

## THE POLITICAL MEETING IN HALIFAX.

If any proof were needed of the lengths to which political excitement will carry some men, it might have been gathered at the monster political meeting held at the Drill Shed on Friday evening last. Had the building been twice its present size, it would scarce have been large enough to comfortably accommodate the mass of human beings who were packed like sardines in a box in the audience room. Jostled and jammed on every side, and obliged to stand up in order to prevent their being smothered by the rushing crowd, hundreds upon hundreds of our most orderly citizens were obliged in self protection to jostle and jam in their turn. In that immense throng there was no respect to persons. Each individual had to fight for the small floor or bench space upon which he stood; and had it not been that the window panes and sashes were broken out, and many persons thus escaped from the crush, very serious disasters would probably have resulted. To add to the discomforts, a perfect babel of yells, demanding that those in the front seats should sit down, was kept up by persons in the rear of the hall; and it was evident from the first, that under the circumstances, the audience could not give a calm and dispassionate hearing to the speakers who were to address them. From our observation, we are led to believe that the parties were very evenly represented, although the hearing given to Sir Charles Tupper was somewhat better than that accorded to the Hon. A. G. Jones. Sir Charles Tupper had the advantage of making the first address, and despite the annoying interruptions, most of the audience heard what he had to say, but at the end of his speech of an hour and a quarter, the struggle for better places was renewed by those who were too far distant to catch the remarks of Hon. A. G. Jones. The hubbub beggars description. It was simply deafening like to the noise in the cave of the winds at Niagara Falls. Had Mr. Jones held a speaking trumpet, and possessed the lung power of a Stentor, his utterances could not have been heard ten feet from the stage. Political excitement was rampant, and the cheers and hisses which interrupted the speech of Sir Charles were repeated with tenfold force and with scarce a moment's cessation. The political excitement itself was sufficiently strong to have made it difficult for an impartial chairman like Mr. W. C. Silver to have preserved order; but to preserve order in a political meeting where each individual had to be on the *qui vive* for fear he should be crushed to death, was simply impossible. As it was, those who attended were obliged to take the daily papers in order to read what had been said by the speakers, and hundreds of people would probably think twice before again running such risks as they did on Friday evening last. The affair was a disgrace to the city, and partyism and bad management are accountable for it. Had the doors been opened early, and a joint committee of management been appointed in conjunction with the police to seat and control the audience, such a wild rush as that made when the doors were opened, with the subsequent jostling and jamming, would have been prevented. Political partisans should learn a wholesome lesson from this remarkable meeting. Men who unblushingly interrupt an endeavor to prevent being heard the remarks of one speaker, have nothing to complain of when their opponents steal their thunder and try to drown the voice of a second speaker. Politically speaking, the meeting cannot truthfully be claimed as a victory by either party, and the colored reports which have appeared in the party papers are enough to make honest men disgusted with politics, and indignant with the papers which can resort to such subterfuges in order to deceive their readers.

## OUR POSITION.

When the political fever is at its height, it is difficult for those who suffer from this epidemic to understand why men of influence, standing or ability, should be comparatively unaffected by the excitement of an election, and how it is that they can pursue their ordinary avocations apparently undisturbed, and even go so far as to endorse the candidates which the respective parties have placed in the field. It is a fortunate thing for the country that among the electors are to be found hundreds of such cool-headed individuals—for were it not so, and were the doctrine of the blind allegiance to party under each and all circumstances closely adhered to, the relative position of the "ins" and "outs" would remain the same, so long as the franchise was not changed. But if to a party man the independence of an elector appears strange, the independence of a newspaper is quite inexplicable; and he naturally infers, that because a journal is not an out and out supporter of the party to which he is attached, it must be opposed to it. This by no means follows. The editor of a public journal is, from the nature of his position, in duty bound to further the interests of his country to the utmost of his ability; and when in his judgment the country would suffer an irreparable injury from the policy of one or other party, then and then only is he as an independent journalist called upon to take sides. In the present political contest THE CRITIC sees no great interest at stake. The question of repeal has virtually been dropped, while the Hon. Edward Blake's utterances in favor of incidental protection, and the due observance of vested rights, is but the National Policy in other clothing. The other questions before the electors are of minor importance; and whether the Outs go in or the Ins remain in, they will not materially affect the prosperity of the country. The economical flag which the Outs are now waving is the standard which is always seized during election times by the party in opposition; but if under its folds victory is gained, retrenchment and economy are seldom realized. As an independent critic our position has been assailed by both Liberals and Conservatives. The Conservatives point to the following paragraph which appeared in our issue of the 21st ult:

"Messrs. Jones and Fuller have been nominated for the City and County of Halifax to contest at the Liberal Standard banners in the election to be held on the 22nd prox. The Hon. A. G. Jones is an old campaigner. He knows how to handle a political shil-

lingleh to advantage. Mr. H. H. Fuller is, politically speaking, not so familiar to the electors of Halifax, but as a business man he has earned and long maintained a high reputation for integrity and square dealing in all transactions."

This is quoted as the CRITIC's endorsement of the Liberal candidates; but lo! when Messrs. Stairs and Kenny's nomination was announced in our last issue, the CRITIC is put down as a Tory organ, and yet the paragraph was but a truthful statement of facts. It read:—

"The Liberal-Conservatives of the City and County of Halifax have nominated as their candidates for the House of Commons Messrs. J. W. Stairs and T. E. Kenny. Mr. Stairs has already served a short term in the Dominion Parliament, and has won throughout this constituency an enviable reputation for the prompt attention given to all communications addressed to him by the electors. Mr. T. E. Kenny is a man of wide business experience and high character, and is well qualified to represent the metropolitan constituency of the Province."

The CRITIC is by no means "on the fence," nor is it the organ of either the Liberal or Liberal-Conservative party. It is an independent journal; and although its approval or condemnation of certain measures or a certain line of policy may lead partisans to think that its learnings are strongly one way or the other, it will continue to enjoy and express its independent opinion, leaving to the purely party journals the work of battling for the Ins and Outs.

## AN AMERICAN RAILWAY COMMISSION.

The *Inter-State Commerce Bill*, which passed the American House of Representatives on the 25th ult., promises to deal most effectively with the many forms of injustice perpetrated by the railway companies of the United States. Indeed, it is seldom thought advisable at the present day to interfere between contracting parties; but there are few cases in which the helpless many can so justly claim protection against the arbitrary few as in the present instance. One town suffers from an unfair discrimination in rates for the advantage of a more distant one which enjoys railway competition. One class of freight is favored to the ruin of an industry and the disadvantage of the public. Certain railways pool to secure through traffic and ruin competing lines. The freight and passenger rates are so variable and past finding out that people rarely discover that they have been unfairly treated.

This bill provides for the appointment of a commission of five members, to be selected by the President with and by the advice of the Senate. That their duties are considered important may be inferred from the provisions made for their remuneration. They are to receive a salary of \$7,500 each; to be empowered to appoint a secretary at a salary of \$8,500; and to fix the compensation of any other employees whose services they may require. The commission is charged with the enforcing of the terms of the act, the infliction of fines for its violation, and the adjustment of disputes with railway companies.

From the maze of legal verbosity in which the act is couched, we may glean that it is declared unlawful for any railway company to charge one person higher rates than another for similar services; to favor any person, company, or locality, or any particular kind of traffic; to charge higher rates for a shorter than for a longer distance, unless the commissioners are satisfied with the reasons assigned; to enter into an agreement with so-called competing lines with a view to dividing the aggregate earnings; or to form a combination to prevent the carriage of freights from being continuous from place of shipment to destination. It is also enacted that every railway company shall have printed and exposed for public inspection schedules showing their rates, fares and charges.

The measure is a radical one; and if the commissioners use their powers faithfully, there can be no doubt of its good results. We in Canada have also a movement of the same kind on foot. Though the abuses of which we complain may not be so flagrant as those against which our cousins have revolted, yet they are sufficient to call for legislative interference.

The French electricians seem to be using the electric light far more extensively than we are. Private carriages in Paris are said to be illuminated by the incandescent lamps. Not only are the outside lamps included in this plan, but the interior of the vehicle is illuminated by a lamp sufficiently powerful to read by. And in some cases a similar lamp is placed, for novelty, on the head of each horse. The lamps are connected by wires with small accumulators placed under the driver's seat.

Vice-President Chanul, in his address before the Mechanical Section of the American Association, considered what might be called the evolution of inventions. Nothing, he said is more remarkable than the multitude of minds and facts which are required for the perfecting of even a simple machine, or how little the last man may need to complete the invention. Facts and natural laws, known for years as curiosities, are taken up by some inventor, who fails in the attempt to render them of practical use; then a second genius takes hold, and profiting by the mistakes of the first produces, at great cost, a working machine. Then comes the successful man, who works out the final practical design, and, whether making or losing a fortune, yet permanently benefits mankind. This course is exemplified in the address by the relation of the growth of the steam engine; and so with other inventions. The steamboat was being developed from 1760 to 1807; the locomotive from 1802 to 1829; the telegraph from 1729 to 1844; the sewing machine, with its two thousand patents, from 1790 to 1860, and the reaping machine for seventy-five years—the last successful man adding but little to the work of his forerunners. The rule has been that "the basis of success lay in a thorough acquaintance with what had been done before, and in setting about improvement in a thoroughly scientific way."—*Popular Science Monthly*.