

## POLITICAL TOPICS.

### OUR POSITION.

IN treating political questions the BLUENOSE has no desire to appear as a partisan. To discuss public questions it is not really necessary to espouse the cause of a particular party. There is the position of the ardent party man, but there is also the position of the onlooker, who sees objections to the methods of political parties and possibly disagrees at times with all of them on questions of policy. There are two great parties in Canada, each in the main, it must be assumed, wedded to certain principles and striving for the fulfilment of certain ideals. If those to whom the verdict of the electors gives the reins of government and the emoluments of office fail to carry into effect the principles for which the party fought, there is a change of government; for, more potent than the wiles of the politician is the voice of the people. So far as the BLUENOSE may discuss public questions it will be from the standpoint of a journal that desires to see the political affairs of Canada conducted wisely and well, by men who regard the welfare of their country as paramount to any personal victory or the triumph of any party. The ideal is not likely to be realized because the BLUENOSE has entered the field, but it is well to have a lofty ideal; and in the heat of political warfare there is something to be said in favor of the attitude which is not disturbed by the flash of polemic swords or the thunder of vocal artillery.

### A WORD OF CRITICISM.

Certain esteemed contemporaries of the BLUENOSE are engaged in the work of upholding with great vigor the views of the political parties to which they respectively give their adherence and support. There are so many of them, in fact, that it is with some degree of timidity this journal ventures to offer a criticism. At present they are extremely active, since an election is believed to be near at hand. At the risk of giving offence the BLUENOSE begs to suggest that a little more argument and a little less vituperation would be acceptable to the readers of most of the party papers. If the leaders of the government and the leaders of the opposition are as bad as they are painted in some of the organs of rival parties, the Canadian penitentiaries are being cheated out of their rights. Certain gentlemen who fill a large space in the public eye, and who have wielded a powerful influence in Canadian public life for many years, are held up to view by partisan newspapers as

the personification of all that is dangerous to the welfare of the country. If the half were true that is insinuated or openly affirmed, we could not but despair of the future of Canada. The fighting instinct is so strong in human nature that most of us like to see a sturdy battle, but when the rules of fair competition are violated there is good ground for protest. One does not find in English newspapers anything to compare with the political articles which appear in so many Canadian papers. The influence of American rather than British journalism is apparent. One is sometimes inclined to believe that Canadian editors are aiming to surpass their United States brethren in the violence with which they make personal attacks upon those whose political views differ from their own. There is a form of personal attack which is perfectly legitimate. It has facts behind it, and the facts are stated. To this there can be no objection. It is the fulfilment of a public duty. But there is a species of criticism or open attack, which has no justification, because it simply deals in generalities, offers no evidence that would be accepted by any sane person, and is apparently made without any other purpose than to discredit an opponent and gain a political advantage without regard to the verities or the reputation of the journal itself. Anyone who reads the papers knows that there is too great an indulgence in this species of controversy. It is true, and "pity 'tis true."

### THE IMPERIAL IDEA.

So much has been said and written about the new relations between Great Britain and her Colonies arising out of the South African war, that it is difficult to add anything fresh to the discussion. The subject, however, is not one that is at all likely to become hackneyed or devoid of interest for the citizens of the Empire. The war now drawing to a close has marked an epoch in the history of imperial development. The mother country and the colonies have been drawn closer to each other, and have realized as never before their community of interests. Moreover, that sense of mutual pride, which is a special product of mutual and successful effort in a time of great danger, and which gives a notable impulse to national, or in this case the imperial spirit, has been aroused in a striking manner, and is a further bond of union. So far as Canada is concerned, the gallantry of her sons in the field, and the flattering testimony of Lord Roberts to their effi-

ciency, has warmed the hearts of all our people, and linked us closer with the cause of British justice and supremacy which they have so bravely upheld. The "Little Englander" has received his quietus.

### THE COMING CAMPAIGN.

The elections shortly to occur in Canada will be stubbornly contested. As is always the case, both sides make extravagant claims, and each professes to be assured of victory. The appearance of the Hon. Hugh John Macdonald in the fighting line of the liberal conservatives lends an additional interest to the campaign in the West, where he will try conclusions with the Hon. Clifford Sifton. Each has the prestige of former success, that of Mr. Macdonald being the more recent, and each has the reputation of a shrewd and resourceful politician. In Quebec the Hon. Mr. Tarte looms up as a man of great resource and well established fighting qualities, while the liberal-conservatives appear to repose no small degree of confidence in the abilities of Messrs. Bergeron, Monk and others of the newer generation of French-Canadian politicians. In the Maritime Provinces, a campaign that finds Hon. Mr. Fielding, Sir Louis Davies and Hon. Mr. Blair on the one side, and Sir Charles Tupper, Hon. Mr. Foster, Senator Ferguson and other well known campaigners on the other, is not likely to be found lacking in vigor.

The issues of the campaign are fairly well defined. The government claims to have benefited Canada by the preferential tariff; to have reduced the burden of taxation; to have given the country an honest and economical administration of its affairs; to have developed trade, especially with the mother country; to have wisely expended large sums in improving the means of intercommunication by railway and canal; and to have enlarged and improved the facilities for handling Canadian trade through Canadian channels. The opposition contend that the government has not kept its pledges with respect to the tariff, the public expenditure or the public debt; that it has substituted a one-sided preferential tariff for one that would have secured for Canadian produce a preference in the British market; that it did not offer a contingent for service in South Africa until forced by public opinion to do so; that the administration of affairs has been marked by corrupt acts; that public contractors have greatly profited by the friendship of ministers; and, that in general, the administration has been marked by insincerity, incompetency and fraud.

These are the main issues. We shall find them discussed on the platform and in the press, with all the ingenuity of trained and artful debaters. It is for the individual elector to sift the evidence with as much of calmness as may exist in the heat of a Canadian election, and vote as his judgment dictates.