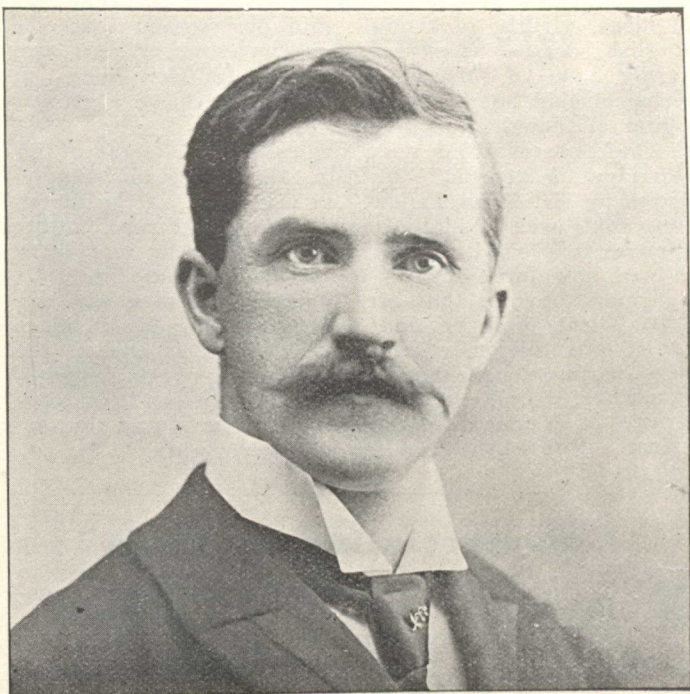




Mr John Bain
Lately Assistant Commissioner of Customs

Deserting the Civil Service

SOME years ago it was an unheard of thing for any man, once he had attained a position in the government or civil service to deliberately relinquish that position for another in commercial life. A government position with a good salary attached was thought to be all that a man could desire. With it he was provided for life with a competency and a fair degree of comfort. In fact, he had no fear of the firm suspending business or becoming bankrupt.

Now, however, things have changed, and almost every day the newspapers announce that some official, high in the country's service, has resigned to become manager of a commercial organisation or to associate himself with some recognised successful man in business. The names of Mr. Smart, Mr. Stewart and others may be mentioned.

One of the latest to follow this course is Mr. John Bain, who last month resigned the position of assistant commissioner of customs to associate himself with the Hon. Clifford Sifton in business enterprise.

In 1896, when the Hon. William Paterson was called to the Cabinet as Minister of Customs, he chose Mr. Bain, who was then giving attention to law and newspaper work in Paris, as his private secretary. In this position, by his energy, application and unvarying courtesy he soon became a favourite with the public and the politicians as well. In the summer of 1902 Mr. Bain went to the Colonial conference with his minister and there did almost all of the secretarial work of the Canadian commission. It was he who drafted the reply to the Imperial Government Memorandum, in which it was stated that the preferential tariff of Canada had not been beneficial in developing the trade between the premier colony and the mother country. Mr. Bain's reply is to be found in the blue book issued after the conference and suffice it to say that there was never any attempt made to refute the facts it contained.

In 1903, Mr. Bain was appointed to the position of assistant commissioner of customs and in that position he again proved his worth. That Mr. Bain was popular with the service was abundantly testified on his departure. The staff of the customs department at Ottawa presented him on the occasion of his retirement with a handsome gold watch and chain as well as an appropriate address, while the inspectors and higher officers of the outside service tendered him a banquet and presented him with a beautiful cabinet of silver. At the same

time the Minister of Customs gave a banquet in his honour in the House of Commons Cafe which was attended by many Ministers and Members of the House. At this banquet, Sir Wilfrid Laurier referred appreciatively to the services rendered by Mr. Bain.

He Must Walk Delicately

LIKE the gentleman in the Bible, Ambassador Bryce must walk delicately when he arrives in Ottawa next week. He must remember that he is not negotiating between the governments of a vassal state and of an independent state. He must remember that he is not negotiating at all. He has had conferences with Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Root, but the Government of Canada is determined—and Canadians will henceforth insist on this—to be the final arbiter in any arrangements, fiscal or otherwise, concerning the well-being of this country. It is well that Mr. Bryce should know this, and it is well that such a sane and unimpressible man should have been chosen by the King's government as the King's representative in Washington.

Nevertheless, there are difficulties sedulously to be avoided by Mr. Bryce in the course of his visit to Ottawa. Canadians all know that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will insist upon our rights being conserved, just as Mr. R. L. Borden would insist upon the conservation of trade rights were he to-day in the position which, in the course of human events, he some day may occupy—and occupy with credit to us and to him. To-day, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the man at the helm, and he is a man in whom the Canadian people have every confidence. Men who to-morrow would do their utmost to defeat Laurier at the polls, gladly acknowledge that he never loses his constant and determined anxiety to bring to this country all that this country should have.

Mr. Bryce, in his "American Commonwealth," has one or two allusions to the relations between Canada and the United States. He wrote the book too early to be able to appreciate the fact that the United States drove Canada into national unity. The United States drove us into the policy of fiscal protection. The United States compelled us to build our own great through railways; the United States finally forced us into the fiscal alliance with Great Britain which is now gladly accepted by all of us. No one believes that conciliatory measures at Washington would have beguiled us into accepting incorporation with the United States. The thing to Canadians is absolutely unthinkable. Some philosophers who believe otherwise might well come north, or come west across the Atlantic, to find out just why. Any such measures at Washington would have proved as abortive as was the bill which Congress in the later '60's passed for the admission of Canadian provinces as American states. By this previous ordinance, Britain was recommended to hand over this country to the Americans as compensation for the Alabama damages and other offences against the victorious work. Gladstone, Mr. Goldwin Smith has told us, advocated this infamous deal.

The truth is that the Canadian national spirit is exuberant, and Mr. Bryce will find this is the case when he meets the men whom he will encounter in Ottawa. The travail of Canada's birth has made Canada robust and strong and earnest. Confidence and self-reliance have come to us through the strenuous preparation of the early years. Strength and confidence will be ours increasingly. We shall be loth to forget that in all international negotiations between us and the United States we—we Canadians—are the dominant partner. Our interests in all such cases are to be considered and mainly to be considered. This being understood, Mr. James Bryce can as adequately act as the representative of Canadian citizens as of the government which gave him his credentials to Washington.

R. K.