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REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

APPARENTLY, the Conservative party is about to come out for a further measure of Civil Service Reform. Mr. Foster some time ago gave notice of a motion along this line, and that resolution will be debated in the House before this issue reaches the reader. It is also common gossip around Ottawa that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is bringing pressure to bear on all his colleagues in much the same direction. This is one of the encouraging signs of the times. Without handing out any condemnation of both parties for their record in regard to patronage, every right-minded citizen should do his utmost to help in bringing about this new era.

Mr. Foster's resolution is as follows:

"That in the opinion of this House the prevailing system of party patronage constitutes a menace to honest and efficient government, incites to great waste of resources and extravagance of expenditures, tends inevitably to corrupt and lower the tone of public morals, and should forthwith be eliminated from our federal administration."

Perhaps Mr. Foster intends this motion as a vote of censure on the Government. If so, he is not a broad-minded citizen nor a statesman. It is quite true that there has been an adherence to party patronage under the present administration which is not greatly to its credit. But it is also true that the Hon. Sydney Fisher has given us the only measure of Civil Service Reform which is worthy of the name. It is also true that party patronage is as rampant in Ontario under Conservative rule as in other provinces or in the Dominion. In the Conservative city of Toronto, the patronage committees still perform important functions under the Whitney administration. Only a few days ago, these committees met in solemn conclave to choose sixteen pages to serve in the Legislature during the approaching session.

Party patronage is a national, not a party, sin. Every person has been guilty. Every member of Parliament past or present has condoned and practised a system which was based on the motto that "To the Victor belongs the Spoil." Being a national sin, it can be eliminated only by a keen and well-informed public opinion. No one party can make the reform; it must be the work of both parties at Ottawa and both parties in every provincial legislature.

CONSERVATION of national resources is another national problem. President Roosevelt started the movement in America, but Canada is doing better than the United States. Over there they have got to quarrelling—a state to which we may come if Mr. Sifton is as energetic as his brother millionaire, Mr. Pinchot.

Last week, in the *Canadian Courier*, Dr. Porter pointed out the relations between double-windows and disease. He re-voiced the old complaint that our houses are too warm and badly ventilated. At the Ottawa meeting last week, Dr. Bryce said that to maintain the population in good health is a part of the conservation of national resources. Good health depends not only on climate but on social environment. Dr. Bryce also touched upon the national loss through high infant mortality, typhoid, tuberculosis and industrial accidents.

A strong man or a strong woman is a national asset, while a weak human being is not only a liability but a source of future danger. To keep men and women strong, to keep the loss of life among all ages at a minimum, to breed here in this stern climate a race strong physically and intellectually is a national problem and a national duty. We must first learn that most human disease is due to human apathy and human carelessness. We must cease to look upon our bodily and mental weaknesses as unavoidable and must strain every effort to overcome them.

Railways, canals, banks, mines, wheat fields, productive forests, magnificent laws and administration of justice — what are these if

the people as a whole are not healthy, strong, and virile?

Fresh air and outdoor exercise are needed by the dwellers in the cities; better cooked food and more bathing facilities are needed by those who live in country homes. Both classes need a more perfect knowledge of the rules of health, and an awakened interest in what this means.

PROFESSOR A. P. COLEMAN, professor of geology in the University of Toronto, has spun a fine theory in a recent article in the *Canadian Magazine*. He says that for a long period Ontario and Quebec were covered with glacier ice a mile thick. Just think of it—this fair country buried for thousands of years under a mile of ice! It is enough to make even a resident of White River shiver. Then the ice passed away and almost tropical summers reigned in succession for about 50,000 years. Great trees and great animals there were in abundance, but there are no traces of the human being. There came another gradual cooling of the climate and once more Canada was covered with perpetual ice and snow. There was thus the glacial period, then the inter-glacial, then the second glacial, and finally the present period. The inter-glacial was much like the present, but this time the human is added.

Strangest of all the pieces of this theory, the Professor thinks that some day the ice will again crawl down from the north and cover the land once more. It is nearly 20,000 years since the last glacial period. In another 30,000 there may be another such phase. Happily few of us will live to see it. It should, however, make the parliamentarians and the transcontinental railway magnates humble when they stop to think that all these beautiful creations of theirs will some day be buried in ice a mile deep. Perhaps if the Canadian navy is large enough and in good condition, it will be able to sail away and carry the Mace to a warmer climate—a new and delightful country, covered at present by the ice-fields surrounding the South Pole. But such reflections are enough to make one dizzy.

FOR a time last week it appeared as if the Asquith Government would be dependent upon the Irish Party for its future existence. It was thought by some that the Liberals might not retain office on such an onerous condition, as the Irish Party has been notoriously self-seeking and self-centred. They thought that possibly a coalition government might result with, say, Lord Rosebery as Premier and the moderate men among the Liberals and the Unionists in the leading offices. This would mean the elimination of Lloyd-George and Winston Churchill, who are the extremists on the Liberal side. Others thought the Asquith Government might hold on for a while and enact some temporary legislation, and then make a second appeal to the country.

The attitude of Mr. Redmond may change all that. He takes Home Rule out of the list of pressing propositions and declares for land taxes and a curbing of the veto of the Lords. That was a master stroke. It put the Nationalists in a new light; it made them patriots and statesmen, rather than carping critics and selfish aggrandisers. Moreover, it cleared the air of all doubts as to what is likely to happen immediately. It assured a greater opportunity to Mr. Asquith to work out at least some of the reforms to which he is committed.

TO show how wonderfully different is this action of Mr. Redmond to that of Mr. Parnell in previous situations of a similar character in the past twenty-five years, the leading events in connection with Home Rule must be recalled.

In June, 1885, Mr. Gladstone's second government tottered to a fall. The Nationalists, under Parnell, were against Gladstone because he had decided to "coerce" Ireland then in a somewhat lawless state.