

## Concessions

Recently a British Columbia commission was appointed to recommend provincial action with regard to our old friends, the Doukhobors. One recommendation stands out clearly above all the rest, viz., that all incoming settlers must understand that henceforth they are expected to fall in with the ways of the country, for no special privileges will be granted them. This should apply all the way round. What right have a few people, in the infancy of a great province, to ask for a concession in the name of religion or nationality, such concession to apply to their own following for all time? It is as unpatriotic as it is unjust. There should never be any concessions of this kind. Special privilege is always dangerous. Any man who seizes this fundamental idea can hardly fail to become a good citizen. If he fails to recognize it, he is likely to prove dangerous to the social organism. Special privilege in trade and commerce is bad enough, but it is unutterably bad when extended in the name of religion or race.

### REDISTRIBUTION

The making of the country's laws is entrusted to the representatives of the people in Parliament. Parliament should fairly represent all the people—every district, and every important opinion. Towards this end two things are necessary: redistribution, and proportional representation.

As it now stands, Western Canada should have twenty-five additional members at Ottawa. Unless a redistribution measure is brought down and acted upon at the present session, the newer and better Canada will be unjustly treated for another year, and perhaps for two or even three years. If an appeal is made to the country before a redistribution is made, it is possible that we may have another census taken before anything is done. This is absolutely unfair and yet it is only a sample of treatment that has become altogether too common. If the Western Provinces are in Confederation they should have the same rights as others. They demand nothing more than equality of opportunity, and this they are determined to have. Every act of unfairness on the part of the provinces who now hold the majority vote will create an unfriendliness and even a bitterness that years will not remove, and will make impossible that feeling of unity which is the condition of all permanent prosperity.

### A QUINQUENNIAL CENSUS

With our country developing so rapidly, it is only fair that a census should be taken every five years. This is necessary, not only in order to ensure a fair representation in Parliament, but to protect the country from what might be termed libel. Canada has always more than the census shows. More than that, the census would be far more accurate if taken every five years. As it is now, a new set of men have to be broken in every ten years. Under a five-year system many of the workers would belong to a permanent staff. The mistakes made in Western Canada during the last taking of the census indicate the necessity for employing more people who have had some experience in the work.

### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Representation should not only be fair to districts. It should be fair to every view held by a considerable section of the people. Recently, in Australia, the Socialists polled a fraction-over-fifty per cent of the total vote, and yet so nicely were the majorities distributed that every member of the house is a Socialist. Now, this is hardly fair to the other side; and if the other side had the fraction

over fifty per cent and all the representatives, the howl from the Socialists would be heard throughout Christendom.

In several of the provinces—indeed in all the provinces, and in the whole Dominion—the minorities have no representation in proportion to their number. The only cure for the evil is proportional representation. This system is in force not only in a country like France, but quite recently has been adopted by Great Britain in the Home Rule measure—where it is provided that where some of the cities send three members to Parliament the minority, if large enough, shall have a right to name one of them. It is not so difficult to arrange ballots for voting after this fashion. France has a very complex system but it is almost perfect in its fairness. The British system is simplicity itself and is so fair that every man who studies it will give it his endorsement.

Were the system in vogue it would end bribery and corruption. For this reason it will not be tolerated in Canada just yet, but, all the same, it is coming, with government ownership of public utilities, and a parcels post, and abolition of the bar, and the referendum, and a dozen other reforms that vested wrongs now render impossible.

### OCEAN RATES

Wheat at Fort William is eleven cents cheaper than it was a year ago, yet when it reaches Liverpool the price is the same as a year ago. What causes the difference? The middleman—in this case the transporter. What is the remedy? A merchant marine. If seven and one-half cents paid the carriage from Montreal to Liverpool in 1911, it should not take thirteen cents to carry it in 1912.

There is a good field for investigation here for those bodies that are supposed to be the guardians for the people. In making such an investigation it will be well to recognize that the rate from Montreal to the Motherland exceeds that from New York; that it is quite possible to get all the vessels required for American trade, but almost impossible to get ships to come to Canadian harbors. As a result the bulk of Canadian products is shipped from American ports. Buffalo sends out more wheat than Montreal, and this is only an illustration.

Why is this? Partly because the insurance rate paid by vessels trading to Canada is 25 per cent higher than that paid by vessels carrying trade from other countries; partly because, apart from the highly subsidized liners, there are few independent steamers in the Canadian carrying trade. Those that are in the trade do not complain of high insurance rates because, as in the case of the tariff, the producer and consumer pay the price. It is not a very wise policy, surely, to subsidize directly and indirectly great carriers by rail and water, and then find that they double rates just as they please. No one expects that rates will be as low as a few years ago. The cost of living in all lands has increased too rapidly for that, but there is no reason why Canada should not have all the vessels needed for its trade at reasonable cost to the shippers. So we expect those in charge of our affairs to take note of conditions and find a way out. The present investigation into railway rates is no more necessary than an investigation into the rates charged by ocean and lake steamships.

### POPULAR VOTING

It is customary these days for newspapers and other agencies to take popular votes on live questions. For instance, the managers of moving picture shows are taking a vote of their patrons as to the advisability of opening the theatres on Sunday. The vote is, of course, very much in favor of the proposal. No one would urge on that ground that legislation

should be enacted giving the theatres the right to hold Sunday exhibitions. The thousands who never patronize the shows—and perhaps with good reason—do not appear in the vote at all. In other words, the vote is not a popular vote—it is the expression of prejudiced parties.

Similarly the vote that is now being taken by the Montreal Witness on thirteen live questions probably represents a biased constituency. It would be interesting, for example, to obtain a vote of the readers of, say, the Toronto News, on the same questions. None the less is the vote on the Witness questions full of interest. It shows a great majority opposed to the gift of battleships, and a similar majority in favor of a Canadian navy, with a strong vote in the West against both policies. There is a feeling almost approaching unanimity in favor of Imperial free trade. The parcels post idea is approved by 99 per cent of the voters, and 87 per cent favor the single tax. Government ownership finds favor with three out of four, but woman suffrage is not favored by nearly so many. The vote on the abolition of the bar was practically unanimous and the referendum was very popular in the West. This all shows that the readers of the Witness are in sympathy with its own views. It also shows that the West has opinions of its own on questions apart from trade. The question is very well raised as to whether a popular vote, taken when no election is pending, would not be infinitely more suggestive and honest than a vote taken during the heat of a contest.

### SUBSTITUTES FOR SALOONS

There is more or less of merit in the argument that when saloons are voted out something should be set up to take their places. Of course, there is a large sense in which it is true that with the disappearance of the saloon many of its customers turn their attention to work, reading, attendance on church and other public services and in other ways occupy the time and expend the effort which hitherto has been given to the barroom. But there are restless men, those who have few settled habits of life, and who lack interest in many of the ordinary things in every community. To reach such men and to provide for their social demands is a problem that should not be neglected. In short, every community which banishes the saloon should use its every effort to maintain a state of affairs such as will defeat all desire for a return of the evil business. As all legitimate means should be used to put the saloon out of business, we say now that every proper effort should be made to keep it out of business.

### THE CHURCH AND POLITICS

What is the duty of the pulpit in matters political? It should not be difficult to find an answer. It is clearly one of the supreme aims of the church to bring about the reign of righteousness—"Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven." Now, righteousness is based on knowledge, and the Christian teacher is in duty bound to set forth the principles that govern the "Kingdom." He cannot do this effectively without referring to definite practice in the home, the state and the business callings of men. One reason why the pulpit has been ineffective is because it has been content to preach abstract truth. The most hopeful sign of the times is that the Church is awaking to the fact that it should be a practical institution. It must be willing to go one step further if it is to regain the confidence of the people. It must exclude from its membership all who are guilty of gross immorality—personal, political or vocational. A clean church of fifty members is more effective than an inconsistent church of five hundred members.