

BOOKS AND NOTIONS

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BUSINESS AND POLITICS.

SHOULD a business man touch politics? This question is a delicate one, but an answer will be given—its only virtue lies in its being the opinion of "another man."

Politics are of two classes: politics of the nation, which includes Provincial and Dominion affairs, and politics of the municipality. The two are entirely distinct and widely dissimilar.

As regards politics of the nation, every business man should have his ideas, thoughts and judgments. But he must not obtrude these on the community; he must not glory in them. They may be straight and strong, but they must not be sticking out all over him like the quills of the porcupine. If they are, they will offend some person who is delicate of skin, and business is injured.

Municipal politics are different from the former kind. The municipality is made up of citizens, and, like every other hive, has its workers and its drones. The business man must not, at least, be a drone. If he can be a worker, so much the better for him and his business. But if he goes into municipal politics—and every citizen should to a greater or less extent—he must guard against two things: Being partisan, abrupt, churlish or unyielding; and devoting too much time to civic affairs to the detriment of business.

With these points in mind, a business man is safe going into municipal affairs. It is a relaxation from business, broadens a

man's sympathies and views, makes him hustle so fast that the old rut will not bear the speed and a new one is formed, and makes him in the eyes of the people something higher than a mere human machine with a mouth that opens and shuts only three times a day. Canada needs more men who consist of something else than "digestive" organs.

WHAT HE IS DOING NOW.

THIS is the month when the book-eller is keeping his weather eye open for magazine and library orders. He is spying out the land, and the "rich" spots are being located.

He descends from his exalted perch on his desk stool, stops figuring on Cash Discounts and Debits and Credits, and goes into the arena where his customers throng. Mr. Jones-Smith is a literary man, and the bookseller asks him about renewing his subscriptions for the magazines, and secures an order or two. Mr. Hay-Clover is a farmer, but he takes two Montreal weeklies, two Toronto weeklies, a Halifax weekly (his wife's folks live down there), *The Farmers' Advocate*, *The American Agriculturist* and one or two others. His order is looked after and secured. The names of the members of each Sunday school library committee are jotted up and each personally seen and when the lively traveler for the Copp, Clark Co. or the Methodist Book Room gets around he finds his Xmas goose is cooked and eaten by this retailer. The Mechanics' Institute managers are sounded and the dates when the lists of books and magazines are required are jotted down in the merchant's diary. The secretary of each neighboring village Sunday school gets a nice letter telling him that "Daylight, the Bookseller," is still doing business in Sunday school books, papers and sundries, and "his esteemed and valued order" would be appreciated.

And all this time, the dealer's clerks are getting ready the holiday goods and every preparation is perfected. The enthusiasm spreads from employer to employe, until even the messenger boy runs the length of two blocks twice a day. The local paper has an extra double-column advertisement with "dear old Santa" smiling out at the top. The windows are jam up full of price ticketed toys and holiday goods. The 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 cent tables creak with goods that sell themselves to the mass of the people. The counters are covered with specialties, such as Diaries, Canadian Almanac, Star Almanac, Christmas papers, etc., specialties which always require pushing to catch the trade.

A few flags are hung up here and there, while a row of Chinese lanterns and some cheap bunting give a holiday air to the place. It is the season of Merry Christmas,

and people desire to be happy if they can. They will loosen their pursestrings if their heartstrings can be softened. There are a thousand and one little things to be attended to. But the merchant enjoys the rush and push, and his brain is unusually active. What matters it, if he has to work two or three hours a day longer? It is the harvest season which comes but once a year.

THEY SHOULD REFUND DUTY.

The book trade have always got the worst of it in their dealings with the Customs Department, and they have borne all with becoming resignation. In many ways we have to play second fiddle to the American dealer's first violin, simply because of some old rule which the officials say cannot be altered. As is well known to the trade, publishers of papers, magazines and books in the States send a quantity on sale to dealers in every part of the country. If the consignment is not entirely disposed of at the end of three months dealers may return the remainder to the publisher. There is no difficulty in the way, and it is a very fair and liberal arrangement for the dealer in the States. In Canada, however, dealers pay a duty of 6c. per lb., and on some an additional 20 per cent. ad valorem. Under the present Customs regulations the entire lot may be returned within one month and a refund of duty given. If, however, one or more magazines (fashion) or books are sold out of the consignment no refund of duty is allowed. With the present very high rate on books this is a considerable figure, and is in itself a profit. There is no reason why a refund should not be allowed. The explanation is that it would be impossible for the Customs authorities to tell whether the books returned were a portion of those imported or not. That is a very easy matter to ascertain. If they doubted it at any time they could easily open the package being returned. There could be no deception. The titles of the books are easily read. It is not like an article in which a cheaper or more expensive quality might be substituted.

ONTARIO TEXT-BOOKS.

Six months' grace has been given to the publishers of the Ontario P. S. Readers, and their contract will not run out on January 1st, 1895, as was expected. By the indulgence of the Education Department, and their own skilfulness, they have delayed final action by the Minister until July 1st, 1895. Thus, in the great contest now dawning, the publishers have drawn first blood.

No. 3 of the H. S. Drawing Course will be ready about January 1st. It is said to be very fine.

There is some talk of the authorization of a new series of copy books, teaching the vertical system.