

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Monsieur Armand Lavergne.

M. ARMAND LAVERGNE seems to occupy a place in the public mind out of proportion to his importance. It is difficult to explain just why this young man should be the subject of so many newspaper despatches. There are plenty of cabinet ministers, financial magnates and other public figures who might well envy the public interest in every move made by this young politician. As an intimate of Mr. Henri Bourassa, and leader of the Nationalist movement in the Quebec district, he might be of some importance at home. But why should Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto be so interested?

A few days ago it was announced that he was one of the first to greet Mr. Borden as he came up the St. Lawrence to Quebec on his return from England. Next we hear that he has applied to the Minister of Militia to be sent as a military envoy to the war in the Balkans. Now comes the news that he has given up the Balkan trip to stand by Mr. Monk in his "fight for Canadian autonomy." Apparently he suddenly realizes that Bourassa, Monk and Lavergne have now another opportunity to add to their reputations during the approaching session of parliament.

Do these men really stand for something in Canadian life which the regular party politicians have overlooked? Is it because they think less of the "loaves and fishes" than of principle that they attract so much attention? Is their patriotism and single-mindedness so exceptional in public life that they have become curiosities? If not, then what is there behind these men, two of whom are not even members of parliament, which enables them to keep a whole province in a ferment, two national political parties on edge, and the whole Canadian press curious?

These men seem to me to have reached the singular position where they are a third party holding a balance of power in politics which has each of the straight-line parties in a state of fear. Without Nationalist support Mr. Borden would have but a small majority in the House. With the Nationalists on his side, Sir Wilfrid Laurier could almost force another general election. Are Monk, Bourassa and Lavergne aiming at being King-makers?

Railway Rates in the West.

H. ON. ROBERT ROGERS, in an address to the electors of Macdonald, promised flatly that western railway rates would be reduced. He declared that "the government of the day are going to see that the freight rates of this country are reduced." He admitted that the western farmer is suffering, claimed that the Borden administration was the first to make a definite move in the way of bringing the whole subject before the Railway Commission, and practically said, "We shall force the Railway Commission to order a reduction."

Personally, I must admit that this gives me a new idea of the situation. I had thought that the Railway Commission was an institution which was absolute in this matter and that it would order a reduction in rates only if it thought the rates excessive. From this declaration of Mr. Rogers, I gather that the rates will be reduced no matter what the Railway Commission thinks. If the railways justify their rates, and if the Commission thinks that the rates are justifiable, it will make apparently no difference to the Borden Government who are determined that the rates shall come down.

But what will happen if the Railway Commission refuses to order a reduction in rates? Does Hon. Mr. Rogers intend to abolish the Commission and take over their work himself? These and other questions suggest themselves to one's mind.

Whatever the circumstances it will be pleasant news for the west that the railway rates are to be reduced. In 1886, the cost of transporting a hundred pounds of wheat from Calgary to Fort William was 63 cents, and from Winnipeg to Fort William it was 28 cents. Now the rates are 24 cents and 10 cents. A further reduction would be marvellous, but if it can be done by all means let the west have it. Perhaps it was not wheat rates which Mr. Rogers had in mind. It may be he was thinking of the rates on cement and certain other lines of merchandise in

which there has been little or no reduction in recent years.

Nevertheless, until the reductions are announced by the Railway Commission, I am content to believe that Mr. Rogers was expressing a hope rather than making a promise.

Christianity Takes the Sword.

H. AS Christianity any right to take up the sword against the Turk? This is a question which the Greeks, the Serbs, the Bulgars and the Montenegrins have answered in the affirmative. In the words of the President of the Greek Chamber

The Courier's Naval Policy.

J.UST now it seems necessary to nail our colours to the mast. The "Canadian Courier" stands to-day where it has stood for six years. It is in favour of,

1. A non-partisan settlement of the naval policy.

2. A Canadian navy, built as far as possible in Canada, and manned as far as practicable by Canadians.

Our policy was well defined by Mr. Borden in his address at Halifax on October 14th, 1909, and we cannot do better than reproduce his remarks:

"The House of Commons last session laid down a certain policy touching naval defence in which both political parties united. It may not have satisfied the aspirations of all Conservatives, but it seemed our bounden duty to place, if possible, above the limits of partisan strife a question so vital and far-reaching, and to attain the standard which has for many years governed both political parties in Great Britain with respect to foreign nations.

"How the present Administration will work out the policy which was outlined by a resolution to which I have alluded, remains to be seen. One governing principle at least should control, namely, that out of our own materials, by our own labour and by the instructed skill of our own people any necessary provision for our naval defences should be made so far as may be reasonably possible. In this connection may we not hope that there shall be given a stimulus and encouragement to the shipbuilding industry of Canada which has long been lacking.

"To-day should be Nova Scotia's opportunity in that regard. Providence has endowed this Province with the material, with the men, and with the maritime situation which are essential not only for developing a scheme of naval defence and protection, but also for the resuscitation of that shipbuilding industry which once made Nova Scotia famous throughout the world."

of Deputies, "the cannon are roaring in the name of civilization and Christianity is at war against barbarism." In the phrases of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, "the tears of the Balkan slave and the groaning of millions of Christians could not stir our hearts and the hearts of our co-religionists"; "our work is a just, a great and sacred one"; "this is a war for human rights."

But has Christianity any right to go to war? Are we not taught by all Christian teachers that war is unholy and wicked, and utterly opposed to Christian principles even as Isaiah prophesied would be the case? Yet here are four Christian nations going to war to protect other Christians. If this is a just and righteous war, how is it that

Germany and France and Britain, the three great Christian nations, have allowed, according to King Ferdinand, the Macedonian Christians to be persecuted, persecuted and massacred for twenty-five years? If this is a just and necessary war then the Christian nations, the big Christian nations, stand convicted as un-Christian. Turkey has maintained her present peculiar position among the nations because supported by the big powers of Europe. If King Ferdinand is right, then the Christianity of Europe is a farce. Perhaps the powers were too busy planting colonies, building battleships, encouraging commerce and providing for farcical old-age insurance, to be able to give a thought to the suffering Christians under the aegis of the Sultan. We send foreign missionaries to make Christians out of Mohammedans, Buddhists and other happy if ignorant people, and then allow them to be plundered and slaughtered.

This world is certainly one sad old mystery.

Warring Against Things as They Are.

I.F the Anglo-Saxon world is able to celebrate a hundred years of peace it is still afflicted with warring elements. Down in Lawrence, Mass., they are trying two men for disturbing the peace during the Textile Strike of 1911. These men, Ettor and Giovannitti, are accused of advising the strikers to "keep the gun shops busy" and not to fear the police nor the "tin soldiers with their sharp bayonets." One witness said that Ettor described how the lamp-posts of Paris had "been hung with the heads of the masters" after they had told the working people "to go and eat grass." Similarly the revelations which have come from the trial of industrial leaders in the West proves conclusively that the social reformers of the lower classes are fully determined to use violence if it is necessary in their struggles against employers and capitalists.

In England the Pankhurst element among the suffragettes seems to have gained the upper hand, and a few days ago Mrs. Pankhurst went so far as to say, "I incite this meeting to rebellion. . . . those who can break windows, break them. . . . the only limit we set is that human life shall be respected." These words indicate that the Pankhurst suffragettes have learned no lesson from the events of the past two years and are determined to use force in support of their agitation.

Happily Canada has been free from these warring elements. The labour unions have carried on their work in a quiet and orderly manner, and such strikes as we have had have seldom been accompanied by rioting or bloodshed. The Canadians are an orderly people with an exceptional respect for law and order. This does not mean that we are making less progress. It simply indicates that in the body politic there is more intelligence and more common sense than in the body politic in the United States or in Great Britain.

Our Costly Amusements.

A.LL the clever people are making a profit out of those of us who are less clever—and chief among these shrewd exploiters of the public are the Amusement Kings. They may not be as clever as Rockefeller and Carnegie and Morgan, but they are equally adroit and resourceful.

Take for example that World's Series of Baseball matches. It is one of the greatest annual amusement "stunts" that has yet been devised to part the people and their money. Every one of these games took from fifty-eight to seventy-six thousand dollars out of the public for gate receipts alone. That was in Boston and New York. But to that must be added the vast sums spent by the telegraph companies and newspapers in spreading the news—all of which must be paid for by the people.

Toronto had another sample recently of clever work on the part of its amusement kings. Five or six men induced the people of Toronto to part with more than one hundred and sixty thousand dollars in one week; made up as follows:

Musical Festival at Arena	\$40,000
Royal Alexandra Theatre	15,000
Princess Theatre	12,000
Hillcrest Race Track	75,000
Other amusements	25,000

\$167,000

We complain of the high cost of living, but Toronto's income must be large when its citizens can afford to spend this huge amount in one week for mere amusements. Talk about the extravagance of Imperial Rome, those people were amateurs in this amusement game compared with the people of the cities of North America in the year 1913. Our easily gained wealth seems to be the mainspring of our selfish pleasures as it was with the Romans.