

"Article 12. That if any member shall at any monthly meeting, or in Club hours, or at the time of business, presume to blaspheme the name of Almighty God by cursing or swearing, for every such offence he shall pay for the first the sum of sixpence, for the second one shilling, and sixpence is to be added at every time the offence may be repeated, for the use of the Box."

Prohibitory enactments were not popular in those days of liberty. Privileges you might have, but you must pay for them. You were not forbidden to swear, but merely warned that if you desired to enjoy that privilege you must not come to the meeting without an ample supply of shillings and sixpences in your pocket.

The quaintness of some of the original articles of agreement will be found entertaining. But, to look at the more serious side, the members of this North British Society who assemble to-day can look back upon a record of one hundred and fifty years of splendid service for the upbuilding of the community in which they and their forbears have lived. Sometimes questions are raised as to the usefulness of societies of this character. Sometimes it is argued that they perpetuate old world sectional feelings, which are at variance with the development of our own national life. Whatever may be the case elsewhere, the history of the North British and its sister Halifax Societies, the Charitable Irish, and the St. George's, proves that they tend to keep alive and to honor the virtues rather than the prejudices of the mother lands, and to apply them to the promotion of good citizenship in our own country. In no city in the Dominion do these national societies play a larger part in the life of the community than in Halifax. In no city is there a larger measure of goodwill and co-operation among all classes and creeds. The friendly relations between these organizations were happily illustrated on one occasion when, a new Governor General being about to land at Halifax, the Scottish, Irish and English Societies united in welcoming him at a banquet that is well remembered. In all the good work for charity and good citizenship, the senior association, the North British, has taken a foremost part. A society of this character, celebrating its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, is of more than local interest. The men of Old Scotia, making their home in the capital of Nova Scotia, and the sons of the Scots of former days, will receive widespread congratulations on the splendid record of their national society, and good wishes for even greater usefulness in the years to come.

The Speakership

MR. Rhodes, the member for Cumberland, was unanimously re-elected Speaker of the House of Commons at the opening of the new Parliament, after receiving commendation of his previous service in the chair from both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. It is assumed by some of our contemporaries that this mark of respect for Mr. Rhodes indicates the adoption of the British practice of treating the Speaker as practically a permanent official. This, however, may be a too hasty conclusion.

The suggestion that the Speakership be so regarded in Canada undoubtedly springs from a good purpose. There are usually, however, difficulties in the way that will crop up again. The understandings that have existed respecting the alternate holding of the Speakerships

of both House and Senate by representatives of English and French, Protestant and Roman Catholic, are an obstacle, the existence of which we may regret, but which are not easily overcome. Beyond this, however, there is a difference between the conditions in London and Ottawa that has not received the attention that it requires. In England it has been found easy enough to arrange that the Speaker of the Commons shall be re-elected in his constituency without opposition. In Canada that situation has not been reached. It could not be reached without an agreement between both the political parties, and indeed one may well doubt whether the electors of any of our constituencies could be relied on to honor such an agreement, if one were made by party leaders. There is, moreover, an essential element in the British practice which is quite lacking in Canada. It is quite understood in England that the Speaker of the House of Commons, after a period of service in the chair, retires, and is given a peerage. The British House of Lords, being an elastic body, this understanding can at any time be carried out. One member more or less in the Lords makes no difference in the general situation. We have no such convenient arrangement here. True, we have the Senate, which may be called our House of Lords. But the Senate is not an elastic body. On the contrary, it is a body held within numerous rigid lines. There is a fixed number of Senators for each Province. One must wait for a vacancy before the Speaker can be appointed to the Senate, and when a vacancy does occur it may not be in the Province of which the Speaker is a representative. For the present, it is a convenient arrangement that the Speakers of both Senate and House in the last Parliament, both well qualified members, are again to occupy the chairs. But for the reasons we have stated, it will not be wise to assume that the English practice is being adopted.

Unwise Secrecy

A GOOD deal of nonsense is talked in the present day about the evils of what is called "secret diplomacy." There is much in the diplomatic field, indeed, much in most of the affairs of life, that is all the better for not being proclaimed from the housetops. Secrecy, therefore, has its proper place. But undoubtedly there are times and occasions when publicity makes for the public good, and secrecy breeds doubt and suspicion. It seems to be a pity that the delegation from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association which went to Ottawa to make representations to the Premier, arranged that the interview should be a secret one. The belief that the manufacturers are always endeavoring to secretly exercise an undue influence in tariff affairs, is one of the things that in times past have aroused much hostility among the Western farmers. The fact that the representatives of the Association had the interview with the Premier a few days ago became well known, and in the absence of such publicity as the press gives when it is allowed to be present, there have arisen many reports of the Association's requests which, whether they are correct or not, are likely to revive the activity of the interests not usually in sympathy with the Association's views.

Difference of opinion, conflict of interest, on the tariff question is inevitable. But an open and frank discussion of these differences is much more likely to lead to agree-

ment than the holding of secret conferences, the nature of which may very easily be misunderstood. The reports that are being published concerning the recent interview will hardly fail to stir up hostility that may be quite unwarranted by what actually occurred.

Daylight Saving

THE Daylight Saving Bill in the United States has been signed by the President. A similar measure for Canada is to be taken up in earnest by the Government and pushed through. Public opinion generally is unquestionably favorable to the measure. The only very serious objection raised has come from the farmers' societies of Nova Scotia, who claim that in the very early morning hours the climatic conditions of the Maritime Provinces are not favorable for farm work. It is said that in the early morning, owing to the atmospheric conditions prevailing, the land cannot be ploughed with facility, the harrows gum up with sodden earth, and it is almost impossible to work to advantage until the sun is well up. They contend that hay in cock and grain in stack cannot be spread out to dry in the early hours of the morning, and this will become necessary if the hands of the clock are set forward another hour. No doubt there is some foundation for this, or the farmers would not raise the objection. But the farmer can in most cases suit the time of his work to his own convenience, without embarrassing others. No matter what the clock may say, he can begin his work when he is ready for it. In the case of many other classes, however, especially in the cities and towns, something like uniformity of working hours is necessary because there is need of co-operation between the various classes. If the hands of the clock be set forward an hour the farmer will have to remember this when he goes to the market town. But so far as his own work at home is concerned, he will be free to rest as he now does, and begin work nominally at a different hour, though in reality at the same time as at present. Daylight saving will be a great benefit to many, and will do no harm to the farmer.

Woman Suffrage

THE great change that has come over public opinion in all matters relating to women's participation in public affairs is marked by the proceedings in our House of Commons on Friday. The Prime Minister introduced a bill to grant to women generally the right to vote at Parliamentary elections. Three or four years ago such a measure would have evoked a storm of opposition. Indeed, it is probable that no combination of government could then have been formed to assume the responsibility of giving votes to women. On Friday not only did the measure come forward as a part of a Cabinet programme, but it was accepted by the House without division. The only word of doubt as to its wisdom came from one of the Quebec members. There has been but little demand for the vote from women in this Province. Here, more perhaps than in other parts of Canada, the domestic side of women's work is emphasized. Nevertheless the Quebec women may learn to value and exercise the franchise.

Women suffrage ought to make for the betterment of politics. Whether it will make for the betterment of women is a question on which there is doubt in many minds.