

LETTERS

ON THE

ANOMALOUS POSITION

OF

MANITOBA AS A PROVINCE OF THE DOMINION.

LETTER I.

The question of providing for the self-government not only of Manitoba but also of the Provinces still to be created in the North-West, is one which, unfortunately for the future prosperity of this country, does not appear to sufficiently engage the attention of our public men throughout the Dominion. The true position of affairs in this respect is either not thoroughly understood or else there must be an unwise determination to put off the evil day of reckoning. That something will have to be done ere long to place Manitoba on a more independent footing than she is at present must be apparent to every intelligent man who has ever given the matter a thought. To delay the consideration of this important question is only to give an opportunity for fresh difficulties to arise in the way of a satisfactory solution. One of three courses will have to be adopted, viz: either the Province must obtain the means of revenue from the resources within its limits, such as Crown lands, timber limits, minerals, &c., or the Dominion, out of the public treasury, must supply the necessary funds to carry on the machinery of local Government and improvements, or lacking these two sources of revenue,

the people of the Province will be obliged to submit to direct taxation.

Already the formation and sustaining of municipalities throughout the country and a large proportion of the cost of supporting the common schools are sufficient burdens for the people to bear, especially when it is considered that the expenses and difficulties of a pioneer life are in themselves trying enough without the addition of further taxation.

Were we not in a progressive state of existence, were our requirements not increasing rapidly day by day, or were our institutions fully established and in thorough working order, the question of revenue might not be considered of so much importance, for it would be said with some degree of reason that as we were able to manage in the past so we could manage in the future. It must not be lost sight of however that in developing our present institutions we have been obliged to draw heavily from our capital account, until now it is reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. For instance on a population of 17,000 souls at \$32,438 the original amount at our credit was \$551,447.00, on which we drew interest annually @ 5 per cent. From this we withdrew in