

## THROUGH A MONOCLE

MR. FIELDING, whose budget annually wins for him the lime-light on the Ottawa stage, is in many ways an unusual type in our politics, or, indeed, in the politics of any country which has representative institutions and a broad franchise. The democracy loves to make rulers out of its heroes of the "stump." But Mr. Fielding has never been a "stump speaker." His addresses to Parliament are the statements of a business man to a business meeting. They are clear, concise, easily understood, but without oratorical frills. His predecessor and present critic, Mr. Foster, was accustomed to make of his budget speeches rhetorical events. He dealt with the necessary figures with evident impatience, and was only happy when painting the prosperity of the country with the vivid imagery of figures of speech. His budgets were paeans of praise for the National Policy, and were full of the winged efforts of the imagination which make so much better listening for the average auditor than prosaic statements of fact. The greater part of them, indeed, Mr. Foster could have used with effect before a popular audience.

MR. FIELDING would never dare deliver his budgets to an election crowd. But he might lay them before a Board of Trade or a Manufacturers' Association. All that would be necessary to prepare them for such bodies would be to omit the very few attempts at partisan appeal which he attaches to them in places with evident reluctance. Even when he does talk politics, he talks "editorial" and not "stump bombast." He is never more in this field than the party editor. Eloquence he leaves to his great leader and the sounding phrase he leaves to his chief opponent. He telescopes a bank statement with a few editorials—and lets it go at that. His budgets have been invariably interesting, largely because they have been reports upon a very progressive period in the country's progress. What he would have done with the conditions with which Mr. Foster had to wrestle, is another question. He has been Canada's most favoured Finance Minister, but it is, perhaps, as well to remember that Mr. Gladstone made his reputation as a master of budgets when he was called upon to face adverse conditions and to find solutions for involved and heavy problems.

IT is a pity that the country has lost the incisive criticism of budgets which it once got—with little gratitude—from Sir Richard Cartwright. Sir Richard brought to the consideration of a financial statement a wealth of knowledge, a profound understanding of all the bearings of the subject and an industrious study of detail which no other man has ever shown on the floor of the House of Commons.

Listeners would feel, while Sir Richard was speaking, that the only man within reach capable of replying to him, sat—not in the House—but in deputy ministers' gallery, in the person of Mr. J. M. Courtney, Deputy Minister of Finance. Mr. Courtney knew the truth, we all felt; but we doubted whether any of the politicians, whose business it would be presently to reply to Sir Richard, had more than an inkling of what he was really talking about. But then it didn't much matter in the rough-and-tumble of politics. The sharp retort—the barbed jibe—kill quite as effectively as an informed answer.

THERE is surely room for a financier or two in Parliament. We think we cannot make laws without plenty of lawyers about to increase the muddle; but we are entirely ready to permit the politicians with the training of the stump or the newspaper office or what not, to attend to our enormous financial issues. Is it good sense? Why should not each party have at least one financial expert to act as Finance Minister, just as it tries to have a military expert to look after the militia and an agricultural expert to manage the model farm? The nation is about as big a financial proposition as there exists within its borders; and yet it takes less pains than a country bank to get men trained in finance to guide its financial operations. Mr. Fielding is an able man, but he was not a financier when he came to Ottawa. Mr. Foster was an educationalist and a public lecturer. We all think a lot of Mr. James L. Hughes; but if a bank were to choose him as general manager, we would probably deposit our money somewhere else. James would be honest; but he lacks banking experience.

TO make a swift change of subject, have you noticed how persistently Mr. Rudyard Kipling writes himself down as a South African politician rather than a literary man when he takes his puissant pen in hand these days? In his first letter on Canada written for the press he wonders why we "brigaded" with Botha at the Colonial Conference. Only a man looking through South African spectacles would see it that way. We took the position we did at the Colonial Conference because we were aware of the results of the then recent British elections, and proposed to do business with the existing British Government. We were not in British "home politics" nor in South African politics but in Canadian and Imperial politics. Mr. Deakin linked himself with the Unionist Opposition; Sir Wilfrid Laurier permitted the people of the United Kingdom to select the men who were to do business with Canada. It is a thousand pities that Kipling has deserted literature for politics. There are so many politicians quite as good as Kipling; but there is only one Kipling of the caste of "Kim."

*N'importe*



The King of the Carnival—A Scene at the Great Mardi Gras Fete which is held Annually at this Season of the Year in the City of New Orleans