

# REFLECTIONS

BY STAFF WRITERS.

**D**OWN in Nova Scotia, some remarks made in these pages about the Maritime Provinces have been treated with scant respect. In fact, the publicists of the district down by the sea fail very notably in an appreciation of the importance of any opinion expressed by the writers on this journal. They class us as ordinary journalists and fail to realise that our wisdom is of the gods—and not of Ontario and Toronto. The comment from the "Halifax Chronicle" on another page, gives ample proof of this.

We are not discouraged nor are we dismayed. We shall proceed to give Nova Scotia plenty of free advice as of yore, and if they reply to us at such length they are likely to have a busy year ahead of them.

Just here it seems desirable to mention a despatch which has recently arrived from London, England, to the effect that the Governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are making arrangements to gather in 20,000 immigrants this year. If this be true, we throw up our hats and cheer lustily for the provinces by the sea. The policy meets with our distinct and distinguished approval. It is immigration which has kept Ontario from being depopulated; it is immigration which made Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta; it was immigration which made the Western States.

The stream of immigrants coming into the country via Halifax and St. John flowed on in undiminished volume to Ontario and the West. The Maritime Provinces got little or none of it. If it be true that some of the stream is to be diverted into that part of Canada, a new era is dawning for the provinces by the sea. They have lands in plenty; they have coal areas, fishing resources and other possibilities; they have a delightful climate and great trade opportunities. All they require is more people and more industries, and they will not be under the necessity of going to Ottawa to beg that their parliamentary representation shall not be diminished.

If the rumour be true and the attempt be successful, the writers on the Canadian Courier will cease to shed salty tears for the beautiful provinces of the East.

**S**IR WILFRID LAURIER has been receiving some attention because of what is known as the Lavergne incident. The Premier is too firmly entrenched in the affections of the people of Canada to worry over the rash remarks of unfriendly newspapers who have magnified this particular event.

The incident, however, is one which throws considerable light on our methods of conducting public business. The people of Montmagny (pronounced Mont-man-ye, with the accent on the last syllable) wanted a wharf at Cap St. Ignace, and they must needs go to see Sir Wilfrid about it. Why? Because Sir Wilfrid is the father of his people. Then, in the presence of the Premier and the deputation, after the business has been transacted, Mr. Lavergne must make a speech and take up some more of the Premier's valuable time. And Mr. Lavergne has a grievance to air about the patronage. Sir Wilfrid remarked in reply that it was customary for the Government to discuss questions of patronage with members

supporting them. Sir Wilfrid stated the case properly, Mr. Lavergne did not dissent, and there the incident ended so far as the principals are concerned.

The Lavergne incident was the occasion for a very frank statement on the part of the Premier. Every person knows that it is customary for the Government to consult the sitting member when post offices are to be built or other favours bestowed on a constituency. If the member is in opposition, the defeated candidate on the Government side is consulted. Yet by his public statement of this principle, attention has been called to it and a discussion has been started afresh as to its regularity and its wisdom.

The constitution sets down no system for distributing patronage. These details of administration are left to the discretion of the men in power. Under our system an opposition member does not expect to be consulted, though in many cases he is listened to regularly if he has anything to say and is a man known to be fair and broad minded. So far as possible, however, it would seem better that most questions of patronage be eliminated from politics. A civil service commission should handle all appointments and promotions in the Civil Service. The engineers and permanent officials should decide about public works and other details. Yet over and above all these, there are questions which the Government of the day must investigate and decide. These are not included in what is ordinarily known as patronage, and should be carefully distinguished by those who advocate reform.

**T**HE Navy League Branches in Canada seem to be making very little impress on the public mind. That Canadian Naval Force of 5,000 men, decided upon in 1898, has not yet materialised. That was to be but a beginning. It ought to be about 25,000 shortly, after nine years—and it has not yet got into the Militia Act, or any other statute.

Then, again, Canada was to buy some of the "inefficient" but comparatively new war vessels from the British authorities to be kept here for training purposes. There are twenty-two of these ships available, but no appropriations for even one, have yet appeared in the estimates.

That energetic Secretary, Mr. Wyatt, had better return and make another flying trip across the continent and put fresh life into the various branches. If these were really in earnest, they would surely be having more effect on public policy.

Meeting together once a year and passing typewritten resolutions will not prove sufficient. There must be agitation of the public mind and of the parliamentary mind.

Membership in the League should mean something more than a paltry social distinction.

**T**HE death of the Hon. A. G. Blair is so recent, and the political controversies in which his later days were involved were so keen that any formal appraisal of his work is at present impossible. When the inner history of the years 1903 and 1904 comes to be written, an interesting page will be contributed to the record of the inner circles of the Canadian Cabinet. But