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A GREAT DEMOCRATIC VICTORY.

IT will probably take from now until the presidential elections for the press and the politicians of the United States to decide what were the chief causes for the Democratic landslide on Tuesday. A turn-over was expected, but the extent of the change in public opinion astonished most of the people of the United States, as much as the result in Drummond and Arthabaska surprised the people of Canada. Perhaps it is an off year for governments; and governments which have the power to fix the date of elections will recognize the signs of the times and govern themselves accordingly. Either these great changes of public opinion do occur in cycles, or they have a contagious effect. There is not, however, very much doubt that the Republican party defeated itself. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and the division in the Republican party was unconcealed and unconcealable. Naturally the defeat is attributed chiefly to the personal ambitions of Mr. Roosevelt. The vote implies not only that his policy was unpopular; but resentment of his frank use of President Taft as a "warming pan." The general feeling seems to be that the Rough Rider had developed an exaggerated sense of his own importance and was running amuck in American politics. He seems to have learned something from the election, for he is preserving a silence that can be felt, and that is something new for Emperor Theodore. Among the great financial institutions, grief over his downfall will be much modified by practical business considerations, and the trusts will, as a rule, omit flowers.

THE opinion is growing that the cordiality with which the United States reciprocity envoys are being received at Ottawa is a matter of international courtesy rather than of fiscal policy. If it were not so from the beginning recent elections on both sides of the line would be apt to make the Government careful about any experiments in tariff legislation. A Republican administration, with a Democratic House of Assembly, and a dwindling majority in the Senate, is going to be even more seriously embarrassed in any tariff negotiations with foreign powers than United States governments generally are. The prospects of any practical results upon the relations between the two countries arising out of the Ottawa conference are not near enough in fact to

justify the government handicapping itself in the next general elections with a reciprocity policy. Any approaches from Washington should be received at Ottawa as these have been received, with the greatest courtesy and cordiality, but at the same time with the greatest care. Our conviction is that Sir Wilfrid will not be encouraged by Mr. Roosevelt's accomplishment to run amuck among Canadian industries. We hope the envoys will enjoy their trip, and if they do not we feel sure that it will not be due to any lack of hospitality at Ottawa.

BISHOP STREET FIRE INVESTIGATION.

THERE is a great air of improbability about some of the evidence given before the Fire Commissioners regarding the Bishop Street Fire. The one thing proven beyond peradventure is the illegality of the construction, and the only apparent defence so far is that it is the rule rather than the exception in Montreal for buildings to be erected in open defiance of the law. The whole subject should be rigorously investigated and action should be taken at once to place the Building Inspection Department upon a proper basis. That the department is undermanned is obvious; the staff is absolutely incapable of doing a tenth part of the work that the safety of the city demands.

THE BURSTING OF A WATER MAIN.

THE frequency with which the 36-in. water main on St. Antoine Street bursts, is a matter that calls for explanation. It is not to be assumed that the pipes there are any weaker than the pipes in use in other parts of the city; but it is well to bear in mind that at the St. Antoine Street level the hydraulic pressure is presumably greater than at the Sherbrooke Street level, and that consequently much stronger pipes are needed. Probably a still more important fact in the case is that the pipes are laid on poor foundations. The matter is a serious one, not so much on account of the local damage, which is not trifling, but on account of the fire danger to which it exposes that and other parts of the city. For instance, had the pipe burst on the morning of the Bishop Street fire a tremendous conflagration must have wiped out a very large section of the west end of Montreal. For over three hours on Tuesday night that section of the city was totally deprived of