

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Did Mr. Stevens Win?

THE greatest question in Canadian politics at the present time is this: "Did Mr. H. H. Stevens, M.P., win?" It will be remembered that Mr. Stevens, who represents the labour elements in Vancouver, has been fighting the Hindu. You see, the Hindus have no votes and therefore no self-respecting labour member could reasonably be expected to sympathize with them. Far from sympathizing with the Hindus, Mr. Stevens has been utterly opposed to their breathing the air of British Columbia or of enjoying any portion of this land of equality and liberty.

To be more specific, Mr. Stevens had helped to keep two poor Sikh women in custody at Vancouver for several months. These two women had come from India, which is said to be a portion of the British Empire, to join their husbands in British Columbia, which is also said to be a portion of the British Empire. Now, thanks to Mr. H. H. Stevens, M.P., Labour member for Vancouver, and other generous souls, these women, after a long, long fight, are now to be permitted to join their husbands in Vancouver. Mr. Stevens waives his objection on the condition that the case shall not be considered a precedent. The Hindu women are to stay, but it is understood that Mr. Stevens will not allow any more of them to come in.

The two women won. The next two that try to come may win. How, then, can this be a victory for Mr. Stevens and the Anti-Asiatic League? If these men who would sooner die than allow any more Hindus to come into the country have been beaten by two Hindu women, how can we credit them with being Great Patriots?

Bombarding a Trust.

OF all the futile methods of attacking a trust, this reducing the duty on cement takes the medal. And the funny part of it is that some of the sanest newspapers have fallen into the same error. The reduction of the duty will help the merger rather than injure it, because it will put the weaker independent companies out of business. The Canada Cement Company has advantages in plant and distribution over many of the independent companies, and it can stand the strain best. There are eleven independent companies in Ontario alone, and another large plant just ready to begin operations. The reduction of duty will put five or six of these where the balance-sheet will be adverse.

The Borden Government may have been honestly anxious to reduce the price of cement. They have indeed done so temporarily. But in the end they will raise the price of cement rather than lower it, because they will scare off the capitalists who intended to build new mills. They will lower the profits of the merger somewhat, but in the end the merger will gain by the bankruptcy of some of the independent companies and by the stoppage of all new building.

Reduction of Duties by Cabinet.

LAST week the Cabinet reduced duties on many lines of goods, in addition to cement. This is a dangerous procedure. The reductions may be warranted and just, or they may not be. That is not vital. The point is that the tariff should be made by Parliament, not by the Cabinet. If Parliament does not exist to say what the customs duties shall be, why bother with a parliament at all?

Under Sir Wilfrid Laurier's regime, it was freely charged that Canada was passing from government by parliament to government by cabinet. Sir Wilfrid was called a political dictator by his opponents. There seems to be a political dictator in the Borden Cabinet also. Is it Mr. Borden or is it some one else?

Canada abolished the Laurier Government largely on the ground that Mr. Fielding and Mr. Patterson proposed to change duties on United States products without having first got the approval or tacit consent of the people and the people's representatives. Hon. Mr. White would do well to bear in mind the charges that were made against his predecessor.

Tariff Changes Unsettling.

EVERY change in the tariff is unsettling to business. Tariff changes at the time of the annual budget speech are always a possibility. After that is delivered, the business community settles

down to conditions as they are for another twelve months.

This was the rule up to last week. But Mr. White has changed all that. He opened the week with the announcement of the changes in cement duties. He let the country wonder about that for six days and then he announced a large number of other tariff changes. Before this issue is off the press, there may be another announcement. There may be one every week in the year.

The business men must relish the new state of affairs. Next week automobiles may come in free, because certain classes of the community have been discovered who could buy automobiles if they were cheaper. The following week, sugar may be put on the free list because the farmers' wives intend to do a lot of extra preserving this summer. The next week, box-cars and locomotives may be allowed in at one-third the present rate of duty because Mr. White has found that there will be a shortage of box-cars and locomotives to move the Western grain crop. And so on, ad infinitum. What a lovely muddle the business of the country will be in

The Light-House Keeper.

DRAWING a small salary and living a narrow life in isolated quarters, the light-house keeper is the least of civil servants. Yet to-day he is the foot-ball of the petty politicians. He is being displaced to make room for a new appointee, a friend of the Conservative member.

What a spectacle! A Government of Big Men, pledged to Civil Service Reform through the utterances of their Leader, spending their time cutting off the heads of light-house keepers! What a disappointment to those of us who had hoped that the Borden Government would rise above such petty party patronage!

Is there no Joshua in Canada who will lead us out of this state of bondage into the promised land where business principles and common humanity will triumph over political greed?

by the end of the year—if Mr. White continues to announce weekly changes!

The Liberals cannot criticize, because they opposed the creation of a Tariff Commission which would have prevented such occurrences. The Liberal Senate voted down the Tariff Commission Act. The Conservative business men cannot object, because Mr. White is but expressing the decisions of a cabinet elected by themselves. There is nobody to object except the independent journalists and the citizens who are not known as partisans.

Penitentiary Reform.

ONE of the glories of the early nineteenth century was the work of prison reform, with the chief glory to John Howard. There is probably as great need of prison reform to-day as there was one hundred years ago. At any rate, it would be a great mistake to suppose that our present prisons and penitentiaries are the final word. Psychology and other mental sciences have worked with medical science to show us that the criminal mind is created by physical or mental weakness, hereditary or personal.

Some seventeen or eighteen years ago, the then Dominion Government decided to establish a penitentiary reformatory on a farm near Alexandria. To this new institution were to be sent all the "first offence" men for reformatory treatment. But when the change of government came, in 1896, the plan was abandoned and the property sold.

Our present penitentiaries are not reformatories, they are training schools for criminals. They are crude survivals of an ignorant past. They are up-to-date only in the quality of steel in the prison bars, and their sanitary arrangements. Most of them are managed by ex-politicians, whose chief business it is to draw their salaries and keep out

of trouble. I do not know of any penitentiary or prison in Canada which has an expert in criminology at its head.

Kingston penitentiary to-day keeps one half of its inmates breaking stone indoors. The theory is that every man shall be taught a trade. In practice, very few of the men learn anything except how to kill time breaking stones, a most soul-killing occupation. A man who has broken stone in Kingston for five years will be so hardened and dulled that he will never be able to get back his manhood. He is permanently added to the criminal classes.

The first thing to be done is to put trained experts at the head of these institutions; the second to separate the first offenders from the hardened criminals; and the third to put every man at work which will develop his creative faculties and his mental poise. This means taking these institutions entirely out of the hands of the patronage-mongers and place-seekers.

Terminal Elevators.

EVERY government should try to redeem its pre-election pledges, but no such pledge should cause any administration to do something which it, in the meantime, discovers to be unwise. Hon. Robert Rogers announces that the Government will implement its promise to build and operate terminal elevators at the head of Lake Superior. This shows a commendable desire to carry out a promise, but it does nothing more. It is not a fresh proof of Hon. Mr. Rogers' statesmanship, nor of the Government's anxiety to find out what is best for the West.

Last year twenty-five million bushels of wheat went to waste because there were not enough cars to transport the wheat to Fort William and Port Arthur. The West needs more cars and more railway tracks, rather than more terminal elevators. What will be the good of a storage elevator if there are no trains to carry wheat to it?

Again, the Government will build only one elevator, with a capacity of three million bushels. This is better than buying an existing elevator, but what will one storage elevator with three million capacity be worth in face of a shortage in storage capacity of fifteen, twenty or perhaps fifty millions? Ten elevators, not one, should have been the contract—if the policy was good.

But the policy is not the best. If a dozen cheaper storage elevators had been built at central points through the West, to which grain could be rushed quickly over the branch lines when the main lines were fully occupied, the real remedy would be found. At present a car loaded in middle Saskatchewan will carry out to Fort William only one load in two weeks. The same car could carry out three or four loads to a storage elevator at Saskatoon in the same time. Then these storage elevators at interior points could be emptied after the navigation season closes, and when the main line rush is over. Ten such cheap elevators would save twenty-five million bushels of wheat which might otherwise be destroyed.

The Final Haven of Rest.

A FEW weeks ago, the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, addressing a meeting in Toronto, told of a man who applied for a position on the Dominion Experimental Farm, urging his claim on the ground that he had a stiff leg and couldn't work. Far be it from me to rail at any man's misfortune, yet the case illustrates the attitude of many people toward the public service. It is looked upon as the final haven of rest. The broken-down and the unsuccessful wonder if it is not possible for them to get a small government job which will allow them to pass their old age in peace and comparative comfort. It is foolish, but it is also pathetic.

Under the Civil Service Commission, no man may be appointed to a government position unless he is under thirty-five and sound in mind and body. The only exceptions are important technical positions. Therefore only young men are now being admitted into the Inside Service. As for the Outside Service, the old rule obtains and grandfathers and grand-uncles are still getting jobs which should be filled by younger men.

The business of the country is too complex and too important to be dependent upon men who have spent the major portion of their lives in other callings. This is as true of the administration of a city and of a province as it is of the Dominion. All public services should be filled with men trained in their youth to perform intelligently and efficiently the duties of their office. The "haven of rest" idea must be eliminated.