



REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS

READING the Montreal papers every day reminds one that there is always one topic which is alive in that city—municipal reform. Was there ever a time when Montreal was not being reformed? Haven't

THE ENDLESS HUMAN TASK

dozens of men won reputations in this great undertaking? And yet, ex-Mayor Laporte, Editor Brierley and a number of others are still hard at it. They are now trying to solve the problem of separating the legislature from the executive functions and the fixing of responsibility. This is a problem which has to be faced by municipal reformers everywhere.

It seems curious how constantly that word "reform" comes up in our conversation. Somebody or something is continually being reformed. This is the endless human task, the one which will last so long as the world and the race lie under the curse of Adam. As soon as one evil is eradicated, two new ones spring up to take its place. While the new ones are being attended to, some wicked individual comes along and replants the one that had been torn up by the roots.

The history of young Canada, little more than a century in length, is full of proof that this task is endless. Make a study of any period, and you will discover a band of reformers with a definite object and some measure of success. The cry for representative government was followed by that for responsible government, to be followed again by those for the separation of church and state, for representation by population, for federation, for a national policy, for religious equality and the score of less noted or more local reforms. It would seem as if this continuous seeking for reform is necessary to municipal and national development. When this ambition to improve fails, municipal and national progress will cease.

JUDGE KILLAM is a wonder, and the results of his work on the Railway Commission are marvellous. The shibboleths of railway managers are torn to shreds and the practices of fifty years reversed seemingly without compensation. It is start-

LONG vs. SHORT HAUL

ling really. And through it all the chairman of this important body seems to have retained the respect of the very men whom he is so radically reforming.

For years the people of Canada have been taught that it was cheaper for the railways to haul freight a thousand miles than five hundred. Just why, nobody could understand except the railway men themselves. However, the doctrine was so well sustained in practice that the shippers came to believe that it was true. Shippers in London, Stratford, St. Thomas and Sarnia did not expect to get as cheap rates to Montreal or Halifax as those living in the State of Michigan. This doctrine of the long haul came in, and the railways could not afford a cheap short haul.

It was, therefore, a terrible shock to the community when last week the Commission stood the bogey man up in a vacant lot and set fire to him. As the smoke of his straw-stuffed body ascended to the blue heavens the shippers of Ontario looked aloft with eyes and mouths wide open. All they could say was "Marvellous Killam! Wonderful Killam!"

Another shackle has been broken. Hereafter, freight

rates are to correspond with the distance over which the freight is carried. At present the reform applies only to Ontario, but no doubt it will be extended to cover the whole country. Common sense has triumphed at last. "Marvellous Killam!"

ALL employers are not careful of their work-people and hence the growth of the doctrine of compensation for injuries. It is a modern idea since the dangers of industrial life were not great before the advent of complicated machinery and electricity. A bruised finger or a fractured limb was no doubt

COMPENSATION FOR WORKMEN

common before the days of steam and electricity, but no one thought of collecting damages for such injuries. In Sheffield to-day, in certain cutlery establishments, the knife-blades are made in little rooms, each of which contains one workman and one small hand forge. In the days when the looms and forges were in the homes instead of in large factories, there could be little thought of compensation. The first Workmen's Compensation Act in Great Britain did not come in until 1897.

Modern factories have brought with them new doctrines and new responsibilities. The employer no longer comes into personal contact with the men who labour for him, and the relation between them has changed from a personal to an impersonal one. It is the relation of one class to another class, rather than of one man to another. Because of this, it is becoming a common practice to reduce that relation to legal terms and to enact such legislation as will define the rights of each class.

The Province of Quebec has appointed a commission to make a special study of the laws of different countries concerning labour accidents, labour insurance, responsibility of employers and so on. This body will recommend what to them seem necessary changes in the present laws of that province. The chairman is a prominent lawyer and one of the other two members represents organised labour and one the interests of the employers. The results of their investigations will no doubt have a profound influence upon the legislation in all the provinces.

THERE is no doubt a general movement in the Liberal party for cleaner politics. Speaking at Napanee the other day, Mr. H. M. Mowat, of Toronto, a prominent Liberal, stated that all Ministers should be prepared to observe the code demanded by the Canadian people for domestic conduct; and further, he maintained that the Liberal party would not take up the defence of private follies on the part of those entrusted with high office. If Mr. Mowat correctly represents the Liberal feeling, this means that two or three ex-Ministers cannot get back to office on any consideration, and at least one more member of the cabinet must seek for other occupation. It would be well for the Liberal party and for public life if this were to occur.

FOR CLEANER POLITICS

A prominent Liberal remarked to a Conservative the other day: "We are trying to clean up our party; what is your party doing towards giving itself a polish?" This question is another indication of the spirit of the