincial administration.

DISTRUST OF DIVORCE

THAT Canada does not believe in divorce is now patent to the world and the national reputation is by that much enhanced. A recent issue of the London *Outlook* gives an excellent summary of the situation, from the British point of view, and coins a phrase which is worthy of preservation. "Distrust of divorce" is good. We quote the paragraph in full:

"It may be interesting to note that, unlike the States of the American Union and the Colonies composing the Commonwealth of Australia, the provinces of Canada cannot pass Divorce Acts, the Dominion Parliament of Canada alone having this authority; but the Act which ensured this also contained a saving provision for existing provincial courts, which included those of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and, as now decided, British Columbia. These administer divorce laws modelled on those of England. In the other provinces, since the Dominion Parliament has in fact passed no public Divorce Act, the position resembles that in Ireland, and those who live in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, or the Northwest Territories and desire divorce by reason of the misconduct of their spouses must have recourse to a private Act of the Legislature. In Prince Edward Island the position is somewhat peculiar—the court apparently has power to grant divorces, but does not now do so, and no machinery exists for the purpose. The general attitude towards divorce in the Dominion appears to be one of distrust, as perhaps might be expected from the large proportion of the French Roman Catholic stock. It is, however, somewhat curious that Canada should now be stricter than France, which has a divorce law. Perhaps the object-lesson of the United States with its forty or fifty divorce codes just across the border has tended to make Canada somewhat conservative."

ELECTRICITY AND THE LAW

ONTARIO'S Hydro-Electric Commission is not out of the woods. In the various municipalities where the power is to be distributed and used, legal obstacles are being placed in the way. In Hamilton, the Cataract Power Company won out against the Commission though it had to force the Mayor to sign the contract at the point of a mandamus. In other towns, the municipal officers are recalcitrant. In Toronto, two writs have been issued with the avowed intention of delaying the building of a civic distributing plant in opposition to the Toronto Electric Light Company. It is rumoured that other plans for fighting these civic distributing plants are about to be developed

and that shortly the anti-municipal ownership party will disclose a strong hand.

The Hydro-Electric Commission have shown little consideration for present investments and it is but reasonable to suppose that those who have money invested in the present plants are not likely to allow the fight to end tamely. It would be against human nature and precedent to expect any other situation. Beaten at the polls, the investment interest will appeal to the courts. Aside from the rights or wrongs of the fight, it is pleasant to know that the final decision will rest with judges who know no difference between classes of citizens, who are uninfluenced by doubtful enthusiasms for the so-called "rights of the public," and who are sworn to decide justly and fairly without fear, bias or feeling.

THE QUALITY OF THE CROP

TWENTY bushels of wheat to the acre is to be the minimum if science and experiment realise their hopes. There are those who claim that as much as 200 bushels to the acre may be produced if the proper kind of seed is secured. Laying this extravagant estimate on the shelf beside the airship which is to carry people across the Atlantic Ocean, there have been some yields this season in the West which are quite striking enough to be astonishing. On the word of Mr. J. Polson, of the exhibition branch of the Department of Immigration, at least one farm in Alberta is producing sixty bushels to the acre, while several around Carstairs are producing an average of forty to fifty. There are other observers who have chronicled equal yields in various parts of the West. It is even claimed that a field belonging to Mr. J. W. Woolf, M.P.P., at Cardston, has yielded eighty bushels to the acre. To produce such a yield, the variety of wheat must suit the soil and the climate, and the crop must be well managed. Seed must be properly selected, put into well cultivated ground which has not been overcropped, and the conditions must be favourable. Scientific agriculture, it would be reasonable to suppose, could use these experiences to such advantage that the average of the crop in the West could easily be raised from twenty to thirty bushels per acre.

Any manufacturer who could increase his output fifty per cent. without materially increasing his general expenses and his wage-bill would think himself decidedly fortunate. Surely the farmers who have this opportunity afforded them will give much time and attention to the consideration of crop improvement. Heretofore, to increase his crop, the western farmer increased his acreage. It may be that in future he will aim to secure the same result by improving the quality of his crop. It would seem to be a more sensible and more profitable method.

IN VARIOUS GUISES

PROTECTION to native industries and native workmen may be accomplished by other devices than protective tariffs. In Great Britain they have protection in the matter of copyrights by a strictly enforced law against the importation of books which are entered at Stationers' Hall. This is now to be followed by a law which stipulates that foreigners who obtain patents in Great Britain must manufacture on British soil. Sir Alfred Jones believes that this will increase the manufactured output of Great Britain by twenty-five millions of pounds. This will mean additional employment for thousands of British workmen, the building of many new factories and restriction in imports of manufactured goods. The cable reports are not clear, but it would appear that any patent four years old may be revoked on application if the goods are not being manufactured on British soil.

Most people will see in this law a movement towards protection in Great Britain. It is probable, however, that the new law is due more to the labour party than to the protection party. The unions are having their innings just now, since the labour wing of the Liberal party is rather powerful. Indeed, it may be said to possess the balance of power formerly held by the Irish party. The Old Age Pension Law is another piece of evidence that the Labour party has strength and influence.

It is just a question if protection will not become less and less a matter of tariffs and more and more a matter of restrictive legislation aimed to protect labour unions. Heretofore protection has been sought only by manufacturers, and they were the chief supporters of the tariffs. Now the Labour party, especially in Canada, is upholding tariffs, and adding legislation which accentuates tariff effects. The political influence of the manufacturer cannot be compared with that of well-organised labour under manhood suffrage. In any case, the tendencies of the day are worthy of careful study.