

REFORMERS IN THE EAST

Any one who is inclined to doubt that a wave of reform has begun to sweep over Canada, would do well to peruse an act passed at the last session of the New Brunswick Legislature providing a new form of Government for the City of St. John. Few people are surprised, probably, when a bustling Western city such as Edmonton or Vancouver adopts a new and progressive plan of civic taxation or government, but it becomes necessary to readjust one's ideas of the supposedly effete East when an ancient city like St. John is found at a single step placing itself in the very forefront of progress and reform. The people of St. John, after a careful study by some of their leading public men of the methods in operation in different parts of the world, have adopted what is undoubtedly the most progressive form of civic government in existence on this continent: a council of five salaried commissioners with the Initiative, Referendum and Recall and Direct Primaries. They have also removed the property qualification, which in most cities prevents men who do not own a considerable amount of real estate from becoming members of the council, and have thrown the commissionerships open to all qualified electors. The five commissioners comprise a mayor and four aldermen, each of whom receives a salary of \$3,000 a year and is responsible to the Council for the efficient administration of his department. The Initiative clause in St. John's new charter provides that any new ordinance or by-law may be submitted to the council by petition signed by qualified electors numbering not less than 20 per cent. of the voters at the last election, and an ordinance or by-law thus submitted must either be passed by the council or put to a vote of the people at a special election. Similarly a petition signed by 20 per cent. of the electors requires any ordinance or by-law passed by the council, except such as relates to the immediate preservation of the public health, safety or peace, to be submitted to the people at a special election. For the recall of the mayor or any commissioner a fifteen per cent. petition only is necessary, and in all elections under the Initiative, Referendum and Recall a bare majority of those voting is sufficient to decide the question. The primaries are held two weeks prior to the final elections of mayor and aldermen and are necessary when more than two candidates for mayor or more than twice as many candidates for aldermen as there are to be elected are placed in nomination. Having thus started on the path of reform, St. John will doubtless adopt other progressive methods. The new act places upon the council the duty of establishing a civil service or merit system for civic employees other than day laborers, and also provides for the appointment of a commission to prepare and submit to the council a draft of a new assessment law for the city. With Commission Government and Direct Legislation at St. John in the East, and Commission Government and Single Tax at Vancouver in the West, the maritime cities of Canada are blazing the trail of progress and making it easier for the rest of the Dominion to follow in their path. The St. John experiment will be closely watched by all who are interested in good civic government, and it is to be hoped that the progressiveness of St. John's people will be as amply justified by results as that of Vancouver in the Single Tax has been. The new charter of St. John City marks the beginning of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall in Canada.

Col. Sam Hughes deserves a vote of thanks for his courage in refusing to allow the government to act as bartender to the Canadian Militia. There is no good reason why the government should maintain a supply of liquor for the militia. Its effect is demoralizing in every way, and, though many people will not agree with Col. Hughes' military

ideas, he will have the hearty support of the Canadian people in his courageous action on the liquor question.

ONLY ASKING TEN FOR ONE

The following is from the June issue of *Industrial Canada*, organ of and owned and operated by the Canadian Manufacturers' association:—

"The Guide's Secret."

"It is a favorite pastime of *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 'the only paper in Canada owned and published by the organized farmers,' to represent the Canadian Manufacturers' association as the Spinx of High Protection, tip-toeing about in the political twilight with its finger on its lips. But, to misquote Bret Harte, it would seem that in ways that are dark and tricks that are vain *The Grain Growers' Guide* is peculiar. The editor of *The Guide* recently wrote to Mr. G. M. Murray, secretary of the association, asking for a copy of the membership list in order that a book, 'Protection or Free Trade,' written by Henry George, might be donated to each member. Mr. Murray promptly sent the list to *The Guide's* editor, which was equivalent to placing in his hands the mailing list of *Industrial Canada*. Mr. Murray then asked the editor of *The Guide* to send in return the lists of members of the Manitoba Grain Growers' association, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' association and United Farmers of Alberta association, or, of *The Grain Growers' Guide*, which is owned and published by these associations as their official organ. Had the editor of *The Guide* complied with this request, he would simply have brought about an exchange of mailing lists. The editor of *The Guide*, however, refused to furnish *The Guide's* mailing list. Apparently there is more secrecy connected with *The Guide* and its owners than with *Industrial Canada* and its owners."

The editor of *Industrial Canada*, assisted by Mr. Murray, is thus endeavoring to show the generous and open-handed methods of the Canadian Manufacturers' association as contrasted with the narrow-minded secrecy of *The Grain Growers' Guide*. Mr. Murray did send to *The Guide* a booklet containing 2,600 names of members of his association. It was a list printed and prepared for free circulation to practically whoever asked for it. In return for this courtesy Mr. Murray asked for the mailing list of *The Guide*, which consists of 23,000 names and addresses of farmers who subscribe to our paper. This list is absolutely private, and has never been given to anyone. The mailing list of a journal is its chief asset and costs many thousands of dollars to secure. Thus Mr. Murray only asked for a private list of great value in return for a single copy of a public document that could easily have been secured elsewhere. He asked for a list of 23,000 names in exchange for 2,600. It was only ten for one, which is a fair sample of what the Manufacturers' association is always asking from the farmers. We will make this proposition, however, which we think will return Mr. Murray's courtesy and will not be reciprocated. If Mr. Murray or any member of the Canadian Manufacturers' association will set forth any good reason why the members of the Manufacturers' association should levy tribute upon the farmers of the West or prevent them from securing the best possible market for their products we will publish it in *The Guide*. This will give them the full advantage of our mailing list. Had we suspected any charge of lack of courtesy we would never have asked for the list of the Manufacturers' association. We offered to assist Mr. Murray in any other way but evidently that was not enough. We are quite willing to make any reasonable return for the kindness shown us.

SHUT YOUR EYES AND CHOOSE

The big Liberal banquet to Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Montreal, and the big Conservative banquet to Hon. Robert Rogers, at Regina, have now passed into history. Anyone who reads the speeches of these two statesmen or politicians (according to party lean-

ings) with the idea of finding out which party gives the best government will be sadly confused. Each speaker declared "amid tumultuous applause" that the opposing party was corrupt, cared little or nothing for the public welfare and sought only the honors or spoils of office. Sir Wilfrid could not see that the new government had accomplished anything, while Mr. Rogers declared that in the few months the present government had been in office it had done more for the Canadian people than the Liberal government had done in fifteen years. Each declared that the great principles of their "grand old party" were founded upon eternal justice, but neither of them was able to announce clearly just what principles he or his party stood for. Both were positive that only their own party could "save Canada." Each speaker revealed the corruption and lack of sincerity of the opposing party. Should a citizen of New Zealand or Australia endeavor to study Canadian conditions by the aid of these two addresses we wonder what conclusion would be arrived at. If the progress of Canada towards democracy depends upon the leading politicians we fear that progress would not be rapid. Of course both speakers were right in their conclusions, and no doubt the people of Canada will be generally glad of these contributions towards the solution of national problems.

IS THIS BRIBERY?

The following is from the report of the address of Hon. W. J. Roche, Secretary of State, at the Regina banquet on June 10, as taken from the *Regina Standard*:—

"The Secretary of State made one of the most important statements of the evening when he intimated that the Borden government took the stand that the lands and other natural resources rightly belonged to the province, but that the government was not going to force these resources on to an unwilling people. The best way to show Mr. Borden that Saskatchewan wants the land, he said, was to return to power Mr. Haultain and his party. Incidentally Dr. Roche made it quite plain, though not in so many words, that the Scott government would never get the lands, because the Scott government had declared time and again against their possession by the province and in favor of their administration from Ottawa."

To bribe a voter is to violate the law of the land and renders the offender liable to severe punishment. What shall be said of an attempt to bribe the electors of a whole province? We cannot believe that it has the sanction of Premier Borden. Surely there are enough legitimate methods of soliciting public support without such means as this. How can we expect to elevate the standard of public morality when those whom we place in the highest positions of honor publicly practice corrupt methods.

A number of independent candidates are standing for election in Saskatchewan. This is no doubt the result of growing independence on the part of the people. Party slavery has been one of the leading causes of political corruption in Canada for many years. What the people need is men who will represent them honestly and faithfully and not bow to the dictation of party leaders. The leaders of political parties are no more likely to protect the rights of the people than are the rank and file of the legislators. The rise of independent candidates and the pledge of Direct Legislation by both parties speaks volumes for the democratic progress of Saskatchewan.

When we have Direct Legislation in operation we will be able to reduce the corrupting influences of federal and provincial political party ties.

Before another issue of *The Guide* is printed the American family quarrel will be settled. Few are unwise enough to speculate upon the outcome.