

REFLECTIONS By THE EDITOR



A Campaign of Abuse.

THE campaign of abuse which is now being carried on in some British and some Canadian newspapers, directed at Sir Wilfrid Laurier, is decidedly unfair. Indeed, one might term it unscrupulous and still be within bounds. For example, in an article in last week's issue of the *Sunday World*, Toronto, the following statement is made:

"Where the ministers of the motherland and the sister states have been receptive and eager in their efforts to strengthen the tie that holds the British peoples in an imperial band, reaching round the world from England to England again, the Dominion Premier has chosen to assume the part of the indifferent, and even cynical, critic."

This statement is misleading and untruthful. Sir Wilfrid Laurier may not be a keen Imperialist, but he certainly has not opposed all the other over-seas Premiers or even the majority of them. Neither has he opposed any Imperialist propositions put forward by the British Ministers.

All this slander with regard to Sir Wilfrid Laurier seems to have arisen from his attitude toward Sir Joseph Ward's resolution in favour of an Imperial Council. It is quite true that Sir Wilfrid Laurier opposed the idea and opposed it strongly. He opposed it on the ground that it was creating a body with power to make expenditures but with no responsibility for providing the necessary revenue to meet that expenditure. Mr. Fisher, Premier of Australia, said it would violate the very principle of responsible government. He opposed it strongly and if Sir Wilfrid Laurier is a traitor then Mr. Fisher is a traitor also. After Mr. Fisher came General Botha, who stated that such a body would cause nothing but unpleasantness and friction. If Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Hon. Mr. Fisher are traitors, then General Botha is a traitor also. Following them came Sir Edward Morris, who also opposed the resolution. His name must be added to the band of traitors. After all these gentlemen had opposed the resolution, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Asquith, Premier of Great Britain, expressed the opinion that Sir Joseph Ward's scheme would be "fatal to the present system of responsibility." Thus another traitor was added to the list.

It will therefore be seen that instead of Sir Wilfrid Laurier being a lone traitor at the Imperial Council, Sir Joseph Ward was a lone patriot. All the other premiers were with Sir Wilfrid Laurier and against Sir Joseph Ward. It is really too bad that the ultra-Imperialists of Canada and Great Britain should be able to find only one high-minded and patriotic statesman at this Imperial Conference. It is exceedingly unfortunate that Mr. Asquith, Mr. Fisher, General Botha and Sir Edward Morris should all have the same ideas with regard to what is best for the future of the Empire.

While there is reason for grave disappointment on the part of these ultra-Imperialists, that is no excuse for the campaign of abuse and slander which is now being carried on. In his propositions on behalf of Imperial citizenship and on behalf of a Royal Commission to investigate Imperial Trade, Sir Wilfrid Laurier has shown himself as keen an Imperialist as any man at the Imperial Conference. He is not an ultra-Imperialist like Sir Joseph Ward, of New Zealand, but he undoubtedly is as strong in his support of a united Empire as any other member of the Conference.

A British Witness.

IF there is any reader of the *CANADIAN COURIER* who is still unconvinced that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has had the support of nine-tenths of the members of the Conference in all his actions, he should get a copy of the *Times Weekly Edition*, of June 2nd, and read the report on page 427. As the *Times* is now an Unionist paper the evidence there should be accepted. The reasons given by Laurier, Botha, Morris and Asquith, as to why they were opposed to Sir Joseph Ward's Imperial Council, are clearly and fully set forth.

The *Westminster Gazette*, in an editorial on Sir Joseph Ward's scheme, says, "The other Prime Ministers without exception opposed this scheme on the ground that it would imperil the freedom and autonomy of the separate self-governing committees."

After quoting Mr. Asquith's remarks in condemnation of the proposal, the *Westminster Gazette* writer adds: "It is interesting to observe from this debate the complete acquiescence of the Dominion Prime Ministers in the division of labour which leaves the Government of the United Kingdom the sole responsibility for foreign policy, while it leaves the Dominions unfettered control of their local forces. That rests on practical as well as theoretical grounds, for it is recognized that the Imperial Government could not be strong and efficient in foreign affairs unless it was in a position to act swiftly and decisively on its own responsibility in time of emergency."

Imperial Trade Commission.

WHEN a Canadian statesman desires to avoid present discussion of a question, he asks for a royal commission to investigate it. Apparently this is the rule in other countries judging by the unanimity with which the Imperial Conference members accepted Sir Wilfrid Laurier's suggestion of an Imperial Trade Commission.

No matter what the motive, the Commission is a splendid idea. Hitherto all commissions on Imperial Trade have been purely British commissions, and hence somewhat blind in one eye. A commission with representatives from all the units of the Empire will have three or four points of view and should not be prejudiced in favour of either free trade or protection, of either closer commercial union within the Empire or the reverse. It will give us much interesting information and possibly some good advice.

Of course, it is ordered not to give advice. But in spite of Hon. Mr. Harcourt's attempt to take the starch out of the garment, it is to be hoped that the Commission will talk loudly and clearly and not bury its ideas in a grave of words. Moreover, the report should appear in one volume, instead of in ten. These ten-volume reports are out-of-date, besides being magnificently useless.

Nearing the End.

SO far as the United States Congress in special session assembled is concerned, the question of reciprocity with Canada is almost settled. The discussion is drawing to a close. In another fortnight the answer will be given, and there is little doubt that it will be favourable. Senator Penrose estimates that the vote will be about two to one.

If this bill be passed by a Democratic House of Representatives and a Republican Senate, the main credit will go to President Taft. He made his bargain hurriedly, but had many clever experts to guide him. Once having made his deal, he set resolutely to work to secure congressional approval. The former congress practically refused to adopt it, and he had to let it prorogue. The new Congress was not in a position to "talk it out." It was forced to say yes or no, or remain in continuous session for four years. It was more friendly to reciprocity, but nevertheless contained a large number of people who are politically opposed to the President. In the House, the majority are his political opponents. Yet so well did he manage the movement that he has practically won from both friends and enemies. It is a personal triumph. He has done in the United States what could not have been done in Canada under similar conditions.

Canada Must Soon Decide.

WHEN reciprocity passes the United States Congress, the question will again become a live issue in Canada. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his associates in the cabinet are pledged to put it through the Canadian Parliament. So long as the question was undecided at Washington, so long might the Canadian Parliament dally with the issue. When Washington speaks decisively, Canada must answer decisively. In a month the fight will be on in earnest.

Mr. Borden has begun his tour of the West, and is telling the people of that portion of the Dominion why he will oppose reciprocity. He is fighting courageously. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and several of his ministers are in London and will not return

for a week or two. In the meantime, the activity on the Liberal side is not great. When these leaders get back, however, there will be some big-gun firing.

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An Idol with Clay Feet

IN Toronto there is a weekly newspaper—which is edited by somebody for some purpose. There is no evidence available as to just who that somebody is. The editor signs himself "Colonel," or some name similar to that. But if the editor is unknown, the purpose is quite clear. The purpose is to make a big noise which sounds like somebody hitting something. Of course, nothing is really hit, but the noise is there every week.

This big noise paper has been publishing a series of articles on insurance. These are intended to show that the editor or the publisher or somebody who works for them, knows that the public is being fooled by bad insurance policies, bankrupt insurance companies and inadequate governmental regulation. These articles make a noise like an investigation in the public interest.

Now, the other day, the office of Provincial insurance inspector fell vacant in Ontario. It is the most important insurance position in Canada, or will be if the Supreme Court decides this month that insurance is a matter largely within the jurisdiction of the provinces. The Ontario Government were under the necessity of filling this office. Naturally, through fear of the "Colonel," the man that makes the big noise, the Government was expected to look around for the best insurance man in Canada and put him on the job. Everybody was quite sure that this would occur. Imagine the public's surprise when it was learned that in spite of the big noise and the series of articles, the Government had selected and appointed an aged lawyer recommended by the local politicians. The appointee, so far as is known, knows absolutely nothing about insurance. There is no evidence that he has even read the articles in the big noise newspaper.

When the next issue of the aforesaid newspaper appeared, a number of people opened it with unusual curiosity. They looked for a big noise article condemning the appointment as not being in the best interests of the people. They turned the pages over and over, and sighed because of disappointment. The big noise newspaper hadn't a word to say. The suspicion in the public mind was cruelly confirmed. The idol had clay feet.

National Circulation.

The task of giving the *CANADIAN COURIER* a national circulation is not an easy one. Our aim has been to distribute the *COURIER* throughout the Dominion so that every reader will receive his paper on Saturday of the week in which it is issued. So far this has only been partially possible. Our distribution methods were so far perfected that the *COURIER* was delivered in all the towns and cities from Regina to Halifax not later than Saturday of each week. This has been the case for about two years.

Recently some improvements have been made. By going to press earlier we have been able to mail the edition for Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia one day earlier in the week. The new train of the Canadian Pacific Railway which leaves Toronto for Vancouver at ten o'clock every evening has helped considerably. For example, the issue dated June 10th was sent out on the train leaving Toronto on the night of Tuesday, June 6th, and reached Vancouver on Saturday, June 10th, at 10.25 p.m. The following telegram is evidence of the delivery:

Vancouver, B.C., June 10th.

R. L. Thompson,
C. P. R. Passenger Agent,
Toronto.

Canadian Courier issue of June tenth arrived Vancouver train three Saturday June tenth twenty - two twenty - five o'clock.

H. W. Brodie.

This new train enables us to deliver the *COURIER* on Saturday throughout Saskatchewan and Alberta and a large part of British Columbia. We believe that this is the highest point of distribution efficiency yet reached by any Canadian publication.