

Editorials

UNION GOVERNMENT

Half a loaf being better than no loaf, the professional and business men of Canada will welcome Premier Borden's Union Government which is just emerging from the political oven. We do not mean to insinuate that the Union Government is half baked; to the contrary, it is undoubtedly a well-mixed, nicely risen and richly browned political effort. Both sides of the House, apparently, are well represented; the currants, or plums, or whatever flavors the staff of political life, seem to be well distributed.

But the engineers, at least, are weary of the diet. They would prefer a different style of loaf—a whole-wheat bread, we might say, with the "bark" left on the component grains, not polished by years of rubbing against red tape, nor whitened by the acid atmosphere of Ottawa. They would prefer a government of business men, a national government of efficiency, with a cabinet selected purely for their fitness for the work in hand, the whole being freed entirely from the taint of party politics.

In war times, how can we afford to play at government? Why should Dr. Somebody—a medico by profession, let us assume—be transferred from the Customs Department, concerning which he probably never knew very much, to—let us say—the Department of Railways & Canals, of which he knows less than nothing, in order to permit Sir Lawyer, a distinguished Liberal, to have a seat in the government as Minister of Customs? The Customs Department should now be managed by the most expert tariff man in the country; the Department of Railways & Canals by the ablest transportation expert available; the Trade Department by an outstanding man of practical commercial knowledge; and so forth, all chosen for their ability,—not for their politics or for the voting precinct in which they reside. Such a government could be under the direction of Sir Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier or any other Prime Minister; it wouldn't matter much about that, because a government thus composed wouldn't be a one-man government and the Prime Minister would be pretty much of a figurehead anyway.

This may be Utopian; but, paradoxically, it is the only eminently practical and sensible plan, and nothing short of it will satisfy the business interests of this country, if the war continues. England is coming to it rapidly and so will Canada.

The Public Works Ministry is the only appointment yet made in the new government in which *The Canadian Engineer* is much interested as an engineering paper. Public works are largely engineering works, and that appointment, to fit in with our Utopian scheme, should go to some engineer of national standing. Mr. Ballantyne is not an engineer. However, he is a most capable executive and a fine type of modern business man, and Sir Robert could have chosen far less wisely.

Mr. Ballantyne will no doubt make one of the best public works ministers Canada has had in a long time. He has a big reputation for honesty, capacity for work, initiative and enterprise. It is refreshing to see a man of his type selected for the public works office. Had he been selected purely for his ability to run that department,

however, and without any consideration for his previous political affiliations or place of residence, his appointment would have been even more warmly welcomed. But despite the politics of the appointment, *The Canadian Engineer* congratulates Hon. C. C. Ballantyne upon his new office, which he will fill with credit, and congratulates Sir Robert Borden upon having been able to induce Mr. Ballantyne to accept the job.

TORONTO'S STREETS NOT YET CLEANED

The strike of the street cleaners and garbage collectors in Toronto still continues, and there is apparently a deadlock between the strikers and the aldermen. The strikers want a board of conciliation to settle their grievances, and the aldermen have agreed to that, but the men most unreasonably demand that Commissioner Wilson be removed before the Board meets. That is equivalent to demanding that Mr. Wilson be sentenced before his trial, so to speak. It is not British fair play. There is no reason why Mr. Wilson should not administer his department until he is proven unworthy of office, and the sort of piffle that the men have brought up about him proves nothing. Up to a few days ago, the only charge made by the men was that Mr. Wilson had insulted the flag by removing it from a manure wagon. Nobody took that charge seriously—not even the men themselves. The public waited patiently for the men to come out into the open with definite grievances. They have not done so, and the Toronto public are now convinced that they have no real grievances, but merely a grouch because the Commissioner has been requiring them to work steadily and politely. This grouch has no doubt been aided and abetted by a few interfering political bosses.

The strikers having proven obdurate, the city must get along without them. To begin with, the Board of Control should wash their hands of the whole matter if the men cannot submit proof of any real grievances, and

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