

is often or always obscured. These obstacles to bargain and sale, covering a part of a national domain, may be insuperable. With this, for the moment, let us have nothing to do; we will ignore this side of the question wholly. What would three plain, straightforward business men do if this case were brought before them for a final conclusion, purely as a question of profit or loss?

Would they not first endeavor to put down on paper all the points upon which they substantially agreed? What would these points be? Are they not as follows?

A:—The different sections which now constitute the Confederation known as the Dominion of Canada are not so united by nature as to make the Maritime Provinces either a necessary part, or even a part which, under other circumstances, would have happened to belong to that Dominion.

B:—It follows that the policy of the Government of other parts of the Dominion of Canada, although beneficial to such other portions, might merely be a burden upon the Maritime Provinces; as for instance, excessive expenditures upon railways for the development of Manitoba, British Columbia, and the like, can be of no benefit to the Maritime Provinces, but may involve a heavy debt, of which their share would be a serious burden.

C:—These Provinces are physically allied by nature to New England. Were there no obstruction to trade between them and the United States, the traffic per capita would be equal to the traffic per capita among the people of the United States. How much that would be one can hardly measure from any existing data; it might, however, be from twenty to thirty times what it now is, so far as one can judge from the tonnage carried by the railways of the United States, which is about eight tons to each person moved 112 miles at a cost of \$8.75 per year. An increase of, at least, ten-fold in mutual traffic would be the minimum if these Provinces were annexed.

D:—It might, however, be admitted that, inasmuch as the Maritime Provinces had assented to the present obligations of Canada, the people of these Provinces could not rightfully withdraw from the Confederation, without assuming their portion of that debt. Their gross debt is about fifty dollars a head; but there are sinking funds belonging to Canada which materially reduce it. The net debt is, I believe, something less than forty dollars per head. On the basis of about one million population, which is not far from the fact, the proportion of the debt of the Maritime Provinces might be forty million dollars.

E:—On the other hand, by joining the United States they would become indebted for a portion of the United States debt, now amounting to about twenty dollars per head, to which they would immediately begin to contribute in the way of taxes.

F:—It might therefore be admitted that the United States should pay either a ratable part of the whole of the proportion of the Canadian debt belonging to the people of the Maritime Provinces, subject to reduction for the value of the public buildings or other property turned over to serve the