

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

The National Calamity.

LAST week a number of gentlemen met at Ottawa to discuss what Dr. Fernow called "The National Calamity." There are all sorts of national calamities of course. There are Liberals who believe that the Borden Government is a national calamity. Sir James Whitney thinks any one who has a mind of his own (other than Sir James and Sir William Ralph) is a national calamity. Hon. Adam Beck considers a privately owned water-power or a hydro-electric generating machine is a national calamity. The editor of the *Toronto Evening Telegram* thinks it is a national calamity that there is no other sane or sensible editor in Canada. Mr. Henri Bourassa, Senator Belcourt, and a few others consider that the existence of the people who use the English tongue is more or less of a calamity. And so one might run through the list.

But Dr. Fernow's national calamity is the annual fire waste of twenty-five million dollars' worth of timber. These gentlemen who, with him, discussed the question, are more nearly right in their estimate of what is a national calamity than most of the others. Canada, federally and provincially, spends only \$350,000 a year trying to prevent that twenty-five million waste, and spends most of it badly. Dr. Fernow calls it "continual neglect and incompetency," and refers to "their governments" supine and self-destructive incompetency and mismanagement."

But why should I worry myself about the nation's forests? If that twenty-five millions was saved every year for five years, what portion of it would come to me? Would it increase my salary, lower the price of the coal, potatoes, butter and eggs which I buy for the use of my family? These are questions to which Dr. Fernow should give simple answers which we, the ignorant public, could grasp and understand. His appeals are made to governments, to party politicians and vote-manipulators who are unconcerned with anything but the immediate present. Governments follow, and not lead, public opinion. Let Dr. Fernow and his associates appeal directly to the people and they will get results. Rouse the public and the governments will do something; and not otherwise.

* * *

The Victory of Belfast.

MR. CHURCHILL seems to have won a victory at Belfast. Not a great victory, perhaps, but one worthy of notice. Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right, but the fight will be that of a reasonable minority. There will be arguments but no bullets.

Home Rule for Ireland is nearer being a reality to-day than at any time during the past quarter century. If the proposed Bill is reasonable and contains ample safeguards for the Protestant religion and the rights of minorities, it will undoubtedly pass the British House of Commons. What the House of Lords will do is more doubtful, but the Peers are not so interested as they once were. Moreover, they have discovered in the two recent general elections that the people do not follow them as faithfully as they did in Gladstone's day.

The Roman Catholic majority in Ireland would have no more reason to repress the Protestant minority than the Protestant majority in Canada has for oppressing the Catholic minority. Home Rule would inaugurate an era of compromise and local patriotism which, if not wholly satisfactory, would probably mean the regeneration of Ireland. Further, the effect on the British Parliament and on Anglo-Saxon unity and good-will would be supremely beneficial.

* * *

Tottering Great Britain.

WHEN Dr. Macdonald, editor of that ancient and honourable daily paper, the *Toronto Globe*, returned from a visit to England two or three years ago, he told us all about British misery and British decadence. In his most high-sounding rhetoric, he phrased a prophecy of the early downfall of that great island nation. This modern Jeremiah made us all shudder and shiver. Yet Great Britain still exists and seems more prosperous than ever.

Indeed, ever since the preacher-publisher-peace-

maker returned from Great Britain, prosperity seems to have settled permanently upon the Ancient Realm. In 1909 business was good; in 1910 it was better; in 1911 it was great. The total foreign trade of Great Britain in 1911 was one hundred and twenty-five million dollars greater than in 1910. Exports of British goods increased 5½ per cent., and almost the whole of the increase was in manufactured articles. The increased exports of cottons alone totalled seventy millions of dollars in value. The imports increased 33 per cent., showing that the people of the country have the money to buy what they want. They are not buying on credit, like Canada and other new countries are. They pay spot cash.

Any country whose exports have grown steadily from \$1,400,000,000 in 1901 to \$2,270,000,000 in 1911 cannot be in a very bad way. While the professional croakers discuss tariff reform, Lloyd-Georgian



Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill (centre) whose speeches at Belfast and Glasgow have attracted much attention. On the left Lord Grey; on the right Lord Crewe.

confiscation and taxation, the German scare and the degeneracy of the modern citizen, the country goes right on getting greater and wealthier.

In all this, there is more than one big lesson for the Canadian people.

* * *

The Quality of Our Sabbath.

FOR many years Canada has been famous for its quiet Sabbaths. Any attempt to change the nature of these rest-days has been resisted on all sides. The Lord's Day Alliance and similar bodies have been active in trying to secure one rest day each week for all classes—policemen, firemen, trainmen, street-railway men and so on. But over and above all the good sense of the Canadian people made them avoid the "Continental" or "American" Sunday.

It would seem, however, that in Toronto the Lord's Day Alliance has foolishly placed itself in a position where it has lost the support of many people who previously upheld it. This was done when it made a move to close the civic toboggan slides on Sunday. By a vote of 17 to 8, the City Council has upheld the necessary by-law, although the final vote is not yet taken. The civic slides will be closed in a week or ten days.

As Mayor Geary pointed out, the Lord's Day Alliance has been working hard and well in order that the working-man should have his Sundays free. Now it contradicts itself and urges, with the support of a majority of the aldermen, that the workingman shall not indulge in certain popular recreations on that day during the winter. Whether it will go farther and move for the closing of the

parks during the summer remains to be seen. It ought at least to try to stop the ferry-boats running on the Bay.

In the smaller towns, the young people have only to walk a short distance for their sleigh-riding, tobogganing and ski-ing. Hence there is no need for indulgence in these sports on Sunday. In Toronto, many working people must spend an hour riding in a street-car and walking before they come to a place where tobogganing may be indulged in. Hence Sunday is the only day available for many of them and a different rule should obtain. Moreover, the population is large, the slides few in number, and the opportunities limited. Theoretically the Lord's Day Alliance are right; practically they are injudicious, if not absolutely wrong.

* * *

Winnipeg Officials Resign.

BOTH public and municipal ownership in Manitoba are having their troubles. The government elevators are not paying, and the ministers complain that the farmers prefer to take their grain to the private elevators. The government telephone commissioners have been forced to "revise" their rates, and submit to a special investigation. Now Winnipeg's municipal power plant is in trouble; General Manager Rossman and five of his assistants have resigned because of aldermanic interference. In Toronto, the municipal power and lighting plant is managed by a commission; in Winnipeg it is directly under the control of the council.

Neither public nor municipal ownership is prejudiced by these revelations. The principles are as sound as ever they were. The lesson is simply that the results depend upon the ability of the management. One private business succeeds, another fails. The difference is the superiority of management. So with public undertakings.

There is no royal road to success, and municipalities and governments discover this just as do mechanics, business men, financiers, statesmen and monarchs. If the publicly elected persons in Manitoba and Winnipeg think they are clever enough to run public enterprises on a basis of political patronage, they will speedily discover their error.

* * *

British Columbia's Attractions.

OUR most westerly province seems to have great attractions for the people of both Europe and Asia. The Japs confine themselves almost exclusively to British Columbia and have crowded the whites out of the salmon-fishing business. The Chinese are there by the tens of thousands. The Hindus are there and no where else. Now the Doukhobors are moving there. Just what is going to happen when this motley collection of people get properly going in the raising of new generations, it is hard to say.

As for the Douks—the latest to take a fancy to the balmy climate and fertile valleys of the Rocky Mountain province—Saskatchewan seems to be glad to see them go. There are only 2,000 of them left now in Saskatchewan and these will probably soon join their brethren and sisters in British Columbia. It is said the Dominion Government is willing to take over their farms and make them fair compensation for the improvements which they have made. But on one condition—they must all go. Not 1,000, nor 1,500, nor even 1,999—but the whole colony. This may or may not be complimentary to British Columbia.

One thing is to be said for the people of the Pacific Coast province—they manage fairly well in keeping order and peace in their household and in maintaining their industrial and commercial development at concert pitch.

* * *

Toronto's New Census.

TORONTO took a police census of her citizens on January 21st and found that 425,407 people slept that night within the city limits. This is 50,740 people more than the Dominion Government census takers found in June last. The number of visitors sleeping in the city that night would not be much larger than the number of Torontonians absent for business reasons. The student population would possibly be larger than in June. But allowing 10,000 for visitors and students, the figures show that the population is 40,000 larger than the census showed it to be. Allowing 20,000 for growth, which is undoubtedly present, the census takers were only about 20,000 astray.

This error, if error it be, amounts to 5.3 per cent. The same percentage throughout the Dominion would make the nation's population nearly 400,000 more than the published figures. But after all four hundred thousand more or less doesn't matter seeing that we are all happy and prosperous.