



BRINGING OUT THE BIG DRUMS

THE quadrennial beating of the big drums is about to occur. The politicians are preparing to get the public excited. When there is much noise in the air, much rushing hither and thither, much whispering and secret meeting, much picnicking and speech-making, the politician gets an addition to his reputation. His hirelings go about telling what a great man he is, how much he has done for the country and his constituency, and how people should bow down and worship his magnificent brain and brilliant abilities. The enthusiastic partisan comes around and offers his purse and his spare hours. The excitement becomes intense. And why?

It is certainly proper and necessary that the people should take an interest in the respective policies of Government and Opposition. It is profitable that there should be a discussion of records and proposals and an examination into the parliamentary situation. The beating of the big drums does not, however, assist this judicial consideration of public questions. The partisans on both sides get too excited to reason or discuss. All they can do is assert and shout. Most of the calm, deliberate discussion which occurs is held between, not during, general elections. The big drums are beaten to prevent thought rather than to encourage it.

The voter who intends to cast an honest, patriotic ballot at the approaching election would do well to avoid political meetings, big and little. If he goes there, he will come away with one-sided views and a disturbed equanimity. He will hear appeals to his selfishness and his party spirit which will arouse within him feelings which are best kept under close control. There will be much talk about corruption under Tory rule before 1896, or graft under Grit rule since 1896. He will hear prominent men who should know better slander their opponents and misrepresent their position on public questions. He will hear more calumnies than arguments.

The other day, the *Montreal Gazette* had a long editorial to prove that nearly every good thing which Canada possesses was due to the Conservative statesmen who governed the country between 1878 and 1896. The truth is that most of the reforms and advances of that period were due to the Opposition and the public-spirited and aggressive citizens outside of Parliament. The Liberal newspapers are full of the greatness of the Liberal statesmen who have filled the high offices since 1896, whereas the Opposition has no doubt suggested and forced many of these legislative advances, and the people themselves have been responsible for most of the prosperity and national progress.

No one will deny that some of these Conservative and Liberal statesmen were men of high purpose, clear vision and constructive ability. It was given to them to lead, and lead they did in many ways. Nevertheless it is equally true that public opinion has done more than all of them combined. Or to put it in another way, these great men have usually trailed along after public opinion. No one will deny that in all our parliaments there have been hardworking, painstaking legislators who have served their country faithfully and well. Nor will there be found many to deny that less politics and more public service might easily be the rule in Canadian parliaments.

The beating of the big drums should not be allowed to prevent the public from distinguishing between the honest, hardworking public servant and the noisy, self-assertive and wordy dispenser of political diatribes. Beware of the big drums, for they are inimical to calm and sober judgment.

PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICES

IT is unfortunate that the newspapers and the various social organisations have not yet recognised the timeliness of a discussion of provincial civil service reform. The advance in this respect at Ottawa should pave the way for a similar advance at all the provincial capitals.

If an independent civil service commission is necessary at Ottawa, it is equally necessary at Toronto, Quebec and other provincial centres.

The civil service in each of the provinces is of equal importance with the civil service at Ottawa. In some ways, it is even more important that provincial officials should be entirely independent of the ruling political party. Provincial officers come more closely into contact with the public. Sheriffs, bailiffs, registrars, and crown land officers are able to do more injury or more good, as the case may be, than an equal number of postmasters or customs officials. The latter are merely administering a set of clearly defined regulations; the former have much discretionary authority. That the provincial employees are less numerous than the federal may make the need seem less important, but this is not truly the case.

It is the duty of every man who has been talking and working for civil service reform at Ottawa to take up the subject in relation to his province. Public opinion in this matter needs educating and stimulating. The reform will not come from within; it must come from without. Let the agitation begin.

DOUBTFUL PATRIOTS

OCCASIONALLY an English-speaking Canadian, whose father and grandfather were born in Canada, will be heard to cast doubt upon the patriotism and loyalty of an Irishman who has not yet forgotten the wrongs of Ireland. Or it may be that he has similar doubts concerning the French-speaking Canadians who love the Tricolour, have considerable reverence for France and cling tenaciously to their mother-tongue. Such a doubter believes that to be loyal and patriotic, a Canadian must speak only English words and revere only the Union Jack.

The other day the Canadian Club of New York held its annual banquet and Dr. Macphatter, the president, started his address by saying: "We Canadians, residing in the United States, are three times loyal—we are loyal to the land that gave us birth (cheers), we are loyal to the institutions and government of this great Republic (cheers), we are loyal to the Anglo-Saxon race (cheers)." The pictures of the banquet show that a British flag was hung beside the Stars and Stripes. The speakers of the evening were mostly Canadians—Hon. Charles Marcl, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons; Mr. Hugh Guthrie, M.P., of Guelph; Hon. Justice Longley, of Halifax; Hon. D. C. Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia; Mr. R. G. McPherson, M.P., of Vancouver; and the Right Hon. James Bryce, the British ambassador at Washington. In addition to the Canadians who introduced the speakers, there were two United States orators, Hon. J. Van Vechten Olcott, of New York, and Rev. Dr. N. McGee Waters, of Brooklyn.

As a result of that banquet, did any one arise in the United States to say that the Canadians in the United States were disloyal or unpatriotic? So far as we know, no one was so foolish. Every person recognises that loyalty to Canada on the part of one of these expatriated Canadians is not incompatible with loyalty to the United States. Their homes, their families and their investments are there and they are just as good citizens as any other class. Perhaps if war broke out between the United States and Great Britain, some of them would sympathise with Great Britain. Perhaps some of them would sell out and come back to Canada. Those who would do this would be but a small percentage.

If we believe that the Canadians in the United States are loyal to the Republic, in spite of their Canadian Clubs and their hanging of the Canadian flag in their homes and banquet-halls, why should we not accept the Irishman and the French-speaking Canadian as loyal subjects of His Majesty and as good Canadian citizens? If loyalty to their native land is no defect in the character of Canadians resident in New York or Boston, why should loyalty to France and the French