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Special Articles

The Use of Gas at the Front.
 By W. B. Campbell, B. Sc.

The Future of the Wool Market.
 Address by Albert W. Elliot.

The Dyestuff Situation.
 Interview with Mr. F. M. Mooney.

The Dry Goods Situation.
 (Special Staff Article).

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Editorials:	Page.
The British Crisis	1
Is Montreal Incapable of Self-Government..	1
Tariff Reform in England ..	2
A Resignation	2
A Queer Bit of Journalism	2
The Use of Gas at the Front	3
The British Columbia Farm Loan Act.....	4
The Future of the Wool Market	5
"Public Opinion"	6
"Among the Companies".....	7
"Mentioned in Dispatches"	8
The Bank of Montreal	9
Canada's Trade Increasing	9
Bank of England Statement	10
Bank of France Report.....	10
British Trade for November	10
"Economist" Index Higher.	10
Mr. George Burn Retires	11
Lord Shaughnessy's Views on British Cabinet Changes	11
Montreal Stock Exchange	11
David Lloyd George—The New Premier.....	12
Canadian Bank Clearings	12
"The Exporter's Field"	13
Group Insurance Protection	14
Correspondence—"Seager Wheeler"	14
"A Little Nonsense Now and Then"	15
Fire Losses	15
The Dyestuff Situation	17
Farms for Returned Soldiers	18
The Dry Goods Situation	20
Commodity Markets	21-22-23
Demurrage Rates	24
When the Russian Ports Open	24

The British Crisis

THE political crisis in Great Britain, besides being deeply interesting to all who are concerned in the larger politics of the world, may well be a cause of anxiety to all British subjects. The reputation of Mr. Lloyd George as a statesman of great ability and intense driving power will go far to encourage a confidence that any administration under his leadership will devote itself patriotically and resolutely to the great work of carrying on the war to a victorious end. That this may be the case must be the earnest wish of Britons everywhere. Unfortunately, the circumstances under which the change has been brought about seem likely to leave room for some misgivings as to the future. If it be true, as alleged, that British discontent was produced chiefly by the influence of the newspapers under the control of Lord Northcliffe, then the new Cabinet will begin its work under a little cloud of suspicion that may at any time become large enough to create trouble. Denunciations of such men as Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Viscount Grey and Lord Lansdowne are a poor foundation on which to build a movement for change of leadership. There are no men in the public life of the Empire who have shown more of the qualities of statesmanship that endure than the men we have named. The proposal that there should be a small War Council, which should be independent of the Cabinet, and of which the Prime Minister should not be permitted to be an active member, was one that a self-respecting statesman like Mr. Asquith could not be expected to accept. That he resigned his high office rather than permit such a humiliating situation is not surprising. The unreasonableness of the proposal can, perhaps, be better understood now, since the change of leadership. It was proposed to exclude Mr. Asquith on the ground that the general duties of leadership would prevent his giving the attention necessary to the work of the War Council. Now that Mr. Lloyd George is Premier, how will that contention operate? If Mr. Asquith as leader could not serve on the War Council can Mr. Lloyd George as leader do so? And if Mr. Lloyd George, because of his holding the place of Prime Minister, is not to serve on the War Council, will not that body be much the poorer because it has not the benefit of his acknowledged force of character? Mr. Lloyd George's Cabinet, it is to be hoped, will obtain the necessary support in the House of Commons. Further division at this time would be most unfortunate. But if it is understood that the new Cabinet is formed as a consequence of movements that have been unjust to Mr. Asquith and a number of his chief colleagues, Mr. Lloyd George may find his task both delicate and difficult.

Is Montreal Incapable of Self-Government?

MUNICIPAL affairs have so often been mismanaged in Montreal that many citizens may be tempted to give a measure of approval to the suggestions made from time to time for the appointment by the Provincial Government of a Commission to take charge of all or part of the civic business. Two proposals of this kind, it is said, are to come before the Quebec Legislature at the present session. One of these contemplates the abolition of the existing machinery and the substitution of a Commission to manage the business of Montreal. The other, more restricted in character, is designed to take the vexed tramways question out of the hands of the Mayor, Controllers and Aldermen and hand it over to a Commission, who would be empowered to grant the Tramways Company a new franchise. That discontent with the management of municipal affairs leads some people to look with a degree of favor on proposals to withdraw the public business from the City Hall we have already said. Granting that there has been much in the past management of Montreal's affairs to excuse this feeling, we are reluctant to believe that on mature consideration any considerable number of citizens will consent to the adoption of such a policy, either generally or in the case of the tramways. That such proposals should be gravely considered is surprising; more surprising would it be if in these days of democracy any Government, elected by the people and responsible to them, should put the stamp of approval on such reactionary measures. Montreal indeed has not a very enviable reputation, but one of the most serious blows that could be given to the city in the eyes of the outside world would be a proclamation that its citizens are no longer deemed capable of managing their own affairs.

Popular government does not produce perfect government. Democracy has its perils. Perhaps these are as much in evidence in Montreal as in other quarters. The mass of the people are not always very well informed in all the things that concern their best interests. Too often they form their judgments hastily, under the influence of unscrupulous men who, to serve their ends, are ready to resort to any kind of misrepresentation and to appeal to passion more than to reason. This is a sad feature of popular government. But there seems to be no remedy for the regrettable conditions beyond what is found in better education of the people in the responsibilities and duties of citizenship. A limited few may for the moment be the gainers from the cries of the demagogues. The mass usually find out in the end that they have been deceived, and when the opportunity comes they reverse their judgment. Even if there were not this hope for the correction of evils, it is