

Aug. 31st, 1894.]

for all parties to join in fighting it than to cast about for arguments that it exists somewhere else." The readers of *THE WEEK* may judge whether it has ever failed to fight the evil as it exists in Dominion politics to the best of its ability. But if it is really the evil and not the party which we desire to fight, it strikes us that nothing is to be gained but much lost by shutting our eyes to indications of its existence somewhere else, even on a much smaller scale. We prefer to be in a position to carry on the fight all along the line. If the *Globe* means to deny that there are any such indications, we should like to ask it whether the statements in the following paragraph which appeared some time ago in the columns of the *Evening News*, are true, and, if so, what explanation can be given, consistent with the theory that the Mowat Government is wholly innocent of the crime of bribery by wholesale:

"It has been frequently shown that the colonization road expenditure of the Mowat Government exhibits a wonderful upward tendency in each year in which a Provincial election occurs. This same peculiarity is noticeable in the miscellaneous account. In 1879, when a general election was on, the expenditure under this latter head suddenly bounded up from \$79,000 to \$124,000; in 1883 the same cause led to a jump from \$66,000 to \$104,000; in 1887 (the election was held in December of 1886) there was a bound from \$86,000 to \$149,000; in 1890 the leap was from \$60,000 to \$152,000; and in 1893, in anticipation of the contest of this year apparently, the advance was from \$118,000 to \$179,000. In every year in which a general election has occurred there has been a most astonishing and suspicious jump in the miscellaneous expenditure of the Province, and in one case the increase amounted to no less than 150 per cent."

Now that we are on the subject, and it is a season of leisure in political journalism, we may as well add a word with reference to the patronage question. The *Globe* tacitly admits our statements with reference to the use of patronage for party purposes by the Mowat Government. At least it "does not deny that grave abuses may arise and have arisen" in connection with the use of patronage. It does not "contend that it is absolutely right in principle that a man should be appointed to an office largely because he is an active and influential Conservative, or Reformer, as the case may be." But it faintly apologizes for the system on the grounds that it exists in England, "whither we look for inspirations for good government;" that the "practice may be a necessary evil, like party government itself," and that it "does not, except in cases of gross abuse, involve bribery."

"The person who gets an office for political reasons has usually made his choice of his political party many years previously, and without any thought of reward. He has become an active politician from public spirit, from party spirit, from a desire for distinction among his fellows. Very likely, at some stage in his career, especially

in its later stages, the thought of office may occur to him, and may stimulate his party zeal. It is not a perfect system; nothing human is. But if it were possible to abolish it, it would be by no means certain that appointment solely for merit would take its place. For party services we might have substituted the far less manly and more detestable motive of personal sycophancy as a means of political advancement."

We do not think it necessary to discuss these propositions one by one. From internal evidence, we venture to say that the writer of them was not very well satisfied with them himself, and we are pretty sure that our readers will not be satisfied with them. The third sentence, in particular, involves a most damaging suggestion of the corrupting influence of the system under which a politician's principles and motives are liable to deterioration as he grows older. To argue for the retention of a demonstrably bad system because it is possible to change it for a worse, is a species of logic that leads to strange conclusions. England has long since, by her civil service system, taken a large amount of patronage out of the political sphere. Will not the *Globe* better promote the cause of reform by urging us, while we emulate what is good, to shun what is bad in her methods, and by joining with *THE WEEK* in advocating the minimizing, if not the complete elimination, of the twin evils of wholesale bribery by appropriations and individual bribery by the abuse of patronage, from Dominion and Provincial politics, by substituting non-partisan boards or commissions to control, or at least recommend, all appropriations of public moneys and as far as possible, all appointments to public offices?

CANADIAN POLITICAL ISSUES.

The speeches of Mr. Laurier and his lieutenants during the Western tour which he is now making may be fairly taken as indicating the political issues which will be made prominent in the next general election, so far as the party in opposition has it in its power to determine those issues. The reforms demanded, as will be seen by careful reading of these speeches, are, in effect, three: tariff for revenue, purity, and economy in administration. Negatively, expressed, they demand the elimination of protectionism from the tariff, of corruption from the administration, and of extravagance from the Estimates. It is true that the declaration of principles adopted at the Liberal Conference seemed much more extensive than this. The *Globe*, also, the other day laid down a liberal platform of no less than sixteen planks, but all these, with the exception of reform of the Law Courts, will be found to be really included under one or the other of the above heads.

Unfortunately for the carrying out of the Liberal programme, it is not given to the Opposition to choose its own issues in a contest of this kind. One of the most effective me-

thods of the late Sir John A. Macdonald was his skilful changing of the issues upon which his opponents wished to conduct a contest and his substitution of others of his own choosing. Whether his successor in office possesses the same readiness of resource remains to be proved. Already, however, the newspapers supporting his Government and supposed to know its views, are evidently attempting to divert attention from the main points in Mr. Laurier's addresses, and to raise other issues on such questions as imperialism, patriotism, etc. The evident desire of the friends of a protective tariff to transfer the contest to other ground is significant. It favours the impression gained from other sources that, were protection *versus* revenue-tariff the sole question before the electors, we should soon see the last of the present high tariff in Canada. Already, however, Mr. Laurier's renewed declarations in favour of reciprocity in trade with the United States are being seized upon and made the occasion for raising anew the cry of disloyalty to the Mother Country. This is a cry to which a very large and influential section of the people of Canada are always ready to respond. The fact is a wonderful tribute to the success of Great Britain as a colonizing nation. In sooth, if we may say so without danger of bringing our own loyalty under suspicion, we doubt whether the charge of disloyalty to Canada herself, if a distinction may be made between the two phases of loyalty, would produce half as much effect with a large class of citizens as that of disloyalty to the Mother Country.

And yet it would not be very difficult to show that intelligent loyalty to our own country, and wise efforts to promote its growth and strength are the very best and most effective means by which the interests of the Mother Country can be promoted in Canada. Whatever promotes the well-being, the content, the population and wealth of our own country, enables us most effectively to increase our trade with the Mother Country, to aid her in protecting our freedom in case of trouble, and to give her in return substantial help in her own time of need, should such ever arise. Be that as it may, however, it is evident—and this is our point just now—that nothing will so effectually enable the advocates of protection to discount in advance the Liberal policy of tariff for revenue, looking to ultimate free-trade, as the use of expressions by its leaders which the people can be made to believe mean or imply readiness to discriminate in trade against the Mother Country. In vain is it for the *Globe* and other Opposition journals to point out that a few British manufacturers are not the British nation, and that the interests of the latter are not necessarily identical with those of the former.

It would greatly increase the interest and the educative power of these discussions of public questions if the issues could be more squarely and frankly joined. When Mr. Laurier, for instance, asserts openly that the administration of affairs under the direction of the present Government, and at the present time, is more corrupt than it has been at any previous period, and when he points to numerous transactions in which the interests of the country have been betrayed and its coffers robbed of hundreds of thousands of dollars, even during the present Parliament, why should not the charge be fairly met, and if possible refuted? This might be done in one of two ways, either by direct denial of the alleged facts, or by a frank admission of negligence on