

which will at best embody the views of only a majority. Not so, the Hamilton club. They have passed resolutions concerning technical education and Civil Service reform which are quite decided in their sentiment.

There is little doubt that promiscuous resolutions are in the class with votes of thanks and letters of condolence. Yet, after all, we continue to say, "How d'ye do!" and "Good morning" with the same time-worn lackadaisical tone that people have used through several generations. There are a certain number of conventionalities which have become stereotyped, but which we are not yet prepared to abolish. The resolutions passed by political associations at their annual meetings expressing confidence "in our beloved Leader" and in "the party platform" as laid down at Halifax or Sorel are conventionalities to some extent but they indicate the presence or absence of party discipline.

The truth is that there are useful resolutions and useless resolutions. The Canadian club which is in earnest and passes a resolution in support of a movement which it desires to support cannot be criticised. The club which gets so large that it cannot pass a resolution on any subject without offending some of its members and causing internal dissensions is in the last stages of a useful career. The admirably worded and clear-cut resolution of the Hamilton Canadian Club, backing up Judge Cassels' suggestions regarding awakening the public conscience, abolishing the patronage system and the appointment of independent purchasing boards, is a desirable piece of work. The voice of the independent and thinking public should be heard. In so far as the Canadian clubs represent that portion of the community, they should speak for them in no uncertain terms. To leave all the speech and resolution making to party organisations would be to make the public press the only avenue for public criticism. That would be regrettable.



A NATIONAL LITERATURE

THE subject of a national literature appears to distress the Canadian public in an intermittent fashion. Mr. Arnold Haultain, in a recent address on the matter of letters, declared that the essence of literature, as distinguished from journalistic effort, is spontaneity. Some of the wise-acres who are urging "young writers" to take Canadian themes and enlarge thereupon are in danger of forgetting "the first fine careless rapture" which inspires the work of the true artist. Many of these advisers appear to regard literature as if it were a mammoth cheese or a Niagara peach orchard. Whatever may be the mode of production of best sellers, a good book is not "turned out" as if it were a cheap rocking-chair or a bargain-day sofa-cushion. A great Canadian novel is not to be produced by gazing at the Rocky Mountains, tobogganing down the slide at Montreal or watching the tides of the Bay of Fundy. Yet there are would-be counsellors of the aspiring writer or artist who keep urging upon his consideration the bigness of our prairies, the altitude of our mountains, the goldenness of our wheat and the freshness of our lakes, as if all these qualities were to be mixed in judicious quantities in order to come out a national literature.

Such is not the way of the Muses. The poet is not a self-conscious patriot, the novelist feels no "mission" to exploit the crops or the climate of the land in which he was born. The writer of imagination is not an immigration agent, although the pamphlets produced by the latter are not entirely a matter of unadorned fact. Let us leave our poets and song-writers in peace and cease vexing them with ill-advised directions about the road which leads to literature. The most of us go about our buying and selling and reading of the daily news; but, suddenly, some morning, there comes a song or a story which illuminates the common world and shows us a divine light beyond the mists of the common task, and even the dullest of us knows that it has come from a soul which has neither planned nor manufactured the product. Literature, like love, comes unsought, unsent.



AN OPPOSITION LEADER

THERE is a deal of talk about the leadership of the Reform party in the Province of Ontario. The successfulness of success is nowhere more spectacularly shown than in the domain of politics. Since that stormy day in January, 1905, when Mr. (now Sir) James Pliny Whitney made a snowy sweep of the province, which had once put its trust in Oliver Mowat, the leadership of the Reform party in Ontario has not been regarded with a wistful eye. Mr. Ross could

hardly abide in the opposition shades. He was too accustomed to the right hand of the Speaker to linger, for more than a session or so, on the dubious left. A desire for repose and the sensation of being numbered with the successful led to his entrance into the Dominion Senate, where he surveys the Ontario tumult from afar.

Hon. A. G. MacKay is a leader of more than average forensic ability and of considerable magnetism. His defeat last June was by no means a personal humiliation, for Sir James Whitney's surprisingly large majority was doubtless more an evidence of the desire of the independents in the Province "to give the new premier a show" than a conviction of the Opposition's unworthiness. It is now rumoured persistently that Rev. D. C. Hossack, a gentleman who has shone both in legal and ecclesiastical circles, is to assume the leadership of the Reform party. Mr. Hossack, it will be remembered, was opposed to the Ross regime but "also ran" in the Liberal cause last June. It is stated that Mr. Hossack will have a broad temperance plank in his platform and that "a dry Ontario" will be the battle-cry of the next provincial contest. With Rev. J. A. Macdonald as managing editor of the *Globe* and the Reverend Donald as leader of the Ontario forces, the kirk of Scotland would be well represented—with no Robbie Burns to write campaign literature.



FISCAL REFORM IN BRITAIN

CANADIANS must view with increasing interest the coming campaign in Great Britain with regard to Fiscal Reform. The *London Outlook*, a Unionist tariff-reform weekly (in other words, Conservative) begins its latest editorial on the subject with these confident assertions:

"The fight for fiscal reform is now as good as won. Looking back over the last five and a half years one may well be surprised at the rapid and continuous progress of the movement. . . . Surely no other proof is needed that it has had the impelling forces of the *Zeitgeist* behind it, and that nothing can resist its ultimate triumph. Indeed, the final consummation is only a matter of time."

The *Outlook* expects that the General Election will come within two years, and then the new tariff policy will be put into legislation. In the thirteen by-elections, the Unionist party has shown a gain of 30,000 votes. Just why all these voters can be classed as converts to Tariff Reform is not fully explained. It does go on to say that "The voice of the Unionist Free-trader is now scarcely heard in the land" and explains that the Unionist party is fairly well united on this question. In other words, both the Conservatives and the Liberal-Unionists are convinced that this is the proper fiscal move.

Just what fiscal reforms means is not fully explained, because it is not yet decided. There is, however, to be a duty on wheat, meat and wood, with a preference to colonial goods, of this character. Timber is the most recent addition to this list. It is further hinted that the \$750,000,000 of foreign goods annually sold in Great Britain will have to pay some measure of tribute.

On another page of the same issue of the *Outlook*, a correspondent retails some of the stock arguments. In the nine-year period 1898-07, the exports to the five principal colonies increased 42 per cent. over the previous nine-year period, while the increase to Britain's five largest foreign customers was only 10 per cent. These five colonies take seven times as much per head, as the five foreign customers. Canada, with a thirteenth of the population, takes half as much of British exports as the United States. The colonies are growing and they are Britain's best customers, therefore cultivate the colonies.

This correspondent also touches on the sentimental and political side. The British people, who have no room to expand much beyond the 43,000,000 population now living in the three islands, cannot maintain their supremacy without the aid of the colonies. "We cannot bear the burden and fight the battle of the Empire alone." Already the United States has 85,000,000, Russia 150,000,000 and Germany 61,000,000 people. "Only therefore by uniting thoroughly with our colonies can we hope to maintain our proud pre-eminence among the nations."

While these statements by the *Outlook* and these arguments by its correspondent may or may not be convincing it behooves Canadians to watch closely the political events of Great Britain during the next year or two. The Fiscal Reformers are confident that preferential trade is in sight, and if it should happen to come Canada must be ready to accommodate herself to the new situation. It is not for the colonies to advise the Mother Country as to what is best in her own interest, but it is certainly wise to be prepared to meet an increased demand for colonial products in the British market if that increased demand should arise.