

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Mutual Satisfaction.

A CURIOUS feature of the general election in Ontario was the satisfaction the results brought to both sides. Sir James Whitney's majority was so large, that it could be reduced with benefit rather than harm. That was the general opinion among the Conservatives who know political history and do a little thinking on their own account. Of course, a sudden reduction of considerable size would have been quite unwelcome to even these broader-minded Conservatives. The slight reduction which occurred pleased them mightily. Sir James' majority is still large enough to enable him to carry any measure he may desire without a prolonged fight, and not large enough to invite internal dissension and revolution in the ranks.

On the other hand, the Liberals are also delighted. The change of leadership a few weeks before the election prevented their scoring any considerable advance. No matter how excellent the new leader, how great an improvement in party feelings which might result, there was no time to translate that into votes. Therefore all the Liberals could expect was to hold their own. They did that and added two or three extra constituencies. Their new leader, Mr. Rowell, was elected for the first time with a substantial majority. They have every reason to be satisfied with themselves as a re-organized party.

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Ethics of Foreign-Born Societies.

PREMIER BORDEN has been in New York addressing the Canadian Club of that city. I wonder what the people of Toronto would think if there were an American Club in that city and if that organization should bring President Taft over to tell them of the United States progress under "old glory." I suppose it would be all right, but I am quite certain it would be the cause of some peculiar private conversations in, say, Colonel Denison's library.

The other evening, in New York, a meeting to support the pending arbitration treaties among Britain, France and the United States was broken up by members of a German-American organization. It was claimed by the disturbers that these treaties were aimed against Germany, and as Germans by birth or descent they could not allow their adopted country to be so gravely prejudiced as it might be under the circumstances. Whether they were right in their contention is not vital to the point, but that they should put their affection for the land of their fathers before their loyalty is a matter of supreme importance. If these treaties are inadvisable and inequitable, discuss them on their merits. To condemn them merely because of sentiment of this kind does not seem quite right.

Canadian clubs in Canada are a national influence where they have not been turned into entertainment bureaus as in Toronto, but a Canadian club in a United States city should not be more than a social organization. It should leave politics, national and international, severely alone. In the address of Premier Borden, already referred to, the opening sentences were a recognition of this point.

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Latest Convert to Civil Service Reform.

STORIES emanating from Ottawa would indicate that some of the members of the new government find that the Civil Service Act hampers them in the reorganization of their departments. They are not satisfied with all the clerks and stenographers they find there, yet it is difficult to displace them. An incompetent person cannot be summarily dismissed. A recommendation to that effect must be sent to the Commission and their approval obtained. This round-about proceeding does not please some of the impatient ministers.

There is some force in their objections, yet the present practice is absolutely necessary for the protection of the service. Otherwise a new cabinet minister, if reckless in his conduct, could at once dismiss every employee in his department. The present system may hamper an honest and business-like administrator who finds his department in a bad condition, but the hampering is only temporary.

It is pleasant, therefore, to note that so prominent a Conservative as Mr. W. S. Middleboro announced that the entire matter of patronage is unsatisfactory to many of the members of the House and that he

would be pleased to see every portion of it placed under the control of a commission. He has declared himself in favour of the English system. This is evidence that Premier Borden's promise to place a portion at least of the outside service under the Commission which now controls the inside service is meeting with general approval.

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Interprovincial Commerce.

SIR LOMER GOVIN says that the Province of Quebec gets \$600,000 a year out of the tax which it imposes on companies doing business in that province but whose head offices are elsewhere. He cannot see his way clear to abolish this form of taxation. Similarly Hon. Richard McBride continues to approve the British Columbia law which imposes similar taxes on outside firms and corporations. These and other laws are hampering interprovincial trade.

In the United States inter-state commerce is under the regulation of the federal authorities and no state can interfere with companies doing a national business. Such a tax as is imposed by Quebec and British Columbia would be unconstitutional in the United States. It would therefore seem wise to secure an amendment to the British North America Act which will make such legislation impossible here. Canadian business is becoming more and more national in character, and nothing should be allowed to interfere with that development.

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The Canadian Navy.

THERE was a time when a Canadian navy was a popular idea with most of the political leaders. The House of Commons formally approved the movement in general terms. Mr. Borden spoke at Halifax in favour of a Canadian-built navy. The Laurier Government proceeded to create it along lines practically identical with those adopted by Australia and New Zealand. They bought two cruisers to be used mainly as training ships and established a naval college at Halifax. Then they proceeded to lay plans for a fleet of cruisers suitable for coast and river work. Laying all political quibbles aside, this is a fair statement of the case expressed in general terms.

While all this was going on, a section of the Conservative party started an agitation against the programme because it would take too long to carry it out. They wanted to hand over to Great Britain a dreadnought or two at once because of the "imminent danger" of a battle in the North Sea. This was not unreasonable. Many statesmen in Great Britain believed that the danger of an early war was real. Not much fault can be found with Canadians who followed that lead. Eventually nearly the whole Conservative party swung in actively or passively behind this policy.

While the Laurier programme was being attacked because of its tardiness, it was also being subjected to criticism by the Nationalists in Quebec on the ground that Canada should do nothing at all, that a contribution to the British navy was dangerous to Canada's freedom and autonomy, and that a Canadian navy would mean a sacrifice of Canadian men and boys in Britain's imperial wars. This policy also had something to justify it. A Canadian navy would certainly mean Canadian sailors and marines. If the Canadian navy ever went into action it would be difficult to prevent some of those on board being killed.

Then came the general election and the Liberals lost the power to further pursue the policy they had decided upon. As for the Conservative policy, Premier Borden is not sure now that it is the wise one, since the "imminent danger" has passed. At least, he admits that he is not certain on this point. Hence there is no talk at present of a gift of dreadnoughts or a cash contribution. Thus the Liberal programme and the Conservative policy are eliminated. There is only the Nationalist policy left—the policy of doing nothing. For the present this is the policy of the new Government. The Nationalist view has won out, at least temporarily.

What of the future? It is difficult to predict what will happen. Much depends on events in Europe. If the sun of peace should shine brightly the Nationalist policy might continue in the ascendant. If a war scare should occur the Canadian Government

might suddenly determine upon a cash contribution. But at best these policies are makeshifts. The only permanent policy is a Canadian navy built in Canada and manned by Canadians. This may not come in a year, or in five years; but it will come as surely as Canada is an autonomous and self-respecting nation.

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Co-operation in Militia Work.

AS a matter of settled policy, the Militia Department should insist that hereafter where new armouries are erected in towns and cities, the municipality should supply the site. Recently a Winnipeg deputation asked the Minister of Militia to purchase twenty acres on Sargent Avenue and erect thereon the new armouries and drill hall. This land lies next to a city park and can be secured for \$275,000. Col. Hughes very properly pointed out that if he did this, the city of Winnipeg would be securing a fine recreation ground at the expense of the government. Similarly, Toronto wants a parade ground around its present armoury. The city, not the Government, should provide this.

Indeed it might be wise to go a step farther and insist that the local authorities or regiments should provide a portion of the cost of the building. The local authorities could construct a building more cheaply than the government, because it can give better supervision and because politics is less likely to affect the contract. Moreover, the local militia would take an interest in the building and make it more suited to local needs. Toronto has an armoury which is not suited to its needs and this mainly because the local militia were not consulted.

Moreover, to create or maintain a proper military spirit in a municipality, it is necessary that the municipality should have some part in providing equipment and maintenance. The militia would be materially strengthened in its relation to the public everywhere, if the local people had some part in providing for it. The militia would be brought into closer touch with the city council and through them with the citizens generally.

Where militarism is most obnoxious and most dangerous, it is centralized under the national government. What the Canadian militia needs is decentralization. Give the municipalities a share in the erection of buildings, the providing of parade grounds, and even in the maintenance of the local militia units, and the militia spirit would be largely merged in the civic spirit.

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Will the Mormons Desert Alberta?

THERE are those who believe that the Mormons are likely to abandon Alberta. They resent the criticisms which have been directed at them from all quarters during the past couple of years. The Presbyterian Assembly, the Anglican Synod and various other organizations have taken up the cudgels against their theological teaching with regard to polygamy. Moreover, they feel that they can never be a dominating political force in Alberta politics, and the Mormon Church apparently believes in the dominant political power. In Utah they have achieved and maintained their ambition. In some of the neighbouring States they are rapidly gaining ground. What they accomplished in Utah they hoped to accomplish in Alberta. They apparently thought that once they became strong enough the Canadian politicians would overlook their idiosyncrasies and excuse their religion. Although Sir John Macdonald laid down the law to them in no uncertain way, he did it so pleasantly that apparently they still had political hope. In recent years this hope has gradually faded away.

My informant says that Mr. "Johnny" Woolf, who has represented a Mormon district in the Alberta Legislature, has lost hope and will shortly resign. He will probably go to Nevada to reside. If this occurs it may be but the beginning of a gradual exodus. Moreover, my informant states that the next member for Cardston, in succession to Woolf, will not be a Mormon.

Without political control the Mormon Church has never been successful in controlling its own followers. It fears that its lack of political progress will be a decided impediment to its growth. Woolf himself has not always been faithful to the dictates of the Church. One occasion they ran a bishop against him for the legislative honour; but Woolf won out, showing that the independent Western spirit had penetrated even the Mormon Church.

Whether this is true or not it will be interesting to watch the developments. Whatever may happen the Mormon Church is no doubt aware that Canada will have nothing to do with polygamy either practical or theoretical. If the Mormons remain in Canada they must surely become a people differing largely in religion and social life from the Mormons of Utah.