

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

Why Canada Needs Cruisers

JUST the other day, the British cruiser "Berwick" was ordered from St. Lucia in the West Indies to Brazil to protect British interests there. Any day, British cruisers may be ordered to Vera Cruz to protect British interests in Mexico. Indeed, there is probably a British cruiser in that port at present.

Canada has millions at stake in these two countries and many Canadian citizens in each. This wealth and these citizens will be protected by British cruisers. If Canadians are forced to flee from Mexico, they will go aboard British cruisers. This has been the custom in the past, and will be in the future. Canadians have always been considered by the British navy as equal in importance with other British subjects.

Yet here is a service which, so far as America is concerned, Canada should be performing for herself. It is absurd that an important country such as this has grown to be should be unable to send a single cruiser out upon the high seas to rescue citizens in distress. True, we may choose to rely upon the British cruisers—but in that case we should contribute a portion of the cost. We should at least be logical.

Cruisers along our own coast would also be useful in case of marine disaster. Our shipping has grown tremendously and Canadian vessels in distress must necessarily increase. The fast cruiser is a great relief boat, and the relief training is both dignified and useful work for a warship's officers and crew.

Build Cruisers Now

WHY should not the Minister of Finance put an item in his Budget, providing for ten million dollars to begin the construction of a battleship and two or three subsidiary war vessels? Both parties are agreed that something should be done speedily in the way of contributing to the naval defence of the Britannic peoples. The only difference of opinion relates to the disposition of the ships when they are built. The Conservatives want them placed in charge of the British Admiralty, the Liberals in charge of the Canadian Admiralty. By leaving this point to be decided at the next general election, the Government could reasonably appropriate a sum of ten millions to be used for beginning construction. Two or three keels would be laid down in Great Britain at once, and the work got under way. Then when the election is over, the ships can be left in Great Britain or brought to Canada as the Government of the day may decide.

The Liberals could not reasonably oppose this move. They could not urge that it interferes in any way with the Canadian Naval Service Act, or that it closed the door to the ultimate adoption of a "Canadian Navy" policy. Moreover, if they did object, they would have no power to defeat it. The House of Commons majority would pass it and the Senate is prevented by the Constitution from interfering. Indeed some Liberals suggested this method of procedure last session.

The Conservatives have everything to gain and nothing to lose by such a move. They have been talking "emergency"—and this would be an emergency measure. They have spoken of our ungrateful attitude towards Britannic defence—and this would be an evidence of our willingness to do something. They have argued about our duty to the flag—and this would be a feasible method of showing our fealty. They have claimed that if the Senate majority would let them they would act—yet here is an avenue of escape which the Senate has not closed and cannot even if it would.

Such a move would appeal to the people all over Canada. It would set us right with Australia and New Zealand. It would prevent further criticisms of our "do-nothing" policy on the part of the defence authorities in London. Without interfering with a free and full domestic discussion of all the disputed points in naval policy, it would uphold Canada's good name as an integral factor in the Britannic Alliance.

Comedies at Ottawa

PUBLIC opinion demands that there shall be less comedy at Ottawa. The Members of Parliament may retort that there is no such thing as public opinion, and even if there is, it is not in a position to make "demands." It is not organized and it has no mouthpieces—all newspapers being party organs. Nevertheless, there is a demand among thinking people that the comedy stunts should be cut out of the programme at the national theatre.

Last week one of these one-act comedies was staged at Ottawa, when Mr. Knowles, on behalf of the Opposition, moved to abolish the duties on agricultural implements. The Liberals knew that such a resolution could not be adopted by the Government

because the official policy on this point will be announced in the budget speech, and because the abolition of these duties would entail other changes in the tariff which would amount to a virtual abandonment of our system of protection. Yet the Liberals gaily walked upon the stage and made grand speeches in favour of free implements. The Conservatives merely pointed, in their turn, that the Liberals had been in power from 1896 to 1911, and had not abolished these duties, therefore there was no sincerity in their present demand.

The Conservatives cannot abolish these duties, though they may reduce them. If the Liberals came into power before the next session of parliament, the duties would still be retained. Yet for political effect, the demand is made for something which every one knows is impossible.

This is a sample of the comedy which makes the House of Commons a grave disappointment to the thinking citizen. Sometimes the Liberals introduce the comic feature, sometimes the Conservatives are guilty. Neither side can claim a monopoly of the buffoonery.

Spoiling Good People

WESTERN ONTARIO has been the garden of Canada and the cradle of Canadian enterprise. But there are signs of decay. The Ontario Government favoured these people some time

Cruisers Wanted

Hon. W. T. White should put an item of ten millions in the Budget for two or three cruisers to be built at once in Britain. Later it can be decided whether these shall be part of a Canadian navy or not. But the cruisers are needed now to represent Canada on the coasts of Mexico and other American countries where Canada has citizens and investments. They are also needed on our own coasts.

A ten million item in the Budget could not be voted down by the Senate, which has no power over the Budget. If the Liberals in the House were appealed to in a nice spirit, the item would pass without opposition.

If Mr. White refuses to take this easy course, the country will remember it against him and his colleagues. If he takes it, Canada's good name will be preserved among the Britannic peoples. This is a simple way out.

ago with a loan of over twenty millions of dollars to enable them get cheap power. The Dominion Government followed this up with a rush order for building a new Welland Canal. These and other favours are sapping the virility of Western Ontario.

The evidence of this is seen in the big deputation which is to go to Ottawa to ask for bonuses to electric railways throughout the district. These people are rich and prosperous and can afford to build their own electric railways, but they have got the idea that a man is foolish to put up his own money if he can get the government to do it. Surely a railway in our old-settled portion of Canada is on a different basis to a colonization road in a newer portion!

Such is human nature. The more the government does for a community, the more it wants. The governments are now building good roads, supplying agricultural education, giving them cheap power, and doing a dozen and one things for these wealthy people which they did not do before, and yet they want more.

Electric railway subsidies would be a crime in Western Ontario—or in any other part of Canada. It would eventually be as bad as the pension fund of the United States. Surely Western Ontario is not losing its senses.

A Real Joker

MR. J. W. JOHNSON, member of the Ontario Legislature for West Hastings, says that under the present law, married women are mere chattels, owned and controlled by their husbands. He actually told this with a grave countenance in front of Dr. Margaret Gordon, Mrs. Huestis and other prominent suffragists. The idea of these ladies being the chattels of any man is laughable. Apparently Mr. Johnson has not met them often. The honourable gentleman had better move about in Toronto society before he makes any more such foolish statements.

Any man who is both truthful and observing could give Mr. Johnson much first-hand information on this subject. The wives may be chattels in West Hastings and in the Italian quarter of Toronto, but not in the circles in which Dr. Margaret Gordon and Mrs. Huestis move. If there is a wife in the better resi-

dential districts in Toronto who is a chattel, the case is exceptional. Every married member of the staff of the Canadian Courier is prepared to submit indubitable evidence in support of this view. Mr. Johnson is thinking of our grand-mothers, not of our wives.

At Last! At Last!

WHEN the civil service reformers awoke on the morning of March 12th and read in their favourite morning paper that a member of the Ontario Legislature had suggested that the merit system should be adopted, he exclaimed, "At last! At last!" Some of them may have remembered that there was a partial eclipse of the moon on the previous day, and been doubtful. But the fact is a fact. Dr. James McQueen, member for North Wentworth, did arise and declare that the patronage system is inimical to the efficiency of the public services. O ye shades of Sir Oliver Mowat, Dr. Beattie Nesbitt, Lud Cameron and Cap. Crawford!

Now the ice is broken. True, the hole is small, but it can be enlarged. The reformers should get busy. Of course, they must take no notice of the sly insinuation made by The Globe that "civil service reform must wait on a change of government." Judging by other experiences, the time to get the support of an Opposition is when it is still an Opposition. There is some educative work required, but the task of introducing the merit system into Ontario appointments is not one to dismay any real believer.

Senatorial Time Limit

AS a beginning in Senate Reform, why not adopt the rule that all Senators shall retire when they have reached seventy years of age? To-day there are thirty-three members of the upper house who are over seventy years of age. Twenty-one of these are Liberals and twelve are Conservatives.

Such a rule would have several effects. It would tend to make the Senate a more lively and aggressive body by lowering the average age. It would be an inducement to governments to appoint younger men to the upper house. And finally it would help to solve a difficulty such as the government of to-day faces with an adverse majority in the Senate.

Neither party wishes to abolish the Senate. Here there is a slight reform, to which there can be no reasonable objection, and yet one which might do much to remove the most glaring defect of the Senate as at present constituted. It might exclude some good men, such as Sir Mackenzie Bowell, who is active at ninety, but it would eliminate many whose era of usefulness as legislators has passed away.

The Truth About Welland

A CORRESPONDENT insinuates that in an article commenting upon the Welland voting, on the Scott Act, the Canadian Courier "defended incompetence, inaccuracy and irregularities." This was not the intention. The investigations in Welland showed that the irregularities were not to be blamed on the opponents of the act. The mistakes were made by incompetent men who may or may not have been anti-Scott-Act men. Whatever the deputy returning officers were, they deprived the "Antis" of more votes than they did the "Pros."

The temperance people tried to make out that Welland was stolen from them. The truth is that the incompetence of the deputies nearly made them a present of the county. If the temperance enthusiasts would throw less mud at the people who do not agree with them, their cause would show even greater progress than it is now making.

Minimum Wage Progress

ALREADY nine State Legislatures in the neighbouring Republic have adopted the principle of the minimum wage for women and minors. Massachusetts led the way with an indifferent act in 1912. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, California, Colorado, Nebraska and Utah adopted better acts in 1913. Other Legislatures have considered the subject, but done nothing definite. The progress, however, has been marvellous.

It is thought that these new laws will increase the efficiency of employers as well as employees. The inefficient employer can only hold his position by paying lower wages than his competitor. When the wages of women and children are made standard in each industry, the employer with antiquated methods will be forced to improve or go out of business.

The Federal Bureau of Labour found, on investigation in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston, Minneapolis and St. Paul that 20 per cent. of the women, "not living at home," earned less than \$6 a week, and 53.6 per cent. less than \$8 a week. In Chicago, in eight department stores, 23.3 per cent. earned less than \$6 and 53.4 per cent. less than \$8. A Wage Board can do something for these unfortunates. It cannot put young and unexperienced help on the same plane as experienced and efficient help, but it can make the grasping employer pay the same rates as his more generous and efficient competitor.

The subject is one which should be studied by leading Canadian women. It would do more to improve the race and increase happiness than any one social reform now before the public.